

Asifabad police to provide free coaching to 160 job aspirants

Kumram Bheem Asifabad: The district SP Nitika Pant said that the police department would extend free coaching to 160 candidates to help them crack police jobs.In a statement issued here on Friday, Nitika said that the department selected the candidates by conducting an examination to provide the coaching. She informed that the candidates would undergo a 90-day-long free coaching to be commenced from August 31. She added that the aspirants would be given training in physical efficiency, written tests and other aspects of the selection process.

Tibet lake ‘burst’ triggers fresh flood fears in Nepal; 320 Indians untraced

Katmandu, August 28

UFresh fears of another flashflood disrupted rescue operations in Nepal's flood-ravaged Rasuwa district on Friday, even as 320 Indian nationals still remained uncontactable in the aftermath of the devastating Bhote Koshi floods.

There was information that a fresh barrier lake had formed at the origin of the ice-rock avalanche that triggered the Bhote Koshi-Trishuli floods. Satellite imagery indicated that continued water accumulation in the lake could heighten the risk of another downstream outburst flood.



Amid the continuing rescue and relief operations, Ministry of External Affairs spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said 320 Indian nationals remained uncontactable, adding that the situation was “dynamic” and that the lists of missing persons and the actual death toll among Indians were still being reconciled.

“As far as the number of people we are unable to contact or who are missing is concerned, the figure at this point is 320,” Jaiswal said.

He added that around 100 persons of Indian origin holding foreign nationalities also remained uncontactable. Some of them are believed to have travelled for the Kailash Mansarovar Yatra.

Jaiswal said another 63 Indian nationals working at the Trishuli-I hydropower project were rescued on Thursday. In addition, 96 Indians stranded on the Chinese side had safely crossed into Nepal by land, and efforts were under way to evacuate them.

Separately, about 400 Indian nationals on the Chinese side were reported safe, with the Indian Embassy in Beijing remaining in touch with their team leaders, travel agents and Chinese authorities to facilitate their evacuation.

Meanwhile, 21 tourists from Tamil Nadu rescued from the disaster-hit region arrived in New Delhi on Friday.

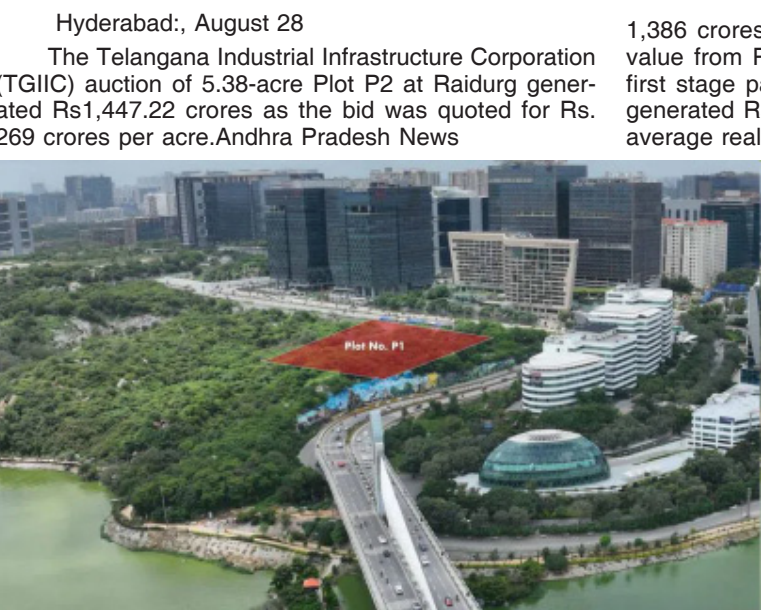
External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar welcomed the tourists on their arrival and heard their accounts of the ordeal. “I was deeply moved upon hearing their experiences firsthand,” Jaishankar said, thanking the Nepal government and the Nepalese Army for the rescue operation. He also commended the Indian Embassy in Kathmandu for coordinating their return.

Jaishankar said he had reviewed the relief and rescue operations in Nepal and received updated assessments from the Indian missions in Kathmandu and Beijing. He added that additional relief supplies were being prepared for Nepal, with the safety of Indian nationals being accorded the “highest priority”.

The Indian effort comes as Nepal grapples with the massive toll of the Bhote Koshi flashfloods. According to Nepal's National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Authority, 538 bodies had been recovered till 3 pm on Friday, while 977 people remained missing and 3,742 had been rescued

Raidurg auction sees Rs 269 crore per acre record bid

The TGIIC has raised Rs 2,833.22 crore from two successive land auctions at Raidurg, underscoring Hyderabad’s growing appeal as a business hub. Plot P2 alone fetched Rs 1,447.22 crore at Rs 269 crore per acre, surpassing last week’s record bid for Plot P1.



This follows the auction of Plot P1 held last week, which achieved Rs 264 crores per acre, generating Rs

1,386 crores. Officials said 25 percent of the auction value from Plot P1 has already been received as the first stage payment. Together, the two auctions have generated Rs 2,833.22 crores from 10.63 acres, at an average realisation of Rs.266.53 crores per acre.

The exceptional price discovery reflects strong confidence among leading developers in Hyderabad's long-term growth prospects, supported by its expanding business ecosystem, besides robust infrastructure connectivity and growing stature as a major business and investment destination.

Commenting on the occasion, TGIIC VC & MD K Shashanka said, “Today's auction is a strong endorsement of investor confidence in Hyderabad and Telangana and the continued attractiveness of Raidurg as a premier business and investment destination.”

The auctions were conducted through the MSTC e-Auction platform, with JLL serving as the Exclusive Transaction Advisor, supporting TGIIC through market positioning, investor engagement and competitive price discovery.

Dy CM Bhatti moots Singareni-Hutti JV to boost gold output

Hyderabad: Deputy Chief Minister Mallu Bhatti Vikramarka has directed officials to explore the possibility of setting up a joint venture between Singareni Collieries Company Limited and Hutti Gold Mines, a Karnataka government undertaking with extensive experience in gold mining.City & Local Guides

He said combining the technical capabilities and expertise of the two public sector undertakings could help increase domestic gold production and yield better results.

Karnala Shailaja Ties Rakhis to Senior Leaders and Seeks Their Blessings



““On the auspicious occasion of Raksha Bandhan, Smt. Karnala Shailaja, Vice President of the Telangana Mahila Congress, tied rakhis to Hon'ble Chief Minister of Telangana Shri A. Revanth Reddy, Revenue Minister Shri Ponguleti Srinivas Reddy, and LB Nagar Congress In-charge, former Member of Parliament and State Campaign Committee Chairman Shri Madhu Yaskhi Goud.”“She conveyed her heartfelt Raksha Bandhan greetings and respectfully sought their blessings.”“Speaking on the occasion, Smt. Karnala Shailaja said that Raksha Bandhan is a sacred festival symbolising love, affection, mutual respect and the life-long bond of protection between brothers and sisters.”“She prayed for the happiness, good health and prosperity of the people of Telangana. She also expressed her hope that, under the leadership of Chief Minister Shri A. Revanth Reddy, the People's Government would continue to give the highest priority to women's welfare, safety and empowerment while leading Telangana towards greater progress and development.”“Karnala Shailaja“Vice President, Telangana Mahila Congress

No Compromise on Our Share of Krishna Waters: Revanth



Hyderabad:, august 28

der arguments before KWDT-II. The meeting was attended by irrigation minister N. Uttam Kumar Reddy, senior Supreme Court lawyer and counsel for Telangana C.S. Vaidhyathan, along with senior irrigation department officials.

The Chief Minister also said that Telangana should present its case effectively to ensure that if AP gets to use 80 tmc ft of water to divert to its Polavaram project, then Telangana should get the 45 tmc ft of water that it can claim as the upper riparian state. In effect, Revanth Reddy said, Telangana's case should be that it gets a total of 600 tmc ft of water as its share from Krishna river.

He said the state government was constructing projects with plans to use 600 tmc ft of Krishna water. When the lawyers explained that the case on the Brijesh Kumar tribunal award was before the Supreme Court and that the next hearing was in September, he said that the state's arguments should be such that no justice is done to Telangana's share from Krishna.

Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy on Friday said that Telangana should make effective arguments before the Krishna Waters Disputes Tribunal (KWDT) -II in a manner that would ensure that the state gets its rightful share of 511 tmc ft of water of the 811 tmc ft that was allocated by the Bachawat Tribunal to the erstwhile unified Andhra Pradesh.

Revanth Reddy was speaking at a meeting to review Telangana's final preparations for its rejoined

Teej Festival of Gor Banjara Community Celebrated with Grandeur in North Kalyanpuri



---Traditional Banjara dances, music and cultural activities mark the celebrations – Around 300 Banjara families participate""UPPAL , AUGUST 28 (INDIAN CHRONICLE): The traditional Teej festival of the Gor Banjara (Lambadi) community, which showcases the community's rich cultural heritage and traditions, was celebrated with great enthusiasm in North Kalyanpuri Colony on Friday. Banjara women, youth and children participated in large numbers, reflecting the community's traditional customs and cultural practices."The Teej festival was organised on a grand scale under the leadership of Guguloth Rajanna Naik and Banoth Venkanna Naik in North Kalyanpuri.

Former GHMC corporator Bannala Geetha and Bannala Praveen Mudiraj attended the celebrations as chief guests and participated in the festivities. The organisers and Banjara elders accorded them a warm welcome."The celebrations began at the residence of Rajanna Naik in North Kalyanpuri, with around 300 Banjara families participating along with their family members. The area came alive with traditional musical instruments, folk songs, dances and cultural activities. Banjara women dressed in traditional attire performed dances highlighting the significance of the Teej festival, while youth and children also participated enthusiastically."Later, a grand procession was taken out as part of the Teej celebrations. The procession began in North Kalyanpuri and passed through Balaji Enclave before reaching Bank Colony. Accompanied by traditional music, Banjara dances, songs and cultural performances, the procession created a festive atmosphere throughout the locality."After the procession reached the Bank Colony Park, the Teej immersion ceremony was performed according to Banjara traditions, marking the conclusion of the celebrations."Speaking on the occasion, Banjara community elders stressed the importance of preserving and passing on the community's culture, traditions and customs to future generations. They said the Teej festival symbolises unity, family bonds and the rich traditions of the Banjara community.Gor Banjara community members including Sriram, Nagender, Badru, Motilal, Badru Naik, Raghu, Vijay, Raju Naik and Nehru Naik, along with members of around 300 Banjara families, participated in the celebrations and made the Teej festival a grand success.

'Baithak' Live Music Evening on August 29

"Hyderabad, August 28 (Indian Chronicle) : Inorbit Mall Cyberabad is organising a series of cultural, musical and entertainment events to offer visitors experiences beyond conventional shopping, the company said in a statement released in the city on Friday. The mall has curated several special programmes during August, with a focus on music, regional culture, entertainment and social engagement, the statement said. As part of the initiative, 'Baithak-Live Music Evening' will be held on August 29. The intimate musical evening is designed to provide visitors with an opportunity to take a break from their daily routines and enjoy soulful music in a relaxed atmosphere. Inspired by traditional Baithak gatherings, the event aims to foster a closer connection between artists and audiences. With music at the heart of the evening, the programme is intended to offer visitors a distinctive and immersive experience. Through such initiatives, Inorbit Mall Cyberabad is positioning itself



not merely as a destination for shopping and dining, but also as a platform for culture, music, entertainment and social interaction, the company said. The mall stated that it would continue to organise diverse programmes aimed at creating enjoyable and memorable experiences for visitors.

Former Boduppall Deputy Mayor Kotha Sravanthi Kishore Goud Ties Rakhi to CM Revanth Reddy



--Former Deputy Mayor of Boduppall receives blessings from the Chief Minister""BODUPPAL, AUGUST 28 (INDIAN CHRONICLE): On the occasion of Rakhi Pournami, former Boduppall Deputy Mayor Kotha Sravanthi Kishore Goud tied a rakhi to Telangana Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy and conveyed her greetings. She later sought and received the Chief Minister's blessings."Speaking on the occasion, Kotha Sravanthi Kishore Goud said that Chief Minister Revanth Reddy has been taking special initiatives for the welfare and empowerment of women. She highlighted various welfare measures, including free bus travel for women and Kalyana Lakshmi, as well as the initiative to distribute free sewing machines to women belonging to the BC communities."She expressed confidence that the Chief Minister would continue to give greater priority to women and introduce more welfare schemes in the future, while encouraging and empowering women to excel in all fields.

Atram Sugunakka Ties Rakhi to CM Revanth Reddy“

"Kumrambheem, Asifabad,District.Reporter "Indian Chronicle" August.29.""Hyderabad, August 28: On the occasion of Raksha Bandhan, Women's Congress State In-charge and Kumuram Bheem Asifabad DCC President Atram Sugunakka celebrated the festival symbolizing the bond of love and affection between brothers and sisters.On Friday morning, Atram Sugunakka visited the residence of Telangana Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy at Jubilee Hills in Hyderabad and tied a Rakhi on his wrist, extending her warm Raksha Bandhan greetings."Speaking on the occasion, Sugunakka said that Raksha Bandhan represents love, affection, brotherhood and mutual protection. She said that it has been a tradition to tie a Rakhi to those who are considered brothers, even when they are not biological brothers. She wished that the festival would further strengthen bonds of affection and brotherhood among people.Later, Sugunakka visited the residence of Telangana Minister Seethakka and participated in the Raksha Bandhan celebrations with her. Both leaders exchanged Rakhis and conveyed warm greetings to each other on the occasion.Sugunakka also tied Rakhis to Chief Minister's Advisor and Rajya Sabha MP Vem Narender Reddy and former MP Madhu Yashki Goud, extending her Raksha Bandhan wishes.Sugunakka expressed her hope that the festival would strengthen love, affection, mutual respect and brotherhood among people and promote unity and harmony in society.



Kangana faces criticism over Kriti's Rakhi ad

Mumbai: It is now Kangana Ranaut's turn to be targeted for her choice of clothes. Days after the BJP MP took potshots at fellow actor Kriti Sanon for her outfit in a Rakhi ad, social media has exploded with users pulling out pictures from past public appearances to call out the "Queen" star's "hypocrisy".The jewellery brand took down Sanon's ad, showing her in a bralette-skirt combo with a cape, following the controversy sparked by Ranaut's comment describing the look as "intentionally creepy".The remark from the actor-politician, known for making provocative remarks on a range of issues, attracted a counter barrage of criticism. Some netizens dug out Ranaut's various looks through the years — one dressed in a strapless gown for the National Award ceremony, another showing her in a similar outfit for a diamond jewellery brand's Rakhi ad and a lehnga-choli during Diwali.The internet never forgets, said a social media user, tagging a collage of her photographs.

"Before moral policing other women's clothing remember that you have much more history out there in Google you're just looking for BJP's validation at this point," said one post."Kangana should be the last person to criticise someone for their dress," lashed out another, remarking that the actor had herself worn many revealing clothes through her career."Kangana Ranaut wearing revealing clothes during Diwali and covered clothes during Eid," shared another social media user to criticise Kangana's latest comments on a news channel where she again took off on Sanon for her "buddha soch".Some of the posts were critical, describing her as hypocritical, and some were personal and downright abusive. The debate began earlier this week when Ranaut wrote in her Instagram Stories, from all the options that are available to us today why would you tie your brother a Rakhi in your bikini/ undergarments? Where are all your styling options? Ha ha the advert looks intentionally creepy."

"Rulers... do not turn the people into dependents with freebie schemes..

. instead, assist the farmers who toil year-round and expand job and employment opportunities," stated Chiduruppa Suvarna Reddy, former President of the undivided Nalgonda District Congress Party and a dedicated social worker.""Today's Telangana state is the fruit of the sacrifices made by so many noble souls... yet, they have burdened 'Bangaru Telangana' (Golden Telangana) with debt. The students made the sacrifices... while one party reaps the benefits and another enjoys the luxuries—such is the state of Telangana today," remarked Chiduruppa Suvarna Reddy.""(Yadadri Bhuvanagiri District Bureau – Indian Chronicle – August 28): Chiduruppa Suvarna Reddy, former President of the undivided Nalgonda District Congress Party and a social worker, stated that for the people of a democracy to prosper, the ruling establishment bears the responsibility of ensuring fundamental rights for every individual. She emphasized that if the government provides essential amenities such as education, healthcare, food, and housing, it would significantly drive the development of both the nation and the state. Speaking on Friday at her residence in Bhuvanagiri town with Mandava Srisailem of the Indian Chronicle (Yadadri Bhuvanagiri District Bureau), she extended her Rakhi festival greetings to the people of Telangana state, as well as to the residents of the undivided Nalgonda and Yadadri Bhuvanagiri districts. Speaking further, she remarked that the "Golden Telangana"—achieved after sixty years of struggle—is being driven to ruin by the current rulers. She noted that today's Telangana state is the result of the sacrifices made by many noble souls, particularly thousands of students; yet, the situation reflects the adage: "One makes the sacrifice, another reaps the benefit, and a third enjoys the spoils." She highlighted how, lacking job and employment opportunities, the youth are going astray—falling prey to marijuana, narcotics, and alcohol abuse—and urged the government to finally create employment by facilitating the establishment of private companies. She criticized past and present administrations for

seizing and encroaching upon government lands for selfish political gain and amassing crores of rupees, questioning the whereabouts of official oversight. She expressed anguish, asking, "Is this what 'Golden Telangana' means?" She observed that politicians, who ascended to power on the strength of public votes by making extravagant promises, are now turning people into dependents through freebie schemes. She pointed out that the RTC is already mired in debt worth crores, and that schemes such as free bus travel for women, free electricity, and free ration rice are further fostering a culture of dependency among the public.On this occasion, she demanded that the government completely abolish free schemes for the betterment of the state. She said that free ration rice should be given to the poor people, and monthly pensions should be provided to the elderly, widows, disabled and eligible people. She asked whether Indiramma houses are being provided to the real poor, and that politicians in the respective villages are benefiting from Indiramma houses and doing injustice to the poor. She asked how reasonable it is to establish ration cards, old age pensions and Rythu Bandhu scheme for those who have hundreds of acres of land. She said that the breadwinners who have been working hard for six years.. the children of farmers.. the ruling governments have given them so much that it is not enough.. She said that Rythu Bandhu should be provided to farmers who have less than five acres of land, and they should be provided with subsidized seeds, subsidized medicines and fertilizers. In any case, today's ruling governments should provide facilities like education, medicine, and housing to the poor, and increase job and employment opportunities in the government and private sectors for the unemployed so that the youth does not go astray. Governments should completely abolish free schemes. For higher education.. the education of poor children who are studying, they should contact me directly, and I will always provide any help I can, said Chiduruppa Suvarna Reddy, former district president of the joint Nalgonda district Congress Party and volunteer..

Retired forest officers back staff, seek fair probe

In the wake of the shooting deaths of three suspected poachers in the Hanur region of the Cauvery Wildlife Sanctuary in Karnataka on August 15, the State Retired Forest Officers Association has written to Chief Minister D K Shivakumar to prevent portrayal of forest officers as 'criminals' when they act in the line of duty."The government should take a clear stance to prevent forest personnel from being portrayed as criminals until the investigation is complete," D A Venkatesh, President of the Association, said on Friday following a show of support for forest staff at the Freedom Park in Bengaluru.

An impartial probe of the incident should be held "to determine whether the staff's actions were in good faith, in the performance of their lawful duties, for the protection of the state forest and wildlife Sanctuary," the Association has said in its letter.Three persons – Anthony Swamy, 50, John Rose Peter, 43, and Sebastian David Kumar, 35, residents of three villages on the fringes of the Hanur forest – were allegedly shot dead in the wee hours of August 15 by forest officials after identifying them as poachers.A fourth suspect, Joseph Mahima Das alias Benjamin, 45, from another village, who was among the group of alleged poachers, managed to escape from the encounter site.The police complaint says the four men were sleeping in the forest – after venturing "to find lost cattle" – when the forest staff chanced on them and opened fire indiscriminately. A probe by the CID unit of the Karnataka Police has been ordered in the case by the state.The Hanur forest of the Cauvery Wildlife Sanctuary in the Chamarajanagar district is a very remote area with hills and dense forests bordering Tamil Nadu, and "patrolling such areas day and night, preventing wildlife crime, detecting poachers, confronting people with illegal weapons, and preventing illegal activities are extremely challenging and dangerous duties for frontline forest personnel," the Association has stated in its letter to the CM.

"There is pitch darkness at night, and nothing can be seen near lakes and rocks. The incident that occurred on August 15 happened in such circumstances. The suspects fired, and forest staff retaliated. There was no malicious intent. There has been no incident in the history of the forest department where people were killed in cold blood," Venkatesh said.Forest rangers risk their lives on many occasions, and the state must "stand behind them" since the criminalisation of forest staff "will have an impact on wildlife conservation," he added."In the future, officers/staff will hesitate to perform their work effectively which will have a negative impact on the government," the Association has stated in its letter while calling for modern safety devices like body cameras, better weapons, bullet-proof jackets, helmets, night-vision Goggles, GPS systems, drones, modern wireless sets and medical kits.On August 25, the Karnataka Police ordered a CID probe into the August 15 shooting of the three alleged poachers.

The order for the CID probe into the Hanur forest firing deaths was issued after post-mortem reports contradicted forest department claims on the distance of firing.According to the post-mortem report from the Mysore Medical College and Research Institute, Sebastian David Kumar had two shotgun bullet entry wounds on his body, unlike the



others who had single bullet wounds. A shot fired to the left side of his chest reveals "burning/scorching" and "singeing" of chest hair, which is indicative of a very close-range gunshot.A second gunshot wound on Sebastian David Kumar is on the right thigh, with "burning/scorching present and charring, singeing, and soot deposition found within and around the wound margins," says the post-mortem report.While John Rose Peter has a single fatal shotgun wound on his neck above his collarbone, Anthony Swamy has a fatal wound on the right side of his lower rib cage from close range, as per the forensic report.On August 17, Karnataka Forest Minister Ramalinga Reddy said that "at the time of the incident, the hunters were at a higher point than the department staff at the Karadikalu rocks. Since the hunters were not visible to the department staff, they were shot in the upper part of the waist when the staff retaliated. The staff did not act with any malicious intent."The forest department has stated that the firing incident was the culmination of a night-long search to find poachers based on "actionable intelligence" of poachers entering the forest from nearby villages at around 8 pm on August 14."We were conducting searches and when we chanced upon the persons who had come with the intent of poaching, both groups became alert. They fired, and we fired," Hanur Assistant Conservator of Forests (ACF) Mariyawamy said.

"A warning was issued but they did not heed. The suspects fired but it was a misfire and there was a flash. At this time our people have fired immediately, if they had not fired our staff would be victims," the ACF claimed.The forest authorities have claimed that they found 34 kg of deer meat allegedly poached by the four men at a small distance from where they were shot.

Dr Malathi Priya, Chief Conservator of Forests for the Chamarajanagar district, has also stated that the four men were poachers and that forest staff opened fire in self-defence after the alleged poachers opened fire."According to expert opinion, this does not appear to be a case in which shots were fired from a long range. There is a possibility that the firing took place from a close range. We have information that the doctors who conducted the post-mortem have also mentioned this aspect in their report," BJP leader B Y Vijayendra said.Forest officials in Karnataka have protection against prosecution in forest firing cases under a September 20, 1991, order which "grants immunity to forest personnel whenever they open fire to protect Government property and life".

Evicted Delhi slum-dwellers seek Rahul Gandhi's help for a 'dignified rehabilitation'

Three days after the Delhi High Court paved the way for evicting people living in three slum clusters near the Prime Minister's residence at Lok Kalyan Marg, a group of women residents of these slums asked Leader of Opposition Rahul Gandhi to intervene to ensure their "dignified rehabilitation".In a representation submitted to the Congress party's office on Friday (August 28), the slum-dwellers said, "We are not opposed to development or any government initiative. We only want our families to be rehabilitated in a place where we can continue our jobs, our children's education, and live our normal lives with dignity."Around half a dozen women, accompanied by their children, arrived at the Congress office at 24 Akbar Road on Friday morning hoping to meet Rahul. They were unable to meet him, but they said they would keep trying.Large crosses painted on dwellings at Bhairam Camp slum cluster near the Prime Minister's official residence on August 26, 2026. Cross marks are seen on the walls of houses at the Bhairam Camp slum cluster near the Prime Minister's official residence, in New Delhi.

"We were told an appointment was needed to meet him. We have requested an appointment, but we have not had a response yet. We will be here again tomorrow," a

woman who gave her name as Firdos said.The government initiated action last October to evict residents from three slum clusters – B R Camp, DID Camp and Masjid Camp – in the neighbourhood of the Prime Minister's residence, pointing to their location "adjoining military installations", and the need to strengthen defence infrastructure.In court, the government emphasized that "in the current global security situation, which involves increased threats and the risk of conflict or war-like conditions, the presence of unauthorized structures in this sensitive area creates serious risks to national security, public safety, and the protection of vital installations".Many residents of the camps have, however, resisted moving to their allotted accommodation in Savda Ghevra in remote Outer Delhi, almost 45 km from where they have lived for the past 70-odd years. While about 400 families have agreed to move, almost 300 families continue to protest.On August 25, the Delhi High Court ruled that the government's eviction order was not illegal. It constituted a committee headed by a retired district court judge and comprising senior government officials to monitor the rehabilitation of the slum-dwellers, who had complained of the absence of basic amenities in their new area,

145 million Indian children face extra month of heat stress due to climate change: Study



GNS News Agency, August 28

New Delhi: In India, 61 per cent of children, or 145 million, are exposed to at least one additional month of heat stress due to climate change every year, new global research has estimated. Findings published in the journal *Science Advances* show that climate change has doubled the number of children aged up to nine exposed to at least five total months of dangerous heat stress per year — from 59 million to 118 million (50 per cent of children).

An international team of researchers, led by those at Vrije Universiteit Brussel in Belgium, said the study is the first-ever analysis quantifying how heat exposure directly linked to climate change affects different age groups globally, both now and in the near future. Excess heat disrupts the human body's normal functioning, aggravates underlying diseases, and can lead to serious complications such as heatstroke, dehydration, and organ failure. The study focuses on humid heat, which is more dangerous than dry heat because it impedes the body's ability to sweat to cool back down, leading to dangerous levels of heat

stress. Globally, up to 560 million children aged 0-9 — 43 per cent of all children in this age group — are living through at least one additional month of heat stress per year due to human-induced climate change, the analysis found.

The exposure outpaces that for any other age group and is nearly triple the 190 million people (30 per cent) aged 60-69 experiencing the additional health threat, the researchers said. They added climate change is increasing humid heat the most in tropical regions and poorer countries, where populations are younger, and more children are therefore affected. South Asia, Southeast Asia, and West Africa are the regions with the highest number of children exposed to dangerous heat stress today, the team said. "Climate change is already causing hundreds of millions of children to suffer from dangerous heat worldwide, posing severe risks to their health. Children in developing countries face (a) disproportionate exposure to climate extremes now and into the future, despite contributing the least to historical greenhouse gas emissions," lead author Rosa Pietriousti, a PhD researcher at Vrije Universiteit Brussel, said. "At the same time, poverty, inadequate housing, limited access to cooling, and overstretched health care systems leave many children with few ways to protect themselves from the heat," Pietriousti said. The number of children affected by an additional month of dangerous heat is expected to increase to 620 million (49 per cent of all children) and 650 million (59 per cent) children under projected climate change scenarios of 1.5 degrees Celsius and 2 degrees Celsius of global warming, respectively. In India, 166 million children (74 per cent) are projected to experience at least one additional month of heat stress per year under a global warming of 1.5 degrees Celsius. The figure could be 169 million children (96 per cent) under a global warming of 2 degrees Celsius.

Surrendered Maoist women celebrate Raksha Bandhan with police

GNS News Agency, August 28

Narayanpur: Affection and trust overflowed at the District Reserve Guard (DRG) campus, where Raksha Sutas were adorned on the wrists of the Superintendent of Police, Additional Superintendents of Police, and other officers. Once known for the dreaded Naxals, this area of Chhattisgarh witnessed the holy festival of Raksha Bandhan, conveying a message of peace, trust, and a changing Bastar. Raksha Bandhan, the sacred festival of love, trust, and a pledge of security between brothers and sisters, was celebrated with great joy and enthusiasm in an intimate and emotional atmosphere at the Narayanpur Police DRG campus.



On this special occasion, surrendered female Maoists, who have renounced the path of violence and Naxalism to join the mainstream of society, tied Rakhis on the wrists of DRG soldiers, giving a new and emotional dimension to the sacred bond of brother and sister. This sacred bond of Rakhi not only adorned the wrists of the soldiers but also strengthened the bond of trust, security, and belonging, presenting a new picture of a changing Bastar. These sisters, who once lived under the shadow of guns and violence, today celebrated a festival of love, respect, and trust with the police family.

During the programme, the surrendered female Naxalites also expressed their love and trust by tying Rakhis on the wrists of Superintendent of Police Sandeep Kumar Patel, Additional Superintendents of Police Akshay Sabdra, Ajay Kumar, and Aishwarya Chandrakar, Deputy Superintendents of Police Ajay Singh, Avinash Kanwar, Manoj

Suvendu Adhikari targets 'Azadi' slogans, 'Red Salute Kishanji' graffiti



Kolkata: West Bengal Chief Minister Suvendu Adhikari on Friday targeted those raising 'Azadi' slogans and questioned the graffiti of 'Red Salute Kishanji' to hail a Maoist leader, who was killed in police firing in the state in 2011, on the walls of Jadavpur University. Law Enforcement Addressing a Raksha Bandhan programme at his Bhabanipur assembly constituency in south Kolkata, Adhikari linked the festival with patriotism and nationalism and invoked Bengal's contribution to the freedom struggle.

He also launched a sharp attack on those he accused of conspiring to divide the country from within, saying such elements must be "cleaned out like household garbage". "Raksha Bandhan has religious significance and celebrates the bond between brothers and sisters, but patriotism has also become intertwined with this festival," he said in his address. Adhikari said the armed forces would deal with India's external enemies, but people within the country were working against its interests. Geographic Reference "Those who are enemies outside the country have already been shown our strength and will be shown it in future as well. But we must also take a pledge to clean like household garbage those who, from within the country, attack patriotism, nationalism, Vande Mataram and Jana Gana Mana," he said.

Adhikari said slogans demanding "azadi" were painful for him and stressed the sacrifices made during India's freedom struggle. "When I see Azadi slogans on the streets of Kolkata, it pains me. What is this Azadi for? We must remember the sacrifices of our freedom fighters, Netaji's struggle and Matangini Hazra's sacrifice. India became in-

dependent in 1947," he said. Adhikari specifically referred to Jadavpur University, questioning why slogans relating to Kashmir were being raised there and on the streets of Kolkata. He also questioned the graffiti of "Red Salute Kishanji" on the walls of the university's arts department.

"Jadavpur University is a centre of excellence. We have had so many wars and so much conflict with Pakistan over Kashmir. Why will you write 'Kashmir wants Azadi' on the streets of Kolkata? This is painful," Adhikari said, referring to last week's student unrest at the varsity. "It pains me when 'Red Salute Kishanji' is written on the walls of Jadavpur. What are you teaching the new generation? Who is this Kishanji? One who demanded the country's partition; who did not accept the Constitution," Adhikari said. Koteswar Rao, better known as Kishanji, was a senior Maoist leader who died in a gun battle with the police in November 2011, months after the Mamata Banerjee-led Trinamool Congress came to power in West Bengal. Law Enforcement At a programme on Thursday, Adhikari had said, "Say Inquilab Zindabad, but if you say Azaadi, you will face a case. If you say 'Kashmir maange Azaadi', we will face arrest." Adhikari also questioned why the opposition has been objecting to the full version of 'Vande Mataram'. He said, "Vande Mataram was not written by any political leader. Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay wrote it. What is the objection to it?" The chief minister also invoked Bengal's spiritual and cultural heritage, referring to Sri Chaitanya, Ramakrishna Paramahansa and Rani Rashmoni. The state government was trying to restore the culture that Bengal had lost, he said. Adhikari urged the younger generation to shoulder responsibilities towards their families while also contributing to strengthening the country. "Israel requires everyone to undergo basic military training. India is a liberal country. I hope it will remain liberal," he said. Geographic Reference Adhikari also announced that efforts were being made to introduce NCC in all schools and colleges in West Bengal. He said he had discussed the issue with Defence Minister Rajnath Singh and would write to him seeking the introduction of NCC across educational institutions. Adhikari said NCC had earlier been discontinued in the state in favour of the 'Jai Hind Bahini' during the TMC regime and asserted that there is no substitute for NCC.

The chief minister also said that 'Bratachari' would be brought back to Bengal. The Bratachari movement was introduced in 1932 by civil servant Gurusaday Dutt in Bengal. It used folk dances, songs, and physical training to build national pride, fitness, and unity among all people. Adhikari began his Raksha Bandhan programmes from his residence on Friday morning, where women police personnel, including Bidhannagar Police Commissionerate's DC New Town Aishwarya Sagar and Baguiati police station inspector-in-charge Sanjay Ghosh, tied rakhis on his wrist. Later, Adhikari joined a procession and took part in a 'kirtan' on a road in front of TMC party supremo and former Bengal chief minister Mamata Banerjee's residence. Senior party leaders and others accompanied him.

Delhi Police celebrates Raksha Bandhan with girl students under 'Raksha Ka Vachan'

New Delhi: The New Delhi District Police organised a special community outreach programme under its 'Raksha Ka Vachan' campaign at government schools across the district on the occasion of Raksha Bandhan, officials said on Friday. The initiative, held on August 27, aimed to strengthen the bond of trust between police personnel and girl students while reaffirming the Delhi Police's commitment to their safety, security, dignity and well-being. Senior police officers, including DCP Sachin Sharma, Additional DCP Anand Kumar Mishra and Additional DCP Jagdev Singh, participated in the programme and interacted with students at various schools.

The officers conveyed the message that the Delhi Police remains committed to creating a safe and secure environment for women and girls and is accessible to them whenever they require assistance or support. As part of the district-wide initiative, ACPs, SHOs and other police personnel visited government schools in their respective jurisdictions and held interactions with girl students. The students were encouraged to approach the police without hesitation if they faced any safety-related concerns or needed assistance. During the programme, girl students tied rakhis to police officers and personnel, symbolising a bond of trust, protection, respect and mutual responsibility.

The police personnel, in turn, reaffirmed their commitment to standing by the students and ensuring their safety and security. The interactions provided students with an opportunity to engage with police personnel in a friendly and approachable environment. Officers also sensitised the girls about personal safety and encouraged them to remain confident, vigilant and aware of the support mechanisms available through the Delhi Police. To make the occasion memo-



orable, sweets were distributed among the students, while gifts were presented as tokens of affection and goodwill. The celebrations created a warm and welcoming atmosphere and helped strengthen familiarity, confidence and communication between the students and police personnel.

The 'Raksha Ka Vachan' campaign reflects the community-oriented policing approach of the New Delhi District Police, under which sustained efforts are made to establish stronger connections with citizens, particularly children, women and other vulnerable sections of society. The initiative received an enthusiastic response from students and school authorities. Through the campaign, the Delhi Police sought to convey a message of assurance to girl students that they can approach police personnel whenever they need help or support. The initiative was organised under the leadership of DCP Sachin Sharma, New Delhi District, as part of the district police's efforts to promote safety, confidence and community engagement.

ED freezes \$5.41 million deposit in DHFL money-laundering probe



GNS News Agency, August 28

New Delhi: The Enforcement Directorate (ED) has frozen a bank deposit of \$5.41 million as proceeds of crime in connection with the ongoing money-laundering investigation arising out of the Rs 34,615 crore bank loan fraud committed by M/s Dewan Housing Finance Corporation Ltd (DHFL) and its promoters, according to an official statement issued on Friday. The amount was frozen after a search operation against DHFL on Aug 19 under the provisions of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA), 2002. Investigation has revealed that a foreign property — Hurtmore House in the United Kingdom, held in the name of Vanita Wadhawan, wife of Kapil Wadhawan, was disposed of through a series of transactions involving the creation of a fictitious liability in her name. A purported loan agreement was executed between M/s Al Jalore Trading FZE and Vanita Wadhawan, and the UK property was mortgaged pursuant thereto.

Investigation has revealed that the arrangement was used to create an encumbrance over the foreign asset for the purpose of settling a liability in India arising out of the DHFL loan fraud.

The property was subsequently sold in 2026, and the sale consideration was directed to the bank account of M/s Al Jalore Trading FZE maintained in India, instead of being received by the registered owner, Vanita Wadhawan. The transaction, thus, involved dissipation of proceeds of crime, utilisation and disposal of a foreign asset in a manner intended to facilitate settlement of an Indian liability through a structured transaction involving foreign property and entities.

During the search proceedings, the bank account of M/s Al Jalore Trading FZE was examined, and an amount of approximately \$5.41 million (around Rs 51.75 crore) found in the account, representing proceeds of crime, was frozen under Section 17(1A) of the PMLA, 2002. Other incriminating documents and records relating to the transactions and

Telangana records 15 percent rainfall deficit since June

GNS News Agency, August 28 Hyderabad: Telangana is experiencing a pronounced dry spell during the peak of the Southwest Monsoon, with the state's cumulative rainfall from June 1 to August 28, 2026, dropping to 469.4 mm against the normal rainfall of 551.6 mm, which is a deficit of 15 percent. According to the latest weather data report from Telangana Development Planning Society (TGDPs), out of the 33 districts in the state, only Kamareddy has managed to register 20 percent 'Excess' rainfall, while 16 districts have remained in the 'Normal' category and another 16 districts have slipped into the 'Deficient' category, ranging from 20 percent to 59 percent.

Among the 16 districts that have received deficit rainfall, Hanumakonda has the lowest rainfall, with a 45 percent deficit, followed by Warangal (43 percent) and Jangaon (40 percent), the data said. In Greater Hyderabad and surrounding urban areas, cumulative rainfall has reached 353.9 mm against a normal of 443.7 mm, which is a 20 percent deficit.

The crucial month of August, which brings maximum rainfall during the season, has closed on a dry note, recording a 33 percent deficit for the month alone compared to its normal average. Daytime temperatures remain relatively high across several regions due to subdued cloud cover and sparse rainfall, with Nalgonda recording the state's highest maximum temperature at 37 degrees Celsius on Friday.

CM Vijay seeks to vacate HC order restraining bye-elections

Chennai: Tamil Nadu Chief Minister C Joseph Vijay on Friday approached the Madras High Court with a plea to vacate its interim order that restrained the EC from issuing any notification for bye-election in respect of five constituencies, where the returned candidates resigned. Vijay stated this in his counter-affidavit filed in response to the Public Interest Litigation filed by advocate K Venkatachalapathy. The constituencies included Tiruchirappalli (East) Assembly segment, one of the two seats from where Vijay won in the April 2026 elections and resigned later.

The First Bench comprising Chief Justice S A Dharmadhikari and Justice G Arul Murugan had on July 10 passed the interim order and directed Vijay, besides former AIADMK MLAs M R Vijayabaskar (Karur), C Vijayabaskar (Viralimalai), S. Jayakumar (Perundurai), and Esaki Subbaia from Ambasamudram to file their comprehensive counter-affidavits traversing all factual and legal assertions. They all had resigned as MLAs. In his counter affidavit, Vijay sought to dismiss with exemplary cost, the PIL, which sought to declare that the vacancies arising out of the resignations of various returned candidates in the Assembly polls do not constitute "clear vacancies" or available vacancies for the purpose of holding bye-elections under Section 151-A of the Representation of the People Act, 1951 (RPA).

Vijay submitted that the petitioner has no locus standi

to file the petition, since he was not qualified to file an election petition. He cannot wage a war placing reliance on the election petitions filed by strangers/third party to the petitioner. Even assuming without admitting that, if at all anyone may have the right to seek a relief postponing the bye election to the vacant constituencies, it will be the election petitioners due to the alleged possibility of two elected/returned candidates to one seat, if the election petitioner was successful in getting further relief. However, no application seems to have been filed by the election petitioner in respect of Tiruchirappalli (East) Assembly Constituency. Hence, the petitioner was waging a "proxy war" and it was liable to be dismissed in-limine, he added. Vijay submitted that the petitioner was in no way aggrieved, so also any of the electors of the said constituency, since no one has raised an issue in this regard. Hence there was no public interest involved in the petition. Therefore, the petitioner seems to have filed the petition with ulterior motives. The petitioner lacks bonafides, he added. The petitioner was only seeking to protect the interest of the election petitioners. But, the stoppage of bye election will deprive several lakhs of people in these constituencies from having democratically elected MLAs, to represent their interest, cause and grievance that too for an indefinite period of time. Hence, prima facie, the petition was against the larger public interest; it was liable to be dismissed in-limine, he contended.

‘Can’t fill the form... help us’: Race against time for BLOs in East Delhi where digitisation average is among the worst

EMS News Agency, August 7

With just 13.81% of forms digitised, East Delhi is among the worst performing districts in the Capital in terms of digitising the enumeration forms filled out by electors as the Election Commission holds the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) exercise in the city. Digitisation average across districts in Delhi is pegged at around 21%, according to the data provided by the Chief Electoral Office (CEO).From unnumbered houses, confusing addresses to an average elector’s inability to fill the form — booth level officers or BLOs in the East Delhi district say that they are facing a race against time to make sure no eligible electors are left out.The Election Commission of India earlier this week extended the deadline for the ongoing door-to-door visits to August 8, giving BLOs more time to distribute and collect enumeration forms in Delhi.

It’s a humid July afternoon. As Vivek Kumar, an English teacher and BLO of Mangal Bazaar’s Block F in East Delhi, enters the street where he is supposed to distribute enumeration forms, he seeks help from passersby to locate the addresses on his list.Delhi SIR Vivek Kumar, an English teacher, is working as a BLO of Mangal Bazaar’s Block F in East Delhi.As he enters one of the houses, he sifts through hundreds of enumeration forms in his backpack. He puts his register, in which he notes all necessary details, and other stuff on the floor.

Explaining the process to the residents, he gives a suggestion, “Please get the forms photocopied so that you can make mistakes.” Most enumeration forms he gets, he adds, are riddled with mistakes. To place the residents of the house, he scans the list — the woman in the house is on Page 18 of his list, while her son is on Page 31. Around 45 minutes have passed and they realise that the woman’s husband is assigned to another BLO.Eyes on the list, Vivek is explaining to another resident on a call on how to find his

father’s details on the Election Commission Information Network or ECINET app. Multitasking has become necessary during hectic routines. He packs his stuff and makes way to the next home. Annie Gomes, the next elector on the list, is not at her house, and the neighbours are not sure if she lives here or not. “We get a lot of such cases where the owner of the house has moved, but their vote is still registered here,” says Vivek.Around 10 km away is the Chilla Village near the Yamuna. A foul stench pervades the entire colony as open drains remain clogged with garbage. BLO Vinay Kumar is also facing a slew of challenges. As he knocks on the door of the house of 55-year old Brahm Chand to collect the form he had given a couple days back, the resident gives a confused look. “Humse nahi bhara jaave form, tu bharde humara. (We are not able to fill this... you please fill on our behalf).”

A tired Vinay sits inside the house and ends up spending more than 30 minutes as he fills the forms of the family of five. The 31-year old explains that most people in the village don’t have fixed addresses. “While villagers might know each other, so many people are tenants. Sometimes, 15 families are renting out different rooms in one house... it gets very confusing,” Vinay says, adding he has to fill out the forms of most people since they don’t know how to read or write. Next, he goes and sits at the verandah of the house — a lot of people come to clear doubts. “If I can’t place myself on electoral rolls, will I be sent to Bangladesh?” asks 60-year old Anisha Khatum, who has a voter ID, but is not able to find herself or any relative in the 2002 electoral list. A neighbour tells her not to worry. She can show her widow’s pension slip when she is sent a notice, she is told.An election official explains, “In areas like Chilla Village and Kotla Village, a lot of the electors are labourers who are uneducated and don’t understand the process. Also, many of them don’t have any proof of where their parents lived since they even moved around and lived on rent.”

Punjab police officer arrested in FBI-linked extortion case tied to gangster probe

GNS News Agency, August 28

police officer arrestAfter the police officer’s name surfaced in the international investigation, the Punjab Police had removed him from field duties. A departmental inquiry found prima facie evidence against the then SHO of Tanda police station.A former station house officer (SHO) of Punjab’s Tanda police station, who had publicly claimed to have cracked the murder of an AAP worker, was arrested late on Friday in connection with an extortion case linked to an international investigation by the US Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI).The action against the police officer, Gurinderjit Singh Nagra, follows revelations made during the FBI-led Operation Hard Ball — a joint investigation involving law enforcement agencies from the United States and Canada into the overseas operations of gangster networks allegedly linked to Lawrence Bishnoi and Jaggu Bhagwanpuria. Investigators also released a photograph purportedly showing him with alleged gang associates.

After Nagra’s name surfaced in the international investigation, the Punjab Police had removed him from field duties. A departmental inquiry found prima facie evidence against Nagra, the then SHO of Tanda police station.Just two months ago, the officer had claimed to have cracked the murder of an AAP worker and hardware trader — Balwinder Singh Satkartar, an AAP worker and hardware businessman — in Punjab’s Hoshiarpur district on January 15. Soon after the killing in Tanda, gangsters Jashan Gill and Gurlal Khokhar claimed responsibility for the murder through social media posts.US authorities alleged that an Indian police officer was involved in an attempt to extort \$400,000 from a family living in the United States by exploiting a murder investigation in Punjab. The officer was identified as Gurinderjit Singh Nagra.The allegations surfaced during coordinated raids conducted on July 10, when agencies in the US, Canada and Europe targeted transnational organised crime networks.Deputy Inspector

General (DIG) Navin Singla marked him to the police lines and assigned Superintendent of Police Vineet Ahlawat to conduct the probe. A case has been registered under extortion and provisions of the Prevention of Corruption Act.The allegations of extortion are rooted in the investigation into the murder of Satkartar, who was shot dead by three motorcycle-borne assailants in Miani village of Tanda on January 15, 2026. During the investigation, the police identified the alleged shooters and brought them on production warrants for questioning.

On May 24, then SHO Nagra addressed a press conference claiming the investigation had established that the murder was the result of a family dispute.He alleged that Charanjit Singh, a retired assistant sub-inspector settled in the United States and the father-in-law of the deceased’s daughter, had orchestrated the killing over a matrimonial dispute involving his daughter. The police claimed the shooters had been hired to execute the murder.However, US investigators have alleged that after Charanjit Singh and his family were named in the murder case, they were allegedly contacted by individuals linked to the Jaggu Bhagwanpuria network, who demanded \$400,000 in exchange for ensuring relief in the investigation and preventing further legal action.According to US authorities, members of the gangster network allegedly gathered information about the family in America, passed it on to their contacts in India and then attempted to use the murder case to extort money.US Attorney Bilal A “Bill” Essayli has alleged that some Indian police officers were also involved in the conspiracy and specifically named Nagra among those suspected of facilitating the extortion attempt.Naveen Singla, DIG, Jalandhar Range, confirmed his arrest in corruption and other charges.The Punjab Police have not yet disclosed whether additional arrests are likely in the case. They said the investigation is continuing to determine the extent of the alleged nexus between organised crime networks and those accused in the extortion case.

‘What major fault committed?’: Kumaraswamy slams suspension of teachers over RSS march



Union Minister H D Kumaraswamy Friday criticised the Karnataka School Education Department for suspending two government teachers for allegedly participating in Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) route marches.“What is the major fault they have committed by attending the RSS march?” Kumaraswamy asked. He questioned whether their participation had resulted in any damage, violence or disruption in Karnataka.

The suspension orders were issued by Yadgir Deputy Director of School Education Channabasappa Mudhol on August 20. The suspended teachers are Gururaj Joshi, an assistant teacher at Government Girls’ High School in Hunasagi, and Anna Saheb Deshmukh, head teacher at Government Lower Primary School in Kuppi village of Surpur taluk.According to the departmental orders, Joshi and Deshmukh participated in RSS Path Sanchalan events held in Talikote in neighbouring Vijayapura district and Hunasagi in Yadgir district on October 10 and 12, 2025, respectively.

The department said their participation violated Rules 3(1), 3(2), 3(3), 5 and 7 of the Karnataka Civil Services (Conduct) Rules, 2021. The orders cited the teachers’ conduct as “dereliction of duty” that warranted disciplinary action.Last year, Jummanna Gudimani, Yadgir district president of the Ambedkar Swabhimani Sene, had sought disciplinary action against the teachers and brought their alleged participation in the RSS events to the government’s notice.According to sources, the two teachers received show-cause notices in March 2026 following the complaint.

In their written explanations, the teachers maintained that they participated in the march outside school working hours and were not on duty at the time. However, sources said the department found their explanations unsatisfactory.

Harish Rao condemns alleged police excesses in Suryapet, other Telangana districts



Hyderabad: BRSLP deputy leader T Harish Rao condemned the alleged police excesses in Suryapet, along with a series of incidents in Mahabubabad and Nagarkurnool. He urged Telangana DGP CV Anand to inquire into the incidents and take immediate action against those responsible.In a statement, Harish Rao said police targeted a roadside shop vendor over social media posts against the police in Kodad, demolished his shop and also registered cases against him and other victims for staging protests against the demolition. He questioned Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy on whether his government was a police rule or a people’s regime in Telangana. He slammed the government for filing cases and arresting those questioning the government.

2 minor cousins’ underage pregnancies trigger Karnataka Pocso probe

EMS News Agency, August 7Two minors from the same family in Karnataka’s Hubballi-Dharwad district were found to be victims of separate instances of sexual assault, leading to underage pregnancies. The Hubballi-Dharwad police on Friday launched a comprehensive investigation into the cases.The investigation was launched after a 15-year-old girl conceived for the second time within a year of delivering her first child. This incident follows closely on the heels of a separate case last week involving her 14-year-old cousin, who delivered a baby at home under highly suspicious circumstances, the police said.

According to a complaint filed on Thursday by an officer with the Dharwad District Child Protection Unit, the 15-year-old girl was forcefully taken by the accused, Karim, to an abandoned area near a railway station, where she was allegedly sexually assaulted multiple times between July and August 2025.

Following the assault, the girl conceived and received medical treatment from a practitioner in a village, as well as at a private hospital, eventually delivering a baby. The Dharwad District Child Protection Unit has alleged that the girl’s parents subsequently gave the newborn away to an unknown party.In May 2026, the minor was allegedly subjected to sexual assault by the same accused, resulting in her second pregnancy within a year.Speaking to the media, District Child Protection Officer Prakash Kodliwad stated that after receiving information regarding the minor’s pregnancy, officials visited her home and school to verify her age, confirming she is under 18. While the family claims that the newborn was given away, authorities strongly suspect foul play. “We suspect that the child was sold or trafficked,” Kodliwad said.The police are also verifying the parents’ claim that the newborn is with a relative. “The parents

have claimed that the newborn was unwell and is currently with a relative in Karwar for treatment. We are verifying that claim as well,” a senior police officer said.The Dharwad District Child Protection Unit has demanded stringent action against those involved. Legal action has been demanded against both the village doctor and the medical staff at the private hospital for failing to report the sexual abuse of a minor to law enforcement.Consequently, the police have registered a case under the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (Pocso) Act, naming Karim, the survivor’s parents, the village doctor, and the doctors at the private hospital.The previous case

The current investigation unfolded under the shadow of a separate case reported last week in the locality. On July 8, the survivor’s 14-and-a-half-year-old cousin sister delivered a baby at her residence, the police said. She was later rushed to the Karnataka Medical College and Research Institute due to severe postpartum bleeding and trauma.Investigations into this case revealed she was allegedly abducted and confined to a room a year ago, where she was repeatedly sexually assaulted. Her parents allegedly hid the pregnancy.

The hospital later alerted the police, and a Pocso case was registered on July 11.Hubballi-Dharwad Police Commissioner N Shashikumar confirmed that both survivors are from the same family. “Currently, both are out of danger but are not in a position or willing to give any statements. We are allowing them time to recover.”Shashikumar added that notices have already been issued to the family members as police actively map out the timeline and systemic failures that allowed these crimes to occur. “A comprehensive investigation is underway as several aspects of the case remain unclear, he said.

Sirpur Paper Mills workers’ relay hunger strike enters 100th day

Kumram Bheem Asifabad: Workers from Sirpur Paper Mills (SPM) cooked food and dined to mark 100 days of their relay hunger strike in Kagaznagar on Thursday. A joint action committee of the workers launched the protest on May 19, demanding that the management of the factory conduct elections to identify a recognised labour union and make an agreement with it for their salary hike.

The workers said despite continuing the relay hunger strike for 100 days, there was no response from either the government or the management of SPM. They criticised the Bharatiya Mazdoor Singh (BMS), a member of the JAC so far, for splitting the committee and forming another forum with the support of the local MLA.They termed the act of the BMS as a betrayal. They alleged that some people were trying to make a wage agreement on the pretext that the matter of elections was within the jurisdiction of the court. They wanted the legislator and MLC to exert pressure on the government to hold the elections immediately if they really wanted the welfare of the workers.The workers said that it was the responsibility of the MLA and MLC to explain to the workers how it was justified to make excuses for



postponing the elections. They questioned how the BMS, which had not been able to make the wage agreement even after winning twice in the past, could now make the agreement without power.JAC convener Gogarla Ramulu, co-convener Sheelam Mogili, members Ambala Odelu, Kushana Rajanna, Munjam Srinivas, Mogili Venkatesh and many others were present.

Join new scheme today or face the axe: Punjab to 2,000 rural employment staff

GNS News Agency, August 28

Escalating its stance against the ongoing strike by over 2,000 contractual employees engaged under the now-defunct Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS), the Punjab government has warned that those who refuse to join duty under the newly launched Viksit Bharat-Guaranteee-Rozgar Aajeevika Mission-Gramin (VB-G-RAM-G) by July 18, Saturday, will have their contracts terminated.

The Viksit Bharat-Guaranteee-Rozgar Aajeevika Mission-Gramin (VB-G-RAM-G) came into force on July 1, bringing down the curtains on the two-decade-old MGNREGS. Consequently, contractual employees working under MGNREGS are required to execute fresh contracts before being deployed under the new project.The employees’ union, however, has decided not to join duty on Saturday and instead stage another protest outside the house of Rural Development and Panchayats (RDP) Minister Tarunpreet Singh Sond at Khanna on Monday.

The Additional Project Commissioner, Department of Rural Development and Panchayats, on Friday directed all deputy commissioners-cum-chief district programme co-ordinators and additional deputy commissioners to terminate the contracts of employees who fail to sign fresh agreements under the VB-G-RAM-G project. The department has also circulated a draft termination order along with a sample contract to be executed with employees joining the new scheme.The order, issued with reference to an earlier communication dated July 10, said that district authorities had failed to act despite clear directions to initiate action against employees whose non-joining or non-performance was adversely affecting implementation of the new scheme. It said no district had taken the required action so far.Under VB-G-RAM-G, every job card holder will now get 125 days of employment per annum, instead of 100 days.The order also reiterated instructions issued on July 10 that employees under the State Rural Livelihood Mission (SRLM) should be assigned additional responsibilities under the VB-G-RAM-G project. These include generating muster rolls, monitoring development works and carrying out other project-related duties. It added that separate instructions regarding payment for the additional work would be issued, while technical duties would be assigned to junior engineers of the panchayati raj department.Over 2,000 MGNREGS contractual employees have been protesting since June 1 over non-payment of wages for more than five months and demanding regularisation of their services in the Rural Development and Panchayats Department. The employees were earlier responsible for logistics operations, field management and implementation of MGNREGS and are now proposed to be deployed under the VB-G-RAM-G project.Reacting to the government’s warning, the MGNREGA Workers Union Punjab accused the state government of threatening employees instead of addressing their long-pending demands.“We have not received salaries for more than five months, and our demand for regularisation has also remained pending. On July 15, our members were lathi-charged while marching towards the residence of Minister Tarunpreet Singh Sond. Several protesters were injured, and one worker suffered a fractured leg. Now, instead of resolving our issues, the government is threatening to terminate us,” said union patron Varinder Singh.

Varinder Singh said the union would hold a massive protest along with workers’ families outside Minister Sond’s residence in Khanna on July 20.“On one hand, the government claims to be creating employment opportunities, while on the other it is threatening to terminate contractual employees who have been working for nearly 18 years on meagre salaries,” Varinder Singh alleged.Gursewak Singh, union president, said, “On July 15, the minister had met us at Khanna and assured us that our file for the regularisation process will be sent to the government, after following the due process. In addition to this, they agreed to give us wages as per a pay scale rather than a lump sum. On July 17, the department issued a warning letter. So the minister is playing a dual game. We all have decided not to join duties and stage another dharna outside the minister’s house on Monday.”The ongoing strike has also affected employment generation under the newly launched VB-G-RAM-G scheme. According to officials, around 26 lakh registered workers have been shifted from MGNREGA to the new programme, but employment generation has been severely impacted due to the continuing boycott of work by contractual staff responsible for implementing the scheme.

‘Tied to a tree, set on fire’: Punjabi influencer dies weeks after assault

Punjabi influencer Manjit Kaur deathThe Chandigarh Police are scanning CCTV footage from Sector 34 to Morinda to establish the sequence of events that led to Manjit Kaur’s death.Punjabi social media influencer Manjit Kaur, who was allegedly kidnapped, assaulted, and set on fire last month, died at a Chandigarh hospital on August 26. Her family accused two acquaintances of kidnapping her and the police of failing to record her statement in time.The police said Kaur’s mother, Kanta Devi, told them that on July 3, two acquaintances, Shubhi and Pinda, allegedly called her daughter near a liquor shop in Chandigarh’s Sector 34. The two took her in a car to Morinda in Punjab, where she was assaulted, tied to a mulberry tree, and set on fire, Devi further alleged.According to Devi, Kaur’s friend reached the spot, found her engulfed in flames, and used a blanket to douse them, before rushing her to a hospital in Morinda.Kaur was subsequently shifted to Max Hospital in Mohali and later referred to PGIMER, Chandigarh, on July 9. After nearly a month of treatment, she regained consciousness on August 5.Devi alleged that Kaur wanted to give a statement to police, but even after the Kharar Sadar police in Sahibzada Ajit Singh Nagar (Mohali) district were informed, they did not arrive at the hospital. She also accused Assistant Sub-Inspector Lakhwinder Singh, the investigating officer, of failing to reach PGIMER on time.Kaur’s family alleged that if her statement had been recorded, it could have provided crucial leads. A daily diary record was reportedly entered at the PGI police post in connection with the matter.Ishan Singla, Deputy Superintendent of Police, Kharar, denied the allegations, saying the police had fully cooperated with the family. “Since the place of occurrence falls under Chandigarh jurisdiction, the action was to be taken by Chandigarh Police. Kharar police provided full assistance to the victim’s mother, took her to the concerned police station, and facilitated the registration of the FIR [First Information Report] in Chandigarh.”

Bengaluru woman cop hit on head with iron rod over refusal to file complaint



GNS News Agency, August 28

A 28-year-old woman police constable was allegedly attacked by a man with an iron rod inside the Bengaluru city railway police station in the early hours of Wednesday. The railway police have taken the accused, identified as Gajendra, into custody. The incident occurred around 5 am when constable Shilpa was alone at the station. According to the preliminary investigation, Gajendra approached the station seeking to lodge a complaint about his stolen phone. Shilpa allegedly told him that other personnel were not

present and asked him to return later in the day. However, he allegedly left the station and returned shortly afterwards. He allegedly entered the station and attacked Shilpa, who was inside the premises, with an iron rod attached to a barricade wheel.

In her statement, Shilpa said the accused allegedly threatened to kill her and questioned her for not taking his complaint. She told the police he struck her on the head six to seven times before leaving the weapon behind and fleeing the station. Shilpa was rushed to a nearby hospital, where she is undergoing treatment. Her family said she had serious injuries and required 23 stitches. Meanwhile, Shilpa's brother Krishna Nayak alleged lapses in personnel deployment at the station. He claimed Shilpa was two months pregnant and had repeatedly requested day shifts, but was allegedly deployed for night sentry duty. Nayak alleged that Sub Inspector Nataraj and Circle Inspector Kantaraj were responsible for the duty arrangements. He also alleged that some personnel were favoured with day shifts and that staff were subjected to mental harassment. The allegations against the police officers have not been independently established. The railway police are investigating the circumstances surrounding the attack, including the accused's motive and the station's duty arrangements.

‘I’ll make you clean my shoes’: Noida woman hurls caste abuse at society guards

GNS News Agency, August 28

Throughout the confrontation, the woman allegedly continued to hurl abuses and casteist slurs at the guards, repeatedly threatening them and challenging them to call senior police officials. (Image generated using AI) Throughout the confrontation, the woman allegedly continued to hurl abuses and casteist slurs at the guards, repeatedly threatening them and challenging them to call senior police officials. (Credits: X/ Image enhanced using AI)

An almost-5-minute-long video purportedly showing a woman abusing security guards at a residential society has gone viral on social media. The video also appears to show the woman allegedly attempting to physically attack one of the guards. The purported incident is from Greater Noida West, under the Bisrakh police station area, and took place on Wednesday (August 26), police said.



purportedly saying. (“You have no standing in front of me.”) She is also heard allegedly saying that she would make the guard clean her shoes and threatening to hit him with her slippers.

At one point, as 6-7 security personnel clustered around the society's gate, the woman allegedly moves towards one of them and attempts to physically attack him. She also allegedly raised her leg and appeared to be attempting to kick a security guard who was sitting on a chair. Throughout the confrontation, the woman allegedly continued to hurl abuses and casteist slurs at the guards, repeatedly threatening them and challenging them to call senior police officials. The video has since been widely shared online, triggering outrage and calls for action. So far, no formal complaint or FIR has been registered in connection with the alleged casteist remarks, threats and purported assault.

West Bengal opens control room; Tollywood actor among those stranded



GNS News Agency, August 28

Nepal flood The West Bengal Government has set up a 24x7 emergency control room to track people missing from the state in the Nepal flash floods (left) and coordinate assistance. (Representational image) Amid reports of more than 300 Indian visitors missing and many others stranded in Nepal following flash floods and landslides, the West Bengal Government has set up a 24x7 emergency control room to track people missing from the state and coordinate assistance. While Chief Minister Suwendu Adhikari stated that the exact number of missing or affected people from West Bengal was being ascertained, several people from the state, including popular Bengali actor Kharaj Mukherjee, are among those stranded. The state police have opened help desks (033-24793311, 9147890181) at its headquarters in Kolkata, while the Indian Embassy in Nepal has additionally issued direct emergency numbers — +977 985 131 6807 and +977 970 910 7500. ‘In solidarity with people of Nepal’

Expressing deep concern over the tragedy, Chief Minister Suwendu Adhikari stated that West Bengal stands in full solidarity with Nepal and asserted that the administrative channels are actively coordinating with the Indian Embassy in Kathmandu to verify real-time data and facilitate prompt rescue operations. “Deeply pained by the colossal tragedy caused by catastrophic flash floods in Nepal. I extend my heartfelt condolences to all the bereaved families who have lost their loved ones in this devastating natural calamity. We stand in firm solidarity with the People of Nepal. Extremely concerned about reports of over 100 Indian visitors, mostly pilgrims on the Kailash Mansarovar Yatra, who are missing,” he said on X late Wednesday. Will head to Gorakhpur today: Kharaj Mukherjee

Actor Mukherjee, his wife Protiva and their film crew, who had travelled on August 20 for a shoot, are also stranded in Nepal. Mukherjee said his team, camping in a forest amid torrential rain, plans to head to Gorakhpur later in the day by road and then fly to Kolkata on Friday. “We were supposed to return today from Kathmandu. The tickets were non-refundable. So I told them to wrap up the shoot as quickly as possible on the 26th by any means we could leave. But by the time our shoot wrapped up, the flight tickets were fully booked. The road was blocked as well. So we had no way of reaching Kathmandu. So what could be done then? After making inquiries, I found out that it is possible to travel directly to Gorakhpur from here. That's the only route currently open,” the actor said.

Several families across Bengal said dozens remain uncontactable or halted mid-journey. A 32-member team from Kolkata comprising 30 pilgrims travelling to Mount Kailash and Mansarovar alongside two staff members of Kolkata-based travel agency Cholo Jai Travels has been uncontactable since Wednesday night. The group, which left Kolkata on August 21, had reached the Nepal-China border immigration office around 8.30 am Wednesday to secure permits for Tibet when a sudden avalanche struck, instantly severing communication links. In other areas, stranded tourists have managed to establish partial communication. A bus carrying 65 tourists from Arambagh that left for Nepal on August 24 remains halted at Chetan Park, roughly 120 kilometers away from the disaster zone. Relatives grew anxious when phone lines dropped Wednesday morning, but limited contact was re-established by evening.

Kolkata resident Arnab Kumar Datta reported that his mother and mother-in-law were safe after initial panic. “They left for Nepal on August 24, but the next day we came to know that there was a flash flood in Nepal. We were quite worried. We were unable to contact them, but anyhow, yesterday we succeeded in contacting them. They are presently lodged in a hotel at Pokhara valley; the place is more than 100 km away from the affected area,” he said. West Bengal minister Agnimitra Paul also expressed condolences to those who lost their lives in the natural calamity. “My heartfelt condolences to the bereaved families. My thoughts and prayers are with everyone affected,” she said. State authorities continue to monitor the ground situation as rescue and relief operations proceed across the affected regions. According to the latest reports, more than 800 people are missing, and 177 bodies have been recovered after a massive flash flood, triggered by glacier collapse, struck the Nepal-Tibet border on Wednesday.

ChatGPT Ads launched in India on Free, Go tiers

New Delhi: US-based artificial intelligence company OpenAI has announced it is expanding ‘ChatGPT Ads’ to India, one of its largest markets, to further monetise its popular chatbot ahead of a planned initial public offering (IPO).

The rollout will show ads to logged-in adults on the Free and Go tiers — the latter priced at Rs 399 per month in India. The sponsored products or services featured in the ads will appear at the bottom of ChatGPT responses.

These advertisements will be clearly labelled and visually separate from ChatGPT's answers, the company said. Paid subscribers on Plus, Pro, Business, Enterprise and Education tiers will continue to enjoy ad-free service. The company said that users' chats, chat history, memories, or personal details are inaccessible to advertisers and that it does not sell user data to advertisers. Advertisers will instead receive aggregate campaign-performance information, such as impressions and clicks. OpenAI also said ads will not be shown to accounts where the user has indicated they are under 18, or where the company determines that the user is a minor.

He blocked Mumbai local door. Then pushed off co-passenger for asking him to move



GNS News Agency, August 28

A dispute on a Mumbai local train turned violent after a man was pushed off the moving train by another for asking him to move aside and stop blocking the train door. The accused, 30-year-old Rahul Kumar Pandey, was arrested and remanded in police custody. The victim, identified as 24-year-old Tausif Shaikh, suffered serious injuries in the incident.

The incident is the fourth case of serious violence on Western Railway suburban trains this year, following three murders after minor disputes between co-passengers escalated into fatal attacks. Police said that Tausif Shaikh was travelling home with his friend Hussain Ali when the incident happened. According to the Government Railway Police (GRP), Rahul Kumar Pandey had boarded the train at Kandivli and stood near the door, opposite Shaikh and

Ali. When the train reached Borivali, Shaikh asked Pandey to move inside the coach since there was space and passengers needed to get down at the station. Pandey initially refused, which led to an argument between the two. Ali intervened, but the argument soon turned into a scuffle, senior inspector Pandhari Kande of the Borivali GRP said.

Seeing his friend fall, Ali reportedly restrained Pandey when the train stopped at Dahisar, and handed him to the police. “Pandey is a resident of Nalasopara and has been arrested on charges of attempt to murder,” said Kande. Some distance away, Shaikh, despite his injuries, managed to reach Borivali station, where GRP personnel took him to a hospital. He was discharged on Wednesday, Pandhari Kande said. The accused, Pandey, works as a salesman for a telecommunications company and was returning home after work. He was produced before the court on Wednesday and remanded to police custody. Shaikh works as a carpenter in Dindoshi and was travelling to Nalasopara with his friend when the incident occurred. The latest incident comes just a week after 63-year-old amputee Cajetan Pires was allegedly pushed out of a local train's handicapped coach by a co-passenger following an argument over seating between Mahim and Bandra. Pires died in the incident. Earlier, in June, 22-year-old Mayank Lohar was allegedly stabbed to death inside the first-class compartment of a Churchgate-Nalasopara local following an argument over keeping the train door open during heavy rain.

Chandigarh opens helplines to trace missing local residents

GNS News Agency, August 28

Following devastating flash floods in Nepal, the Union Territory Administration in Chandigarh Thursday stepped in to help trace local residents who may have gone missing or remain untraced in the disaster-hit regions. The UT Administration has issued an urgent appeal to citizens to share details regarding any Chandigarh resident who was travelling or staying in Nepal during the deluge and whose current whereabouts are unknown. The collected data will be compiled and shared with relevant central and diplomatic authorities to expedite search and rescue efforts and keep affected families informed. Emergency contact information for families and friends who are unable to contact Chandigarh residents believed to be in Nepal can reach out to the UT Administration through the following means. Authorities have urged families to provide detailed information, including full names, contact numbers, travel itineraries, last known locations, and photos to assist rescue teams in establishing identities on the ground.

The initiative comes after severe flash floods damaged infrastructure, power lines, and telecommunications networks across parts of Nepal. The disruptions have left families in India unable to reach relatives and travellers in the affected zones. The Administration has requested residents to circulate the helpline details widely so that anxious families seeking information on relatives or acquaintances can quickly connect with officials. Death toll rising in Nepal flash



floods

Flash floods along the Nepal-Tibet border, likely triggered by an avalanche of ice and rocks that fell into the Bhotekoshi River, have resulted in the death of at least 177 people. The death toll is expected to rise as the Nepalese government restores communication with more remote areas. The flash flood devastated buildings, swept away entire villages, and destroyed roads, bridges, and power plants, plunging the Himalayan nation into chaos not seen since the 2015 earthquake, which killed over 9,000 people and caused billions of dollars in damages. Initial assessments indicate that the floods were caused by a collapsed glacier in the mountains.

Patients trusted him for years. Police say Gujarat ‘doctor’ was Class 10 pass



For nearly 15 years, patients walked into a clinic in one of Vadodra's posh areas, believing they were seeing a doctor. The police now say the man behind the prescription pad had studied only up to Class 10. Biswajit Prafulla Haldar's cover began to unravel when patients started wondering why his medicines were not working. Whispers turned into a tip-off, and the police walked into the 45-year-old's clinic on Wednesday, arresting him for allegedly running Promila Clinic without a valid medical degree or registration. The Vadodra City Police's Local Crime Branch, Zone-2, conducted the raid in the presence of a medical officer. They allegedly found that the set-up had all the outward signs of a functioning neighbourhood clinic, with Haldar allegedly prescribing allopathic medicines, administering injections, and even performing ‘operations’ with tongs for piles and haemorrhoids.

The police seized 38 bottles of cough syrup valued at

around Rs 41,000, 162 injections, 281 medicine strips, 84 tubes, 30 powdered medicines, 32 capsules, nine intravenous fluid bottles and 19 infusion sets, among other material. “Locals had been talking about this doctor, and questioning how his medicines did not work well... He had a high number of patients coming to him daily and even earned more than some of the actual doctors in the city. Based on the tip-off, the LCB team raided the clinic and found that he had a bogus medical certificate. He used a fake BIAMS [Bachelor of Ayurvedic Medicine and Surgery] degree to perform piles and haemorrhoid surgeries with heated tongs without anaesthesia and charged up to Rs 25,000 for the procedure,” Manjita Vanzara, Deputy Commissioner of Police, Zone 2, Vadodra City, told Vanzara said the man had worked as a helper in a doctor's clinic in West Bengal before moving to Vadodra about 15 years ago, where he allegedly posed as a doctor and began running a clinic in Akota.

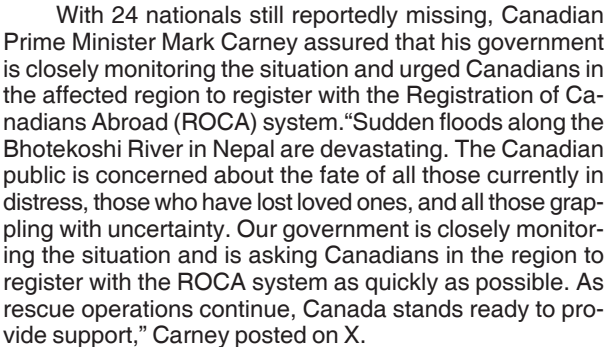
“He has studied up to Class 10. He lived alone here and mostly had patients from the lower middle class coming to him... He may have picked up knowledge about commonly used medicines while working for the doctor as a helper. No one seems to have checked his certificates during these years... He was arrested and granted bail as per law,” Vanzara added. The investigation is now focused on establishing the full scale of the alleged practice, including the number of patients he treated, the medicines and injections administered, and the financial gains allegedly made. The police will also examine the action to be initiated against the alleged proceeds of crime.

Upscale Gurgaon colony pumps out rainwater to save homes, gets FIR warning

Around 12.30 pm on Monday, S C Sharma, a 72-year-old tax consultant, was at home in Block A1 of Gurgaon's South City II when rainwater began entering houses in his lane. Within minutes, the internal colony road was submerged, leaving residents with little choice but to switch on emergency dewatering pumps to drain the water out. “If the Gurugram Metropolitan Development Authority's drain backflows water into our society, what other option do we have?” Sharma said. But pumping the water out triggered a standoff between residents of the upscale plotted colony — where ground-floor plots command upwards of Rs 3 crore — and the GMDA. On Tuesday, an official on duty warned residents that an FIR would be lodged against them for pumping water from the society onto the main road. In a formal representation to GMDA Executive Engineer Ajayender Singh Suhag, marked to CEO P C Meena, the South City II Residents' Welfare Association (RWA) flagged severe and recurrent waterlogging in Block A1 and protested against the alleged FIR threat by GMDA Junior Engineer (JE) Sonu Kaushik. According to the RWA, each time the city sees a spell of heavy rain, it causes the master stormwater and sewer lines along the Sector 47-49 divid-

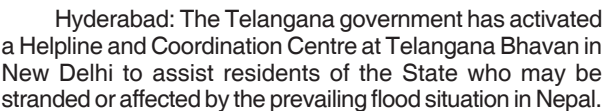
ing road to overflow. This, it said, results in sewage and run-off flowing into Block A1 through internal drainage lines and from beneath the boundary wall adjoining the GMDA road. The flooding directly impacts nearly 200 households. The RWA pointed out that even on July 9, 2024, approximately 160 houses had been severely affected, and a community dog died of electrocution during the waterlogging. “We are not doing it out of choice,” said Navdeep Yadav, president of the South City II RWA. “When the water volume increases and the government agencies do not intervene, what other option do we have but to deploy our own temporary pumps so society roads can remain clear?” RWA member Neeraj Yadav maintained that temporary pump arrangements remain the only lifeline for residents during torrential showers when master drains overflow into their homes. Waterlogged street outside A1 block of South City II. (Special arrangement) Waterlogged street outside A1 block of South City II. (Special arrangement) GMDA: Surface drains not meant for pumped-out water “The Municipal Corporation of Gurugram (MCG) officer concerned was requested to get the society's connection hooked into the master stormwater line, and not the roadside surface drains,” Suhag told the RWA.

Telangana sets up helpline for residents stranded in flood-hit Nepal



Extending his deepest sympathies to those affected by the devastating floods, Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese said that officials were working urgently to confirm the welfare of Australians in the affected region. At least 34 Australians are among those reportedly missing in the aftermath of the disaster. Taking to his social media platform X, Albanese said, "Australians in the affected area should follow the advice of local authorities. We are aware of a number of Australians in the area, and officials are urgently working to confirm their welfare. We are liaising with local authorities as well as tour operators. We stand ready to provide consular assistance. Australians in need of emergency consular assistance should contact DFAT's Consular Emergency Centre on 1300 555 135, or +61 2 6261 3305 (if calling from overseas)."

Describing the situation as “heartbreaking”, New Zealand Prime Minister Christopher Luxon said his government was in touch with authorities in Nepal about New Zealanders who may have been affected. Reportedly, five people from New Zealand remain unaccounted for in the wake of the devastating flood. “The images coming out of Nepal and China following the flash flooding are heartbreaking. My deep condolences to those affected and to impacted communities. New Zealand is in touch with Nepal authorities about New Zealanders who may have been affected. New Zealanders in the affected areas should let their family and friends know that they are safe when they can, and if they need urgent assistance they can call the 24/7 consular emergency line on +64 99 20 20 20,” Luxon posted on X. Meanwhile, 19 Malaysians remain unaccounted for in the aftermath of the catastrophic flood. Extending his deepest condolences, Malaysia’s Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim said the Malaysian Embassy in Kathmandu is working closely with the relevant authorities to assist the affected nationals. “I have directed that our mission be provided with every resource it needs. The Government will remain fully engaged until the Malaysians affected are accounted for and their families have the support they need,” he posted on X.



The centre will coordinate with the Ministry of External Affairs, the Indian Embassy in Kathmandu and other authorities to facilitate assistance.

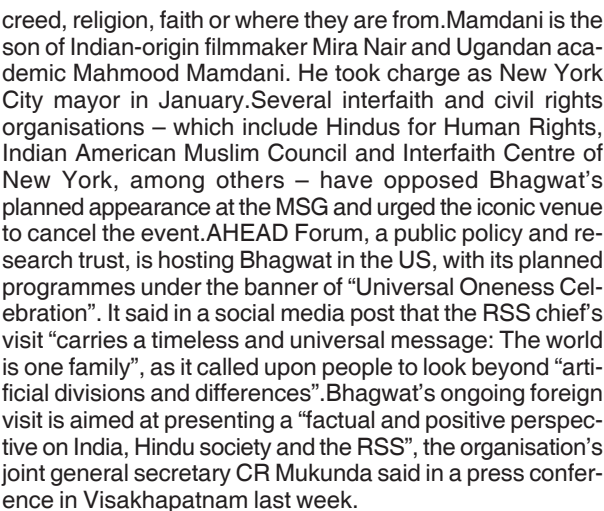
Family members unable to contact relatives, pilgrims or tourists from Telangana in Nepal can approach the helpline with details including the person's name, passport and mobile numbers, present or last known location, travel or tour operator details and family contact information. The State government said it was closely monitoring the situation and maintaining continuous liaison with the concerned authorities. Cases brought to the helpline would be taken up on priority. The helpline contacts are: Telangana Bhavan PS to Resident Commissioner and Liaison Head Vandhana (9871999044), PRO Ch Chakravarthi (9949351270) and Liaison Officer G Rakshit Naik (9618597969). Further updates will be issued based on information received from the concerned authorities.

New York: New York City Mayor Zohran Mamdani has said he does not support the planned event at Madison Square Garden featuring RSS chief Mohan Bhagwat, who is scheduled to address the Indian diaspora later this week. Mamdani, however, noted that the city may not have jurisdiction to cancel the "private" event.

Bhagwat, who arrived in the US on Tuesday, is visiting the country as part of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh's (RSS) centenary-year global outreach programme. His outreach tour also includes Canada and the UK. In the US, he is scheduled to address a gathering of around 5,000 people at the iconic Madison Square Garden (MSG) on August 29. The planned appearance has drawn criticism from several civil rights organisations.

"I don't support the rally, but I don't know if the city has any jurisdiction on cancelling a private event," Mamdani said at a press conference here on Tuesday, responding to a question on the RSS chief's planned event and protests against it. The Indian-origin mayor was asked whether the MSG event should be cancelled. Mamdani, who described himself as the first Indian-American mayor in New York City's (NYC) history, said his mother's family is still in India. He said the vision of India he was taught by his family and grew up familiar with was that of "a pluralistic society" and "a secular republic" that believed in the belonging of each and every person from India. The 34-year-old NYC mayor said it had been "incredibly troubling" to see the rise of a movement based on an "exclusionary vision", without specifically elaborating on the context of his observation.

He said he was in “deep opposition” to it both as an Indian-American and as mayor of a city that believes deeply in the belonging of every person, regardless of their colour,



KATHMANDU, Nepali labourer Bibek Kumal was digging a toilet ?pit outside a newly built house on Wednesday when a wall of water, mud and rock came roaring down, ?sweeping him and everything near him away. Kumal, 24, was working in Bidur, downstream from the worst-hit Rasuwa district, near Nepal's Himalayan border with China's Tibet, when he heard a hissing sound. His four co-workers, standing above the five-foot (1.5 metre) deep pit, shouted at him to get out and run. Stay up to date on the key companies, data, and decisions in the ESG world with the Reuters Sustainable Finance newsletter. [Sign up here.](#) By the time he scrambled out ?of the pit, his co-workers had already fled.

"I started running. Then a wall of water came thundering down as if it was an earthquake," Kumal said from his bed at Kathmandu's National Trauma Centre, his brother Dinesh sitting ?beside him. The torrent swept him downstream amid mud and debris, but "luckily I was stuck up in a mango tree", he said. "Had there been ?no mango tree, I would have been washed away to death." The flash flooding has killed at least 95 people and hundreds, including many foreigners, are ?missing in one of Nepal's worst disasters. Three others also injured in the flood were being treated alongside Kumal, as more people were transported to the capital Kathmandu. Authorities said they had rescued more than 114 people so far and they were being treated at different hospitals in Kathmandu and Rasuwa. Outside the hospital, well-wishers, ?friends and onlookers crowded the small compound of the trauma centre.

The flood, triggered after what appeared to be the collapse of a mass of mud and rock into a river on the frontier between Nepal and Tibet, devastated settlements and infrastructure downstream. Security footage captured on the Chinese side of the border showed many people fleeing before a wall of rock, mud and water destroyed buildings and vehicles and took many lives. The exact cause of the mudslide was not clear, but the German Research Centre

Geosciences said there was a 4.4-magnitude quake about seven minutes before the time shown on the security footage time-stamp. Survivor Kumal said as he clung to the mango tree, he watched the house where he had been working disappear. Police later reached him and pulled him to safety. He suffered injuries to his right leg after being struck first by the water and then by a large stone. His own home, located elsewhere, escaped damage, he said.

NEPAL HAS A HISTORY OF DISASTERSMostly mountainous Nepal experiences deadly floods and landslides every monsoon season, and is prone to other natural disasters. As a teenager, Kumal himself lived through the devastating 2015 earthquake that killed nearly 9,000 people. In the hospital bed opposite him, 11-year-old Rihana Lamichhane narrowly escaped. "I was at school. They closed the school because of this and asked us to go home," she said. "As I was crossing the river, suddenly flood water came gushing down." She suffered injuries to her chest and leg but said: "I am happy to be safe. I have no idea what happened to my friends." Her mother, Rita, said she rushed to find her daughter after receiving a call from a friend. "I am happy nothing serious happened to my daughter," she said. "I am relieved to find her safe."

mu for independence day nt to stronger bilateral ties

Kyiv: Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky expressed gratitude after receiving a congratulatory Independence Day message for the people of the country from India and President Droupadi Murmu. President Murmu on Tuesday sent greetings to the people of Ukraine on the occasion of their 35th Independence Day. Zelensky took to social media and said, "I was glad to receive felicitations for the people of Ukraine from the President of India. Thank you for the wishes of peace." "A dignified end to Russia's war is the most cherished dream of millions of Ukrainians as we mark the 35th Anniversary of the Restoration of our Independence. It is important that the whole world, together, helps build a path towards it," he said. Stressing the strengthening bilateral ties, the Ukrainian President said, "I also reaffirm Ukraine's commitment to further building a mutually beneficial dialogue with India." Earlier, Ukrainian Foreign Minister Andrii Sybiha thanked External Affairs Minister (EAM) S. Jaishankar for his congratulatory message and expressed hope that the India-Ukraine ties will deepen further. Meanwhile, Indian Ambassador to Ukraine, Anjan Kumar attended the official Independence Day celebrations in Kyiv and conveyed India's greetings to the Ukrainian leadership. Taking to X, the Indian Ambassador said, "Inde-

Washington: Popular American singer Mary Millben has described New York Mayor Zohran Mamdani as a “radical” who is on the “wrong path”, accusing him of embracing a socialist movement that does not represent American democratic ideals. “He is a radical, you know, that’s what this DSA movement is,” Millben said in an interview with IANS, referring to the Democratic Socialists of America. “There’s just a bunch of radicals who don’t understand how the world works. They don’t understand how America works, and they certainly don’t understand how New York works. He doesn’t,” she said.

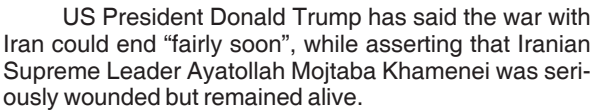
Millben was responding to questions about Mamdani's opposition to the New York visit of Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) chief Mohan Bhagwat. The RSS leader is scheduled to address an August 29 gathering built around the themes of oneness and unity. The singer said Mamdani's criticism should be viewed in the context of his association with the socialist wing of the Democratic Party. "The real meat and potatoes of the controversy is Mamdani's association with the DSA," she said. "That is this democratic socialist organisation in the United States that is a part of the Democratic Party."

Millben said she had several Democratic friends in elected office who did not subscribe to the socialist movement or its agenda. "But Mamdani has attached himself to that sect of the Democratic Party and that agenda," she said. She alleged that the movement was opposed to democracy and religious freedom. Millben also argued that Mamdani's position was aimed more broadly at Prime Minister Narendra Modi, rather than Bhagwat alone.

“They were not necessarily directed towards the RSS chief; they were directed towards Prime Minister Modi and what the Prime Minister represents in the context of India, religious freedom,” she said. Despite her sharp criticism, Millben described Mamdani as a talented young politician who could have a future if he changed direction. “He’s a talented young man. He’s just misguided, and he’s in the wrong hands within his own party,” she said. “If Mamdani was in the right hands in the Democratic Party, if he had a better understanding of the way the world works and the way America works, the way New York works, then I think

that he could have a great future, to be honest, because he has talent." Millben said she wanted young elected leaders in America to succeed by advancing the country's ideals. She argued, however, that Mamdani's political associations did not reflect those principles. "He just has been misguided," she said. "And it's just unfortunate because I wanna see every young leader, young elected official have a success in America as it pertains to promoting the ideals of America."

Millben said Mamdani should reconsider the language used in his speeches and the political movement with which he has aligned himself. "Hopefully he'll wake up and realise the talking points that he's regurgitating in his speeches as he did here recently," she said. "And the way in which he's associating himself is a destructive path." "But right now, I can tell you he's on the wrong path," Millben added. "And it's sad to watch, but not surprising." The Democratic Socialists of America describes itself as a political and activist organisation seeking to build a more democratic economy. Its members have worked in electoral politics, labour organising and social campaigns, while often operating alongside the Democratic Party rather than as a separate national party. Millben is known to Indian audiences for her performances of "Jana Gana Mana" and the devotional hymn "Om Jai Jagdish Hare". She has appeared at events involving India and the Indian diaspora and has publicly expressed support for Prime Minister Modi.



way despite occasional attacks. "The mines are gone. You probably saw that; we put it out yesterday, all the mines. We got rid of the mines. But the strait, it's functioning; it's a functioning strait," he said. "A lot of oil is pouring out, 10 million gallons — 10 million barrels yesterday," he added.

Trump said preventing Iran from obtaining a nuclear weapon remained the central objective of the conflict. “We cannot let Iran have a nuclear weapon,” he said. “That’s what it’s all about. It’s 99.9 per cent. We cannot let them, because they are crazy and they will use it and we cannot let them have a nuclear weapon.” The President linked the military campaign to energy prices, acknowledging that the conflict had forced his administration to take what he called a “detour”. He nevertheless predicted both the fighting and the resulting price pressures would ease. “And we did, and the prices are coming down very rapidly,” Trump said. Earlier, he said US action against Iran “will be ending fairly soon”. Trump also defended his decision during his first term to withdraw the United States from the 2015 Iran nuclear agreement, formally known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action.

Infusing mitochondria helps renew tissues deprived of blood: research



James McCully was in the lab extracting tiny structures called mitochondria from cells when researchers on his team rushed in. They'd been operating on a pig heart and couldn't get it pumping normally again. McCully studies heart damage prevention at Boston Children's Hospital and Harvard Medical School and was keenly interested in mitochondria. These power-producing organelles are particularly important for organs like the heart that have high energy needs. McCully had been wondering whether transplanting healthy mitochondria into injured hearts might help restore their function.

The pig's heart was graying rapidly, so McCully decided to try it. He loaded a syringe with the extracted mitochondria and injected them directly into the heart. Before his eyes, it began beating normally, returning to its rosy hue. Since that day almost 20 years ago, McCully and other researchers have replicated that success in pigs and other animals. Human transplantations followed, in babies who suffered complications from heart surgery — sparking a new field of research using mitochondria transplantation to treat damaged organs and disease. In the last five years, a widening array of scientists have begun exploring mitochondria transplantation for heart damage after cardiac arrest, brain damage following stroke and damage to organs destined for transplantation.

Mitochondria are best known for producing usable energy for cells. But they also send molecular signals that help to keep the body in equilibrium and manage its immune and stress responses. Some types of cells may naturally donate healthy mitochondria to other cells in need, such as brain cells after a stroke, in a process called mitochondria transfer. So the idea that clinicians could boost this process by transplanting mitochondria to reinvigorate injured tissue made sense to some scientists. From studies in rabbits and rat heart cells, McCully's group has reported that the plasma membranes of cells engulf the mitochondria and shuttle them inside, where they fuse with the cell's internal mitochondria. There, they seem to cause molecular changes that help recover heart function: When comparing blood- and oxygen-deprived pig hearts treated with mitochondria to ones receiving placebos, McCully's group saw differences in gene activity and proteins that indicated less cell death and less inflammation. About 10 years ago, Sitaram Emani, a cardiac surgeon at Boston Children's Hospital, reached out to McCully about his work with animal hearts. Emani had seen how some babies with heart defects couldn't fully recover after heart surgery complications and wondered whether McCully's mitochondria transplantation method could help them. During surgery to repair heart defects, surgeons use a drug to stop the heart so they can operate. But if the heart is deprived of blood and oxygen for too long, mitochondria start to fail and cells start to die, in a condition called ischaemia. When blood begins flowing again, instead of returning the heart to its normal state, it can damage and kill more cells, resulting in ischaemia-reperfusion injury. Since McCully's eight years of studies in rabbits and pigs hadn't revealed safety concerns with mitochondria transplantaion, McCully and Emani thought it would be worth trying the procedure in babies unlikely to regain enough heart function to come off heart-lung support.

Parents of 10 patients agreed to the experimental procedure, which was approved by the institute's review board. In a pilot that ran from 2015 to 2018, McCully extracted pencil-eraser-sized muscle samples from the incisions made for the heart surgery, used a filtration technique to isolate mitochondria and checked that they were functional. Then the team injected the organelles into the baby's heart. Eight of those 10 babies regained enough heart function to come off life support, compared to just four out of 14 similar cases from 2002 to 2018 that were used for historical comparison, the team reported in 2021. The treatment also shortened recovery time, which averaged two days in the mitochondrial transplant group compared with nine days in the historical control group. Two patients did not survive — in one case, the intervention came after the rest of the baby's organs began failing, and in another, a lung issue developed four months later. The group has now performed this procedure on 17 babies. The transplant procedure remains experimental and is not yet practical for wider clinical use, but McCully hopes that it can one day be used to

treat kidney, lung, liver and limb injuries from interrupted blood flow.

The results have inspired other clinicians whose patients suffer from similar ischaemia-reperfusion injuries. One is ischaemic stroke, in which clots prevent blood from reaching the brain. Doctors can dissolve or physically remove the clots, but they lack a way to protect the brain from reperfusion damage. "You see patients that lose their ability to walk or talk," says Melanie Walker, an endovascular neurosurgeon at the University of Washington School of Medicine in Seattle. "You just want to do better and there's just nothing out there." Walker came across McCully's mitochondrial transplant studies 12 years ago and, in reading further, was especially struck by a report on mice from researchers at Massachusetts General Hospital and Harvard Medical School that showed the brain's support and protection cells — the astrocytes — may transfer some of their mitochondria to stroke-damaged neurons to help them recover. Perhaps, she thought, mitochondria transplantation could help in human stroke cases too. She spent years working with animal researchers to figure out how to safely deliver mitochondria to the brain. She tested the procedure's safety in a clinical trial with just four people with ischaemic stroke, using a catheter fed through an artery in the neck to manually remove the blockage causing the stroke, then pushing the catheter further along and releasing the mitochondria, which would travel up blood vessels to the brain. The findings, published in 2024 in the Journal of Cerebral Blood Flow & Metabolism, show that the infused patients suffered no harm; the trial was not designed to test effectiveness. Walker's group is now recruiting participants to further assess the intervention's safety. The next step will be to determine whether the mitochondria are getting where they need to be, and functioning. "Until we can show that, I do not believe that we will be able to say that there's a therapeutic benefit," Walker says. Researchers hope that organ donation might also gain from mitochondria transplants. Donor organs like kidneys suffer damage when they lack blood supply for too long, and transplant surgeons may reject kidneys with a higher risk of these injuries. To test whether mitochondrial transplants can reinvigorate them, transplant surgeon-scientist Giuseppe Orlando of Wake Forest University School of Medicine in Winston-Salem and his colleagues injected mitochondria into four pig kidneys, and a control substance into three pig kidneys. In 2023 in the Annals of Surgery, they reported fewer dying cells in the mitochondria-treated kidneys, and far less damage. Molecular analyses also showed a boost in energy production. It's still early days, Orlando says, but he's confident that mitochondria transplantation could become a valuable tool in rescuing suboptimal organs for donation.

The studies have garnered both excitement and skepticism. "It's certainly a very interesting area," says Koning Shen, a postdoctoral mitochondrial biologist at the University of California, Berkeley, and coauthor of an overview of the signalling roles of mitochondria in the 2022 Annual Review of Cell and Developmental Biology. She adds that scaling up extraction of mitochondria and learning how to store and preserve the isolated organelles are major technical hurdles to making such treatments a larger reality. "That would be amazing if people are getting to that stage," she says. "I think there are a lot of thoughtful people looking at this carefully, but I think the big question is, what's the mechanism?" says Navdeep Chandel, a mitochondria researcher at Northwestern University in Chicago. He doubts that donor mitochondria fix or replace dysfunctional native organelles, but says it's possible that mitochondria donation triggers stress and immune signals that indirectly benefit damaged tissue. Whatever the mechanism, some animal studies do suggest that the mitochondria must be functional to impart their benefits. Lance Becker, chair of emergency medicine at Northwell Health in New York who studies the role of mitochondria in cardiac arrest, conducted a study comparing fresh mitochondria, mitochondria that had been frozen then thawed, and a placebo to treat rats following cardiac arrest. The 11 rats receiving fresh, functioning mitochondria had better brain function and a higher rate of survival three days later than the 11 rats receiving a placebo; the non-functional frozen-thawed mitochondria did not impart these benefits. It will take more research into the mechanisms of mitochondrial therapy, improved mitochondria delivery techniques, larger trials and a body of reported successes before mitochondrial transplants can be FDA-approved and broadly used to treat ischaemia-reperfusion injuries, researchers say. The ultimate goal would be to create a universal supply of stored mitochondria — a mitochondria bank, of sorts — that can be tapped for transplantation by a wide variety of health care providers. "We're so much at the beginning — we don't know how it works," says Becker. "But we know it's doing something that is mighty darn interesting." Jackie Rocheleau is an independent science journalist covering the life sciences and medicine with a particular focus on the brain. This article is republished from Knowable Magazine.

Indian teen's family sues NYC for USD 105M over carriage tragedy

New York: The family of Indian teenager Romanch Mahajan, who was killed when the horse drawing their carriage bolted in June last year, has initiated legal proceedings demanding \$105 million in compensation from the New York City government. The family claims in a notice to the city filed last week that stray electricity in Central Park spooked the horse and that it was a result of the city government's negligence. Mahajan's family was on a holiday in the city celebrating his graduation from high school and took a ride on a horse carriage on June 17. Applying For Government Grants

When the carriage driver got out to take a picture, the horse suddenly bolted, throwing Mahajan's mother Priya off the vehicle. Mahajan dove after her in an attempt to save her, but hit his head on the ground and died from the injury. The family filed notices against the city and four of its departments in the first step towards suing them in court, alleging that their negligence caused the accident. The stray voltage, among other factors, "caused, precipitated, contributed to and/or was a substantial factor" that made the horse bolt, they allege.

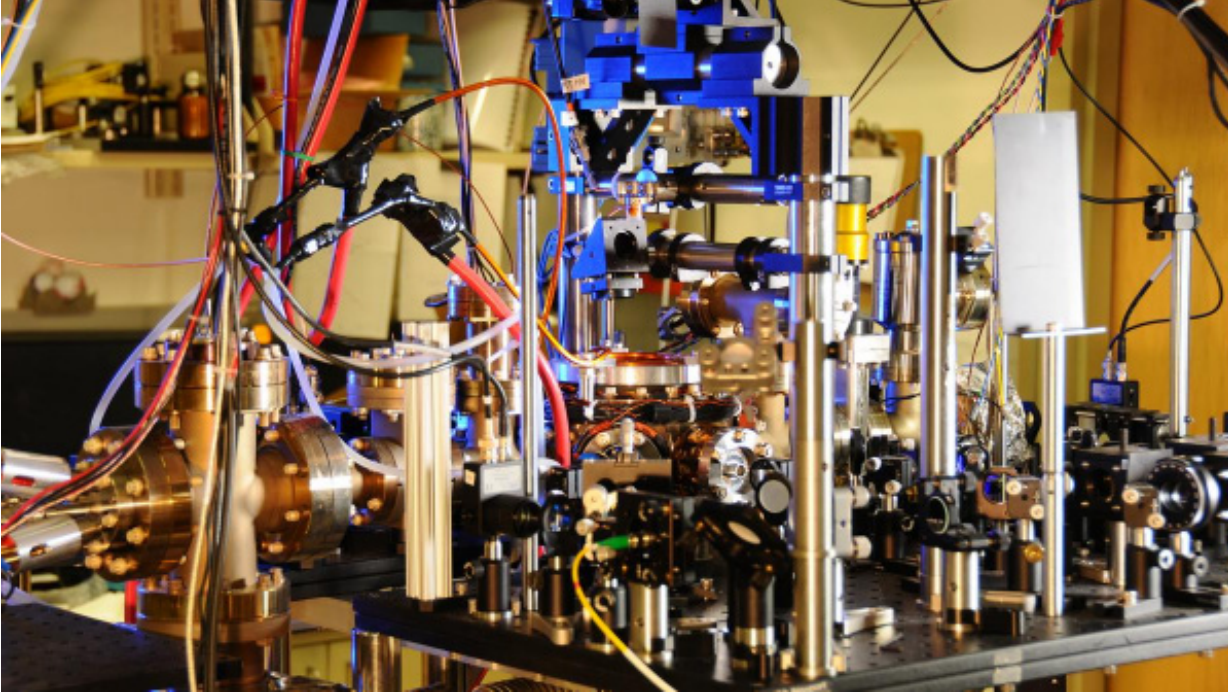
Downloading Interactive Geographic MapsThe allegation about the electric voltage echoes a claim made by the Transport Workers Union, to which carriage driver Ertan Gokdepe belonged. Defending him, the union's local unit Vice President Alexander Kemp said last month: "Blue-collar carriage drivers should not be punished for an unforeseeable hazard caused by flaws in the city's power grid." Eighteen-year-old Mahajan, who was from Pathankot, had recently completed his 12th standard from Angel's Public School and was set for college when the tragedy struck. Exploring Equestrian Gear And SuppliesHis death



gave momentum to the campaign to ban horse-drawn carriages, a tourist attraction in the city.

Named the Romanch Mahajan Bill in his memory, the City Council is expected to vote on the ban soon, and supporters say the proposed legislation has majority support to pass. His father Deepak Mahajan made a tearful plea to the Council through a video link last month to ban the carriages. "A young boy came to America full of dreams and left us far too soon," he said. Comparing New Electric Vehicle Leases"This was not an unpredictable accident," he said. "It was a safety violation, a system's failure to protect the people who visit our city, your city, and everyone responsible has admitted the driver should never have left that carriage."

Intercontinental optical clock comparison sets stage to redefine the second



Researchers from around the world have completed the world's largest, most demanding head-to-head comparison of clocks in history to build confidence for the upcoming redefinition of the second. The duration of a single second is currently defined by caesium (Cs) atomic clocks. Lasers 'count' the radiation emitted by Cs atoms in these devices to measure one second, give or take a few billionths. As the applications of atomic clocks have expanded — including GPS navigation, climate science, and radio astronomy — expectations of their performance have also increased, necessitating the more advanced optical clocks. Scientists around the world have been studying and testing these next-generation devices. Because they can enumerate one second up to around 18 decimal places, scientists expect optical clocks will replace Cs atomic clocks as the world's new time standard around 2030. Until then, however, optical clocks will have to pass rigorous tests attesting to their ability to work in step from different parts of the world. The new effort presents the largest, most sophisticated such test to date. It involved 10 optical atomic clocks on three continents and 65 researchers.

To measure the passage of time, strike up a conversation with the person next to you. If it's riveting, time will fly. But if it advances in painstaking steps, time will slow to a crawl. For better or for worse, this isn't good enough for scientists. To understand how much time one second denotes, they use natural phenomena. In the early 20th century, the definition of a second was one-86,400th of a mean solar day. The first quartz crystal clocks that appeared in the late 1940s could measure time more accurately than the earth's rotation. So scientists switched to the earth's revolution around the sun. In 1956, one second became equal to one-31,556,925.9747th of the time the earth took to go once around the sun from January 0, 1900. Since then, scientists have been building better clocks that, at each step, also incentivised them to refine the time standard. The current standard is based on atomic clocks. These clocks don't directly measure time. Instead, they are complicated set-ups scientists put together to generate radiation of a fixed frequency. (Frequency is nothing but the inverse of time.) In 1967, the SI unit of time was defined thus: "the duration of 9,192,631,770 periods of the radiation corresponding to the transition between the two hyperfine levels of the ground state of the caesium-133 atom". This verbose definition really communicates a simple meaning.

An atom's internal energy comes in fixed steps, like rungs on a ladder. It can jump up a rung by absorbing the right amount of energy and jump back down by giving that energy up again. In a Cs atomic clock, the energy that makes the jump is supplied by a finely tuned microwave signal. The atoms react most strongly when the microwave frequency is 9,192,631,770 Hz. Electronics watch how many atoms make the jump. If that number slips below a peak, the equipment nudges the microwave setting until the jump rate is back to the maximum. When that happens, the microwave signal itself is guaranteed to be exactly 9,192,631,770 Hz, i.e. composed of 9,192,631,770 waves per second. Chips called frequency dividers count these microwave waves and pass on only every 9,192,631,770-th one. This wave comes along every one second — and is the SI definition of the second. Around the world, many countries have set up their own Cs atomic clocks to define their respective national time standard. In India, the National Physical Laboratory in New Delhi maintains five Cs atomic clocks. The clocks' output is disseminated to various applications around India via the INSAT satellites, telecommunication signals, and fibre links. The wall clock hanging in your house is likely powered by two AA batteries and uses a quartz crystal oscillator. After a few months, the clock will start losing a few seconds. The Cs atomic clock that defines the US national time standard loses only one second every 300 million years, however. This is stupendous, yet in some cases it isn't good enough. As their application in defining the time standard suggests, atomic clocks are used in many technologies that we encounter every day. The American GPS network, Russia's GLONASS, Europe's Galileo, and India's NavIC constellation use atomic clocks onboard satellites to accurately measure distance and location data for both civilian and military use. Astronomers use it in radio-astronomy to piece together signals received on different parts of a large telescope. This is how they captured history's first photograph of a black hole in 2019. Climate scientists use atomic clocks for ultra-precise measurements of the earth's gravity that reveal where ice and water have been lost. As these applications have expanded, the expectations of atomic clocks have, too. The definitive

emission in Cs atomic clocks, of 9,192,631,770 Hz, is in the microwave range of the electromagnetic spectrum. In optical atomic clocks, it's in the optical (or visual) range. The radiation emitted when a strontium atom jumps between two particular energy levels is 429,228,066,418,009 Hz. When a ytterbium-ion jumps between two levels, the radiation has frequency 642,121,496,772,645 Hz. Because this radiation contains 10,000-times more waves per second, a device that can count them out can also measure one second more precisely. The frequency of the radiation emitted is also proportional to the clock's stability. In 2014, one optical atomic clock that used strontium atoms would reportedly drift by less than one second in 15 billion years. This is why optical atomic clocks are set to become the next global time standard. But ahead of the milestone, scientists must prove that clocks in different countries agree with one another to the 18th decimal place.

Enter: the new test. It involved 10 optical clocks based on five atoms: strontium-87 (Sr), ytterbium-171 (Yb), charged ytterbium-171 ions in two states (Yb⁺ E2 and Yb⁺ E3), charged strontium-88 (Sr⁺), and indium-115 ions (In⁺). The clocks were located at six national metrology institutes in Finland, France, Germany, Italy, the U.K., and Japan. The two clocks participating from Germany were in the same building, so the scientists linked their outputs through short optical fibres. The clocks across France, Germany, and Italy were linked with telecommunication fibres that already run through these countries. To prevent any noise or distortion from corrupting the data, scientists installed bespoke repeaters and amplifiers. Finally, to link the clocks across the English Channel, the Baltic Sea, and all the way to Japan, the teams used an advanced GPS technique called integer precise point positioning (IPPP). Because optical clocks occasionally take breaks for maintenance, the teams set up simpler backup clocks that stepped in temporarily to keep time using GPS data. When the optical atomic clocks were back in operation, the backups would handover and step back. In this way, all the clocks ran for 45 days between February 20 and April 6, 2022. Every time two different clocks were running and connected, the researchers divided their laser frequencies to make a ratio. In total the teams reported 38 independent optical-frequency ratios, far more than any earlier project. Four of these ratios — Yb⁺(E3) to Yb, In⁺ to Yb, Sr⁺ to Sr, and Sr⁺ to Yb — had never before been measured directly. The tightest single result was the ratio between the In⁺ and Yb⁺(E3) clocks in Germany, measured locally with an uncertainty of just 4.4 × 10-18.

The teams found that the fibre and satellite links told the same story for most ratios. For example, the Sr clocks in Germany and France differed by a factor of less than 2 × 10-16 via both technologies, showing that long fibres and IPPP could both support ultra-precise timing in good conditions. Similarly, same-atom ratios — Sr to Sr, Yb to Yb, and Yb⁺ to Yb⁺ — confirmed that many clocks were healthy. The Germany and the U.K. clocks were compared by GPS across the North Sea and matched within 3 × 10-16 even after accounting for downtime. Combine results responsiblyThe researchers were also able to reveal gaps they will have to fix before 2030. Every GPS-based ratio that involved the Italian Yb clock was off by about 4 × 10-16 compared with fibre measurements, pointing to a previously unnoticed signal distribution glitch at the Italian facility. The strontium clocks in France and Germany showed small but real offsets, up to 2 × 10-16, when the teams checked them against other clocks and each other. These shifts were large enough to matter for a future definition of the second and will need further study. The authors of the paper describing the test, published in Optica on June 12, noted that recognising such hiccups is exactly why large, redundant campaigns are valuable. Because many ratios shared the same clocks, fibres, backups or GPS receivers, the teams noted that their errors were correlated. To address this, they developed a 38 × 38 matrix capturing 242 non-zero correlation coefficients. These coefficients captured the degree to which any two variables were related, e.g. it was 0.94 when two ratios shared a common clock on the same fibre. The teams said publishing these correlations will allow future analysts combine results responsibly instead of double-counting information. In the final analysis, by showing that 10 heterogeneous clocks across three continents could agree with each other to within a factor 10-16 to 10-18, and by identifying the rare cases when they didn't, the test has cleared many obstacles en route to redefining the SI second with optical atomic clock standards.

Google introduces photo-to-video generation in Gemini with Veo 3 model rollout

Hyderabad: Google has introduced a powerful new photo-to-video generation feature in its Gemini platform, allowing users to transform static images into eight-second AI-generated video clips with sound. The tool, powered by the company's Veo 3 video generation model, is now rolling out to Google AI Pro and Ultra subscribers in select countries. The feature is accessible via the Gemini app and Flow — Google's AI filmmaking tool — by selecting the "Videos" option from the tool menu and uploading a photo. Users can then describe the scene and sound to animate everyday objects, drawings, nature scenes, or personal moments. "From reimagining fairy tales to ASMR content with lava textures, users are pushing the boundaries of creativity," Google said. In just seven weeks since Veo 3's wider rollout in May, more than 40 million AI-generated videos have been created using Gemini and Flow. The feature

expands Gemini's growing role as an everyday creative companion. Once a photo is uploaded and the prompt is entered, Gemini animates it into a short, shareable video. Users can preview, download, or share the output via a single tap. The tool is designed for quick creative expression, whether it's turning sketches into motion art or adding visual depth to photo memories. The photo-to-video feature is currently available in over 150 countries. Google said it has integrated extensive safety protocols into the tool's backend, including "red teaming" (proactive stress testing), misuse detection, and strict policy enforcement. All videos feature a visible AI-generated watermark and an invisible SynthID digital watermark to maintain transparency. Users can also give direct feedback through thumbs-up or thumbs-down buttons, helping Google fine-tune its safety measures and video quality in future updates.

Preity Zinta relishes her favourite Kadhi Chawal in Paris while down with fever



Mumbai: Actress Preity Zinta recently shared a heart-warming glimpse of a kind gesture that brought some comfort to her while she was unwell in Paris. Taking to Instagram, the ‘Soldier’ actress revealed that she had been down with a fever and was not feeling well. Her friend happened to mention her condition to a neighbour, who went out of her way to send the actress her favourite comfort food — Kadhi Chawal. Sharing her gratitude, Preity gave a shout-out to what she called the “sweetest & kindest family” living in Paris. Preity said the thoughtful gesture not only lifted her spirits during a difficult day but also left a lasting impression on her. Sharing her video, the ‘Kya Kehna’ actress wrote, “A big shout out to the sweetest & kindest family that lives in Paris. I was down with fever & not feeling great at all. My friend mentioned that to her neighbour & Wow! She sent me my favourite Kadi Chawal to brighten me up This little act of kindness & warmth not only brightened my day but will stay with me forever.” “There is a reason we say Punjabi Hospitality is the best If you are in Paris check out the goodies folks & thank me later Ting.” The video shows Preity Zinta opening a box containing aloo gobi ki sabzi, followed by a tiffin filled with her favourite Kadhi Chawal. Reacting to the thoughtful gesture, she said, “Oh my God, Kadhi Chawal! This is so sweet. I loved it. When you are ill, you want only comfort food. Thank you.” A few days ago, Preity Zinta visited the Kanapathy Temple in Paris on the last Monday of Sawan and shared glimpses of her spiritual outing on social media. In a video, the ‘Mission Kashmir’ actress documented her visit to the temple,

Spinal muscular atrophy patients welcome development of generic drug; call for government intervention to ensure access



A generic version of Risdiplam, a medicine used to treat spinal muscular atrophy (SMA), could soon be available in India at \$183.47 dollars per bottle, a sharp 97% drop from the current rate of \$7,150. The news has been welcomed by healthcare activists and patients as a significant development. Government intervention at this juncture is critical, says K.M. Gopakumar, a legal researcher who works in the area of access to medicines. “Even with this possible cost cut, the drug will remain expensive and out of reach for a large proportion of patients. The Central government can intervene, procure these medicines and reduce the price in a manner that is more affordable. They can also invoke Section 100 of the Patents Act, 1970 that would allow the manufacture of the generic version of the drug and ensure procurement of medicine for all SMA patients,” he said.

Indian generic manufacturer Natco Pharma announced that it could commercialise a generic version of Risdiplam at 15,900, equivalent to \$183.47. Natco released this information within the context of its legal battle with Roche Pharma, the current patent holder for the drug. The Delhi High Court has rejected Roche’s plea for an interim injunction against Natco for alleged infringement of its patent. Patients and their families are all waiting for an af-

fordable treatment option, says Saifullah Khalidi, an SMA patient representative and disability rights advocate. “SMA is a lifelong condition and Roche’s drug improves quality of life. Currently, the drug costs upwards of ₹70 lakh annually for an adult patient. This makes sustained access to the drug an impossible task. As of now, we don’t have any idea about when production would start or when the generic medicines would be available for patients. However, we welcome the possibility of having multiple companies making the generic version of the medicines and bringing down the cost to a point that it becomes affordable for all SMA patients,” he said.

Mr. Khalidi added that, without treatment, SMA patients struggle with reduced mobility, encounter respiratory challenges, and typically have a shortened lifespan. “This medicine is critical for ensuring quality of life for SMA patients,” he emphasised. SMA is a genetic disorder that causes weakness and wasting, or atrophy, of the muscles used for movement. It is caused by a loss of motor neurons, the specialised nerve cells in the spinal cord that control muscle movement. Symptoms vary depending on the type of SMA, but can include muscle weakness, difficulty with movement, breathing problems, swallowing difficulties, and scoliosis. There is currently no cure for SMA, but treatments can help manage symptoms and improve quality of life, with some therapies. Evrysdi (Risdiplam), a small molecule oral medication, is the first and only approved treatment for SMA in India, manufactured by Roche.

Additionally, Nusinersen (Spinraza), another disease-modifying therapy, is available in India through a special program for select children. “Access to medicines means improved quality of life. I was able to raise ₹61 lakh through crowd-funding in 2022 which gave me access to Roche’s medicine for close to a year. However, I have been without this medicine due to the high cost ever since. An easily accessible generic medicine would ensure a better life for people living with SMA,” said writer and SMA patient Sarmista, who hails from Assam.

The link between leprosy and climate-change that we did not know about: an Indian story

When Sharadindu Ghosh* was young, he was taught not to speak about his father’s leprosy. He, like many others, grew up in the lanes of Jamuria Leprosy Colony, in West Bengal, facing stigma and discrimination. Today, years after his father’s passing and an endless struggle through poverty, Ghosh is an electrical supervisor and a mentor to local children. “Among the uneducated population in India, people believe that this disease is given by God,” said Mervyn Basil, communications specialist at NGO Untill No Leprosy Remains-India (NLR-India). Leprosy was eliminated as a public health problem in India as per the World Health Organization’s criteria of less than 1 case per 10,000 population, at the national level, in 2005. However now, experts say, it is quietly resurfacing, particularly in climate stressed States including West Bengal and Bihar. Floods, displacement and overcrowding have become frequent, leading to these States seeing the disease re-emerge in pockets. India reported total 1,03,819 new leprosy cases for the year 2022-23 out of which grade 2 disability (G2D) cases were 2,363 (2.28%), amounting to 25% of the new G2D cases of the world, as per a statement given in the Lok Sabha in February 2024. Extreme weather events do not affect all communities equally, and people affected by leprosy often face risks far beyond those encountered by the general population. Research presented by James Pender at the 21st International Leprosy Congress in 2022 highlighted how climate-induced disasters disproportionately affect leprosy-affected communities. Floods cause the loss of homes, crops and in some cases even access to shelters. Those with leprosy-related disabilities are often left behind in evacuation efforts and many face discrimination at relief camps. In Bangladesh, for instance, over 4,000 people affected by leprosy were impacted by severe flooding in 2017 and many were denied basic disaster relief. India is ranked amongst the most climate-vulnerable nations globally and the intersection of disease, climate change and economic deprivation can further deepen the gaps. According to a report by the Leprosy Mission Trust India, States including Bihar, Jharkhand, Uttar Pradesh, Odisha and Chhattisgarh are also home to the largest proportion of people living in multidimensional poverty, meaning poverty that goes beyond money and wealth. “Leprosy is a tropical disease and in tropical areas, there is a higher chance of this bacteria multiplying at a very rapid pace, and it’s quite possible that it will multiply quickly,” said Mr. Basil.

Eight districts across Bihar, West Bengal, Odisha and Maharashtra report a high climate vulnerability, widespread multidimensional poverty and endemic levels of leprosy prevalence. According to Bihar’s State Water Resources department, 68.80 lakh hectares or over 76% of north and

73% of south Bihar are regularly affected by floods. A total of 28 of the State’s 38 districts are declared flood-prone.

In Odisha, the situation may be worse: it remains one of India’s most climate disrupted states. According to the Council on Energy, Environment and Water, 26 districts in Odisha are exposed to extreme climate events. The State has witnessed an increase in cyclonic events of late, with Koraput routinely facing floods that disrupt agricultural productivity and impact village residents who are primarily agricultural workers. With high risks of flood and drought, the State has a leprosy prevalence rate of 0.89. Chhattisgarh is also emerging as a key hotspot, with multiple districts like Bijapur, Kabirdham and Mahasamund having high prevalence rates of leprosy and deep rooted poverty. Kishanganj in Bihar, Raigarh in Chhattisgarh and Nuapada in Odisha have reported leprosy prevalence rates above 3% coexisting with poverty levels that exceed 60% in some cases. Even in relatively better-off states like Maharashtra and West Bengal, vulnerability in clusters exists especially in tribal areas like Nandurbar and Jhargram. Shubhojit Goswami, senior programme manager at Leprosy Mission Trust India said: “Our report does not claim or suggest that changes in climate patterns lead to leprosy transmission. But extreme climate events like floods, cyclones and droughts increase risk factors like malnutrition, limit access to clean water and poor hygiene which are known to contribute to leprosy spread” Displacement emerges as another key concern. When residents of rural areas face climate shocks like floods or droughts, they tend to migrate to urban areas. “Many can only afford to live in overcrowded slums and high population density increases the transmission risk,” said Mr. Goswami. He cites the example of Shravasti district in Uttar Pradesh, where heavy floods in October 2022 came just months after a drought had already devastated agriculture. “This kind of back-to-back climate shock is becoming the new normal,” he pointed out. Shravasti is a high-endemic district for leprosy where more than 70% of the population lives in multidimensional poverty. The need for interventions Urgent interventions by government and NGOs are needed. Three steps that Mr. Goswami states as urgent are: building community resilience alongside awareness programmes on climate-adaptive health behaviour; strengthening health systems in leprosy endemic districts to mitigate climate shocks as well as hyper-local climate and health risk assessments. A total of 30 districts across India are at the risk of ‘triple jeopardy’ i.e. the disease, climate change and poverty coexisting. “These triple burdens often affect specific districts and not entire States,” said Mr. Goswami. Muzaffarpur in Bihar for instance,

Telemedicine guidance on WhatsApp helps govt. doctors bridge cardiac care gaps in Tamil Nadu



. Can telemedicine guidance on a messaging platform like WhatsApp help doctors improve treatment outcomes in patients presenting with major heart attacks? The Tamil Nadu Government Heart Attack Management Programme - operationalised in a hub-and-spoke model networking 18 government medical college hospitals and 188 district/taluk government hospitals - has the answer. A study analysing the five-year experience (2019-2023) of the programme has found that it has demonstrated that WhatsApp groups are a cost-effective way of networking larger and smaller hospitals in a hub-and-spoke model to provide telemedicine guidance for early diagnosis and treatment of major heart attacks (STEMI-ST-segment elevation myocardial infarction). Through this, cardiologists in larger hub hospitals offered telemedicine guidance to smaller spoke units. Additionally, these groups were used to coordinate patient transfers between hospitals and to monitor the entire process.

Putting out the key findings in an article published recently in the Indian Journal of Medical Research - ‘Impact of telemedicine in STEMI care system: A five-year experience from Tamil Nadu, India’ - government cardiologists and health officials reported that the government-sponsored STEMI care system in a hub-and-spoke model, guided by telemedicine via WhatsApp groups, significantly improved guideline-directed treatment for STEMI care in a resource-limited setting. Talking about the implementation of the initiative, G. Justin Paul, professor of cardiology, Madras Medical College, and the programme’s nodal officer, explained that the 18 government medical college hospitals in T.N. were equipped with cardiac catheterisation labo-

ratories to offer Percutaneous Coronary Interventions (PCI), thereby serving as hub hospitals. Additionally, 188 district and taluk-level government hospitals lacking PCI capacity were enabled to administer clot busting medicines and were linked to these 18 hubs as spoke hospitals. Eighteen STEMI clusters were established by networking 10-15 spoke hospitals with each hub based on geographical proximity and transport logistics.

The networking was done in two phases - 12 hubs linked to 154 spokes to form 12 clusters in phase I (2017-2018) and six hubs linked to 34 spokes to create six more clusters in phase II (2019-2020). The authors noted that 18 WhatsApp groups - one for each cluster - were created to facilitate case-specific management of persons with suspected heart attacks. These groups enabled seamless communication between cardiologists at hub hospitals and teams at spoke hospitals. In total, 71,907 individuals with STEMI were treated over the five years. There was a 67% annual increase in the total number of individuals treated for STEMI. The proportion of individuals receiving pharmacoinvasive therapy increased from 7.9 to 31.7%. There was a 68% increase in the number of individuals receiving primary PCI. The number of individuals who did not receive guideline-directed treatment decreased by 20%.

The analysis found that there was a 6.7-fold rise in the individuals referred from spoke to hub hospitals for catheter-based revascularisation. The overall mortality showed a marginal decrease from 8.7 to 8.3%; phase-II hubs achieved a 68% reduction from 8.5% to 5.8% aligning with a rise in guideline-directed treatment. Dr. Paul said that in developed nations, STEMI care was centred on timely primary PCI, which must be done within 90-120 minutes by a specialist team in a cath lab. But this set up requiring 24x7 infrastructure and trained interventional cardiologists was not feasible in many developing nations including India. “The current study highlights that any timely treatment to restore blood flow is lifesaving, even if limited to fibrinolysis. Any form of revascularisation is definitely better than no revascularisation at all. Healthcare systems in developing nations must focus on early heart attack and at least start with fibrinolysis. This forms the foundation in which a pharmacoinvasive system can be built, as healthcare capabilities expand,” he added.

When Parkinson’s strikes early

Parkinson’s disease, often viewed as an ailment of the elderly, is manifesting with alarming frequency among younger individuals in India. This shift not only challenges existing clinical perceptions of the disease but also poses significant socio-economic and public healthcare implications for the nation. The tremors, stiffness, and slow movement commonly associated with the disease in old age are increasingly observed even in adults in their twenties, thirties and forties — at the prime of their lives. This unsettling trend demands more than just clinical attention; it calls for a systemic recalibration of how we understand, detect, and treat the second-most recurring neurodegenerative disorder in the world. The question is how can India redefine its healthcare strategies to include proper palliative care for Parkinson’s without compromising on its younger demographic, which is leading the country’s charge?

India is facing what can only be described as a dual burden — the expected increase of Parkinson’s disease in older adults and a growing tide of early-onset Parkinson’s disease. Compared with the global average age of diagnosis at around 60, India’s average is 51 — nearly a decade earlier. What is even more startling is that recent cohort studies in the Parkinsonism & Related Disorder Journal show that nearly 45% of patients develop symptoms between the ages of 22 and 49, a statistic that should trigger national concern. It means that India will have the highest absolute number of people with early-onset Parkinson’s disease, given its status as the most populous country. The younger patients experience the disease differently. They are more likely to suffer from dystonia (abnormal muscle contractions), early onset of levodopa-induced dyskinesias (involuntary movements), and psychiatric complications such as depression and anxiety. Because they are younger, they face longer disease durations, years of medication adjustments, employment disruptions, and emotional strain. In short, they are neurologically compromised while still economically and socially active, making the ripple effect of the early onset far wider than it appears.

Despite these shifts, community-level data in India remain sparse, particularly from rural areas where access to care is limited. A 2021 Lancet Global Health review noted the need for comprehensive neuroepidemiology surveys in India, particularly those that factor in region-specific exposures and lifestyles.

Patients often go through years of misdiagnosis or dismissal, partly because physicians themselves are conditioned to rule out Parkinson’s in younger individuals. In women, symptoms are even more likely to be misattributed to stress or hormonal changes. This results in delayed intervention, missed therapeutic windows, and irreversible neurological damage. To address this, India needs structured rehabilitation models and public health messaging around Parkinson’s, especially for young patients.

Strengthening early detection India’s expanding network of Ayushman Arogya Mandirs (erstwhile HWCs aka SHC) under the Ayushman Bharat programme offers an important opportunity to bring neurological screening closer to communities. Training primary care providers to recognise early signs of Parkinson’s, especially in younger individuals, can help improve early diagnosis and referral. Simple clinical checklists, community health worker sensitisation, and public awareness drives can reduce the delay in care-seeking and improve outcomes.

From a clinical standpoint, India presents a different biological profile. A recent paper on npj Parkinson’s Disease observed that genetic mutations common in Western patients (such as LRRK2 and SNCA) are rare among Indians, which suggests that environmental triggers such as pesticide exposure (notably paraquat), industrial pollutants, and air pollution could play a more significant role in this context. Yet these hypotheses remain underexplored due to the lack of large-scale, India-specific studies. It is equally important to recognise that early-onset Parkinson’s often remains undiagnosed in rural and underserved populations, where access to specialised neurological care is limited. Women, in particular, face a higher risk of misdiagnosis or delayed diagnosis. Addressing these inequities requires focused public health messaging, telemedicine outreach, and mobile diagnostic camps in remote areas. Ensuring that Parkinson’s care reaches every corner of the country must be considered a public health priority. Shifting the paradigm India is driving a mixed approach towards tackling Parkinson’s disease, which relies on broad-based government health schemes and healthcare efforts made by private hospitals. However, the growing challenges, especially those related to young-onset and early-onset



Parkinson’s disease, require a targeted response. The National Programme for Health Care of the Elderly is strengthening geriatric care. Yet, these schemes must be broadened to address the growing complexity of the disease arising from inconsistent implementation and a lack of disease-specific strategies. Promising models, such as Himachal Pradesh’s telestroke programme, demonstrate how telemedicine can bridge access gaps and could be adapted to enable remote Parkinson’s disease care and follow-ups. India can explore integrating patient-specific registries into the National Health Mission, expanding centres of excellence, and forging public-private partnerships to scale comprehensive, multidisciplinary care. The country should include Parkinson’s under Ayushman Bharat for insurance coverage, neurological diagnostics, and medications. Subsidising advanced therapies, such as deep brain stimulation, and supporting gene therapy trials can help India leverage its biotech capabilities while furthering advancements. Comprehensive strategy

India has already recognised brain health as part of the expanded National Mental Health Programme, a welcome step. However, there is a strong need to operationalise and strengthen services for neurological disorders such as Parkinson’s disease within this framework. Tackling the dual burden of Parkinson’s calls for better integration under existing non-communicable disease initiatives, expansion of insurance coverage under PM-JAY to include neurological care, and building stronger referral systems from primary to tertiary care. Public-private partnerships, multidisciplinary care models, and investments in research and national registries will help India move from reactive care to proactive, equitable management of Parkinson’s and related conditions. With a focused approach to genomics, gene therapy, early detection, de-stigmatisation.

All you need to know about: Eating disorders

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), eating disorders can lead to severe health complications and even death if untreated. The most common types include anorexia nervosa, bulimia nervosa, and binge-eating disorder. What are eating disorders? Eating disorders are mental and behavioral conditions involving persistent disturbances in eating behavior, often stemming from an obsession with food, body weight, or shape. The six main types of eating disorders include anorexia nervosa, bulimia nervosa, binge eating disorder (BED), pica, rumination disorder, and avoidant/restrictive food intake disorder (ARFID). These are complex mental health conditions that can have severe physical and emotional consequences. Anorexia nervosa, for instance, involves restrictive eating, an intense fear of gaining weight, and a distorted body image. This condition has two subtypes: the restricting type and the binge eating/purging type. Bulimia nervosa is characterised by recurring episodes of binge eating followed by purging behaviors, such as vomiting, laxative use, or excessive exercise. These behaviors can lead to side effects like an inflamed throat, swollen salivary glands, and tooth decay. Binge eating disorder (BED) involves consuming large amounts of food rapidly and secretly, often accompanied by feelings of distress and guilt. In contrast, pica involves eating non-food substances, which can result in poisoning, infections, and nutritional deficiencies. Rumination disorder is marked by regurgitating food, re-chewing, and re-swallowing or spitting it out, potentially leading to weight loss and severe malnutrition. Avoidant/restrictive food intake disorder (ARFID) is characterised by a lack of interest in eating or a distaste for certain foods, resulting in restrictive eating habits and potential nutritional deficiencies.

Nuclear power operator plans new design unit to support private players



nuclear power, Nuclear Power Corporation of India Ltd, NPCIL, nuclear power new design unit, Nuclear Power Corporation of India Ltd new design unit, NPCIL new design unit, Indian express news, current affairsBoth Adani Group and Jindal Steel are planning to develop 10 GWe and 18 GWe of nuclear capacity, respectively, in the coming years.Months after the country's tightly regulated nuclear power sector was opened to private participation, the Nuclear Power Corporation of India Ltd (NPCIL) plans to set up a new design vertical which will provide technological support to private players and state governments seeking to deploy indigenous nuclear reactor technology.

The proposal for the new vertical is currently under process. The Indian Express has learnt.With the draft rules under the Sustainable Harnessing and Advancement of Nuclear Energy for Transforming India (SHANTI) Act — it was enacted in December 2025 — now released and expected to provide greater clarity on the legal framework around licensing for new nuclear projects once notified, the state-owned company plans to streamline its functions through the new vertical.

This vertical will be a gateway for entities seeking access to pressurised heavy-water reactor (PHWR) technology and technical expertise, including technology support, design reviews and quality assurance.The move comes amid growing interest in PHWRs among prospective public and private sector entrants as a preferred technology for the initial phase of India's nuclear capacity expansion, given its established domestic supply chain and ecosystem.Currently, NPCIL implements PHWR-based nuclear power projects through indigenous technology developed in India. The country has a nuclear power capacity of 8.7 gigawatt-electric (GWe), all of which is run and operated by NPCIL.Earlier, the Central Electricity Authority (CEA), in its roadmap for achieving 100 GWe nuclear capacity by 2047, had also identified PHWRs as a prime candidate for adoption by other public sector undertakings and private companies.

“However, NPCIL having in its own pipeline expansion plans may find it difficult to hand hold all the new en-

trants interested in setting up PHWR plants. Therefore there is a compelling requirement for a dedicated and independent entity to provide technical support to other utilities,” the CEA said.It suggested that the proposed agency could be established under the Department of Atomic Energy (DAE), with experts drawn from the Bhabha Atomic Research Centre (BARC), the Indira Gandhi Centre for Atomic Research and other specialised DAE units.Queries sent to the DAE and NPCIL by The Indian Express did not elicit a response.Among global nuclear reactor technologies, India's indigenous PHWR is seen as the most cost-effective option for its price-sensitive power market, where high project costs can undermine nuclear power's competitiveness.India has seen similar challenges previously. The proposed French-assisted nuclear power project at Jaitapur in Maharashtra has remained stalled for years, with the high projected cost of electricity emerging a key hurdle to its progress.

Industry insiders said foreign reactor technologies such as light water reactors (LWRs) or pressurised water reactors (PWRs) are more expensive than indigenous PHWRs. Some estimates peg the cost of Indian reactors at around Rs 18 crore per megawatt-electric (MWe), compared with about Rs 34 crore per MWe for Russian reactors, while reactors from France and the US are estimated to cost much more.Domestic PHWRs are considered the most viable nuclear option, at around Rs 18 crore/MWe, for the price-sensitive Indian power market. Imported Russian, French and US technologies cost a lot more. Established design standards and a mature domestic supply chain are being flagged as key advantages for deployment of PHWRs in the initial phase of nuclear expansion.“The cost of foreign technologies can be viable in India only with bulk purchases. But that is difficult at this stage as no one is likely to order 15 or 25 reactors in one go. So, unless the cost of foreign reactors comes down, private players are most likely to initially opt for PHWRs, which are currently more cost-effective,” a nuclear industry sector expert told The Indian Express.

Industry executives also point to established design standards and a mature domestic supply chain as key advantages for deploying PHWRs during the initial phase of India's nuclear expansion.Last week, executives from two leading Indian private companies, Adani Atomic Energy and Jindal Steel, said the existing 700 MWe PHWR design could provide a practical starting point for scaling up nuclear capacity, given the availability of established design standards, a mature domestic supply chain and an established ecosystem of vendors and technical expertise.According to them, foreign reactor technologies and small modular reactors (SMRs) could play a role at a later stage as the sector matures.Both Adani Group and Jindal Steel are planning to develop 10 GWe and 18 GWe of nuclear capacity, respectively, in the coming years.

In ten months, Japan invested Rs 1 lakh cr out of Rs 7 lakh cr targeted for 10 yrs: Goyal

Union Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal on Wednesday said that Japan is one of India's most strategic partners and India is working to expand the scope, scale and extent of the engagement.The statement came at a time when India and Japan are expected to review their 2011 trade deals. New Delhi is concerned over a widening trade deficit with Tokyo.Japan has announced to invest 10 trillion yen (about Rs 7 lakh crore) in India over one decade. He said that India has received about Rs one lakh crore in investments from that target in about 10 months.

“We haven't got down to work on terms of reference, but I think once the teams have discussed, we will be open to expanding the scope, scale and the extent of the engagement because Japan today is one of our most strategic partners,” he added.Terms of Reference (ToR), in trade parlance, set the roadmap, boundaries, and rules for trade talks between countries.The commerce ministry is also supporting industry and exporters in registering their products to meet regulatory requirements, the minister said, adding that under the export promotion mission scheme, the ministry will facilitate and support micro and small businesses in undertaking expensive registrations such as the European Union's registering chemicals in the EU (REACH) regulations for chemicals.“For the pharma industry, I have also requested to start registrations all across the world...they should all look at registering all across the world, including Japan,” he said.The two-way commerce between the two countries grew 9.18% to \$27.47 billion in 2025-26 from \$25.16 billion in 2024-25.The trade deficit between the countries increased to \$15.4 billion in the last fis-



cal year from \$12.66 billion in 2024-25. It was \$12.53 billion in 2023-24 and \$11 billion in 2022-23.

He, however, said that “we also have to see what kinds of goods we are importing...which are the things we need, like equipment...which help us in promoting economic activities”.The minister said he has asked different industries to submit challenges they are facing in exporting goods to Japan.“Many times these challenges are more about process and language and time, and our mission stands ready to support all sectors,” he said.Earlier, in the day while addressing a round table on start ups which was attended by start ups from India and investors from Japan, Goyal called for four areas of focus — deeptech capital corridor for early-stage funding, leveraging India's design-to-deployment ecosystem, building a two-way innovation bridge across universities and industry, and launching an India-Japan Shark Tank-style pitching series.

JSW MG unveils plug-in hybrid EV with 1,100 km range



The Hector Tomahawk EV will be priced at an introductory Rs 13.99 lakh under the battery-as-a-service (BaaS) model, along with a battery rental of Rs 4.90 per km. The full-ownership price starts at Rs 19.49 lakh.

JSW MG Motor India on Wednesday unveiled the Hector Tomahawk, the first vehicle built on its newly-developed Advanced Drive Architecture Platform Technology (ADAPT), which the company describes as India's first multi-new-energy-vehicle platform.The SUV will be available in both electric vehicle (EV) and plug-in hybrid electric vehicle (PHEV) versions with a range of over 1100 kms. The Hector Tomahawk EV will be priced at an introductory Rs 13.99 lakh under the battery-as-a-service (BaaS) model, along with a battery rental of Rs 4.90 per km. The full-ownership price starts at Rs 19.49 lakh.The PHEV starts at Rs 21.79

Climate change heat stress puts 145 m Indian children at risk of dehydration, heatstroke: Study



For parents, extreme heat is no longer simply a matter of checking the weather forecast. It is beginning to shape everyday decisions about whether children can walk to school, play outdoors or even spend time outside in the evening. “Extreme heat must be treated as a disaster, not just a weather warning,” says Bhavreen Kandhari, a Delhi-based mother of two. She is deeply worried that cities are becoming increasingly unliveable for children.

“We worry about children falling sick, dehydration, whether their journeys to school can be safe with worsening air pollution now mixing with extreme heat. Childhood shrinks in this extreme heat. It is a loss of play, a loss of outdoor childhood. We used to check the AQI (air quality index) before sending children outside, and now we are also checking the temperature. At 6:30 pm, the temperature still hovers at 38 or 40 degrees — can we even send the children out to play? This captures the reality of parenting in urban India right now, and it is not good,” Kandhari told The Indian Express.

Kandhari, who has set up Warrior Moms, a nationwide network of mothers and citizens fighting for children's right to breathe clean air, is now seeing another threat converge with air pollution: extreme heat. Her concerns resonate with new research from Vrije Universiteit Brussel (VUB), which finds that up to 560 million children aged 0-9 globally — 43% of all children in this age group — are experiencing at least one additional month, or 30 or more days, of heat stress every year because of human-induced climate change. In India, the number is 145 million children, or 61 % of those aged 0-9.The study, published in Science Advances, combined population data with state-of-the-art climate models and attribution science to determine how much of this exposure can be linked specifically to human-induced climate change.

According to Rosa Pietrouisti, lead author of the study and a PhD researcher at VUB, children's exposure is higher than that of any other age group. It is also nearly three times the number of people aged 60-69 — about 190 million, or 30% of that age group — experiencing at least one additional month of heat stress.

Why are the findings significant?

The findings are particularly concerning because children are physiologically more vulnerable to extreme heat. Their bodies heat up faster than those of adults, they sweat less efficiently and they depend on adults to keep them hydrated, rested and protected. Excessive heat can disrupt the body's normal functioning and, in severe cases, cause dehydration, heatstroke and organ failure. It can also interfere with learning and cognitive development.The study fo-

Pancreatic cancer's once daily pill gets US FDA nod: What it means for therapy and India?

The FDA has approved daraxonrasib for certain advanced pancreatic cancer patients. Here is what the new treatment means and what trial results show.The FDA has approved daraxonrasib for certain advanced pancreatic cancer patients. Here is what the new treatment means and what trial results show.For people with advanced pancreatic cancer, a new treatment could mean more time to live, as it represents a breakthrough in an area scientists have struggled with for decades. The US Food and Drug Administration approved daraxonrasib (brand name Rasonque), an oral pill taken once a day, for certain patients whose cancer has spread and stopped responding to earlier treatment.

It is the first approved pancreatic cancer treatment aimed at suppressing the RAS protein, one of the key drivers of the disease. In a major trial, patients taking the drug lived a median of 13.2 months, compared to 6.7 months with chemotherapy. The hazard ratio for death was about 0.40, indicating a substantial reduction in the risk of death during the study period.But there is an important distinction between doubling median survival and doubling an individual's life expectancy. The trial result is a population median: some patients will live considerably longer, while others will not respond or may have to stop treatment because of toxicity.

Why the drug approval matters so muchPancreatic cancer is one of the most challenging types of cancer to treat. A large proportion of patients are diagnosed only after the cancer has spread, limiting the possibility of surgery. The tumour itself is also biologically difficult to treat, with a dense surrounding microenvironment — the stroma — that has been resistant to many treatment strategies.As Professor Anant Ramaswamy, specialist in gastrointestinal cancers and Geriatric Oncology at Tata Memorial Centre, Mumbai, noted in our earlier explainer, advanced pancreatic cancer has historically offered only incremental improvements despite decades of research. Against that background, a treatment that produced a median survival of 13.2 months after earlier therapy — compared with 6.7 months for chemotherapy — represents a meaningful change in the treatment landscape.

What does the pill actually do?

The drug targets RAS, a family of proteins that act like a signalling switch inside cells. As cells mutate in cancers, they impact RAS, leaving this signalling system stuck in an abnormal growth-promoting state. KRAS, one member of the RAS family, fuels pancreatic cancer.Daraxonrasib belongs to a new generation of medicines designed to switch off RAS proteins. The FDA describes it as targeting multiple forms of RAS, a key driver of tumour growth. For decades, RAS was regarded as one of cancer biology's most difficult targets. Researchers could identify the problem but struggled to block the protein effectively without risking toxicity. Daraxonrasib shows that the target can, in fact, be attacked successfully in patients. The trial met its primary and key secondary endpoints, including overall survival and progression-free survival. Patient-reported quality-of-life measures also favoured daraxonrasib.

Daraxonrasib is not currently approved as an across-the-board first treatment for pancreatic cancer. The approved population is adults with metastatic pancreatic adenocarcinoma who have received at least one previous systemic treatment, or are not candidates for multiagent

cuses on humid heat, which can be more dangerous than dry heat because high humidity prevents sweat from evaporating efficiently, making it harder for the body to cool itself. As climate change makes heat waves more frequent and intense, children are increasingly exposed to conditions in which their bodies struggle to regulate temperature.

The risks are not evenly distributed. Children from low-income families can be particularly vulnerable because they may have fewer options to escape the heat — whether through air-conditioning, reliable electricity, access to cool spaces or the ability to alter school and travel routines.Dr Harshal Salvé of AIIMS, New Delhi, said the research adds to the growing evidence of the health impacts of climate change on children. “UNICEF has warned that nearly half of the world's children face at least three major climate-related threats, including extreme heat and heat waves. In India, rising temperatures and more frequent heat waves are making it increasingly difficult for children to stay safe and healthy. Children from low-income families are at even greater risk because they often have fewer ways to protect themselves from the heat. When children's health suffers, it can affect their education, growth and, ultimately, our future,” he added.

What does heat stress mean?

Heat stress days in the study are days of humid heat stress, defined as a wet-bulb globe temperature in the shade of more than 28°C. At these levels, protective measures such as reducing physical activity and taking structured rest periods are recommended to prevent heat-related illness.Additional heat stress days are those attributable to human-induced climate change — days that would not have occurred in the absence of climate change. Researchers estimate these using attribution methods applied to observation-based reanalysis data or global climate models. Total heat stress days include both days attributable to climate change and those that would have occurred even without it.The VUB analysis shows that climate change has already doubled the number of Indian children aged 0-9 exposed to at least five total months of dangerous heat stress each year — from 59 million to 118 million, or 50% of children in this age group.

The projections become starker with further warming. In a 1.5°C warmer world, around 166 million Indian children (74%) aged 0-9 are projected to experience at least one additional month of heat stress each year. Around 123 million (55%) could experience at least five total months, or 150 days, of heat stress.In a 2°C warmer world, the number experiencing at least one additional month of heat stress could rise to 169 million (96%), while around 120 million (68%) could experience at least five total months.Globally, the pattern is similar. In a 1.5°C world, around 620 million children (49%) aged 0-9 are projected to experience at least one additional month of heat stress per year. At 2°C of warming, this could rise to around 650 million (59%). South Asia, Southeast Asia and West Africa are projected to have the highest numbers of children exposed to dangerous heat stress.For Wim Thiery, senior author of the study and professor at VUB, the findings underline the need for urgent action. Protecting children from the worst impacts of climate change will require policymakers to drastically reduce fossil-fuel emissions and limit warming in line with the Paris Agreement.



systemic therapy.So, a newly diagnosed patient with potentially operable pancreatic cancer does not simply replace surgery or chemotherapy with this pill. The old therapies — surgery, chemotherapy and radiotherapy where appropriate — remain important. Targeted therapy is being added to the arsenal.Trials are continuing to examine whether daraxonrasib can move into earlier lines of treatment and potentially into combination approaches. Revolution Medicines, the manufacturer, is also developing other RAS-targeting drugs and studying the class in cancers beyond pancreatic cancer.The convenience of a tablet should not be confused with the absence of side effects. The FDA lists rash, diarrhoea, inflammation/ulceration of the mouth (stomatitis), nausea, fatigue, vomiting, abdominal pain, swelling (edema), decreased appetite and haemorrhage among the common adverse effects.

Earlier clinical data also showed that dose reductions were sometimes necessary. Doctors will have to assess whether, for an individual patient, the balance between tumour control, survival, side effects and quality of life is better with daraxonrasib than with available alternatives.The reported US wholesale acquisition cost is \$39,800 for a 30-day supply at the recommended daily dose (roughly ?38 lakh at current exchange rates). That translates to roughly \$477,600 a year (roughly ?4.5 crore a year) before insurance discounts, rebates or other adjustments. But the list price is not the same thing as what an insured patient necessarily pays. Actual out-of-pocket costs depend on insurance coverage, deductibles, co-pay or co-insurance arrangements and assistance programmes.

For India, there is an additional issue: US FDA approval does not automatically make it an approved or routinely available medicine in India. Regulatory approval, importation, local marketing arrangements and reimbursement would all affect eventual Indian access. That makes accessibility one of the next big questions for Indian oncologists and patients.

What does this then mean for India?

For Indian patients, the FDA decision is best viewed as a major scientific development rather than an immediate guarantee of access.

There is, however, a larger reason for optimism. RAS mutations are found across several major cancers. Daraxonrasib is being investigated not only in pancreatic cancer but also in other RAS-driven malignancies, including lung and colorectal cancers. The pancreatic-cancer approval therefore validates an entire therapeutic strategy rather than a single drug. The drug is “one more option” rather than a cure for a stubborn kind of cancer.

After Brazil clash, India to face Uruguay in Kolkata on September 6



GNS News Agency, August 28

With matches against Brazil and Panama confirmed, India will face another Latin American giant in 2-time FIFA World Cup winners Uruguay in Kolkata. The match which will be held in the Salt Lake Stadium on October 6, will take place just 3 days after India's historic fixture vs Brazil in the same venue on October 3. "The Indian men's national team will welcome another heavyweight of world football to Kolkata, with two-time FIFA World Cup champions Uruguay set to face India in an international friendly match at the Vivekananda Yuba Bharati Krirangan on October 6, 2026," the All India Football Federation said on Thursday. Uruguay, who are currently ranked 20th in the world, had a disappointing World Cup this year, failing to cross the group stages. They are currently coached by the legendary Diego Forlán who played for Mumbai City FC in 2016. He replaced Marcelo Bielsa who left the team after Uruguay's disappointing World Cup campaign. This match was the latest fixture to be added to AIFF's calendar after India withdrew from the inaugural FIFA ASEAN Cup in order to

prioritise their high-profile friendly against Brazil, thus avoiding a scheduling clash that had made their participation in both competitions untenable. The Sree Kanteerava Stadium in Bengaluru has been chosen as the venue for the Indian senior men's team's international friendly against Panama on September 26, the AIFF said. The fixture will mark the Blue Tigers' first appearance in Bengaluru since their SAFF Championship 2023 campaign, when India lifted the title on home soil after defeating Kuwait in the final at the same venue. Panama, currently ranked 44th in the world, will provide India with a high-quality test. The Central American nation featured at the FIFA World Cup 2026, adding further significance to the game.

It will be India's first friendly against a World Cup-playing nation in a busy international period, coming exactly one week before they take on the five-time world champions Brazil in Kolkata on October 3. Bengaluru has previously witnessed India record a victory over a high-ranked opposition when the Blue Tigers won 1-0 against the United Arab Emirates (ranked 54 places above India) in the FIFA World Cup qualifiers in 2001. Twenty-five years later, the city will once again host India against a highly ranked opponent. NA Haris, vice president, AIFF, and president of Karnataka State Football Association, said, "Bengaluru has always had a special relationship with Indian football, and the atmosphere during the 2023 SAFF Championship, culminating in India lifting the title here, demonstrated the city's passion and support for the national team." "Hosting another international match against a high-quality World Cup nation like Panama is a grand occasion for the city and an opportunity for football fans across Karnataka to come together and support the Blue Tigers once again. We are confident that Bengaluru will create another memorable atmosphere for the team," he added.

How Ancy Sojan broke India's 22-year-old long jump record while managing PCOD

GNS News Agency, August 28

Plain rice was replaced by vegetables and meat, while biryani and maida-based Malabar parotta were junked by Ancy Sojan, the long jumper who broke Anju Bobby George's 22-year-old national record in June. Before jumping 6.88 metres at the Inter-State Championships to better Anju's 6.83m, Ancy needed to manage weight gain caused by Polycystic Ovarian Disease, diagnosed only last year. Last week, after winning gold at the World Athletics Continental Tour Silver in Bhubaneswar, with a best jump of 6.71 metres, Ancy spoke about her struggle with PCOD.

"Now, I am 55 kilograms, but at the start of last year I was 63kg. My body fat percentage was 26 last year. I checked my fat percentage before coming to Bhubaneswar, it is just 13 now," Ancy told The Indian Express. Irregular periods led to weight gain and an uncontrollable craving for food, said the 25-year-old, who is bound for the Asian Games. Ancy got her first period in her late teens. "Initially, if I didn't get my period for one month, I will get it in the next month. At that time, I was very lean. But in 2025, it started to get worse. I started eating a larger quantity of food. Last year, I trained for three months, and all I lost was just a percent of fat. My coach said, 'earlier, two weeks of training were enough for you to get lean.' I had to do something," Ancy said. She suspected these were symptoms of PCOD but never got herself tested, until things got out of control last year and she had to address it.

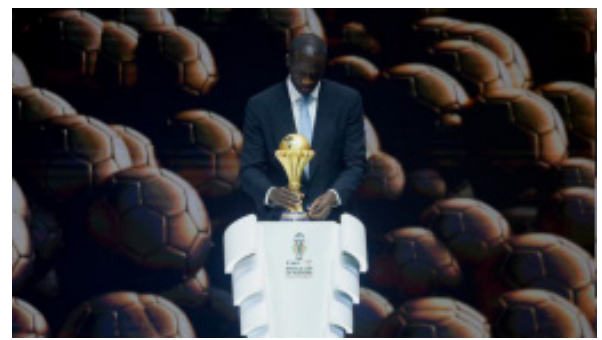
"I started missing my period for a second month too. I was gaining too much weight. I started getting joint pain and mood swings, and I had low energy. I couldn't get a good output in training last year. I knew this was a symptom of PCOD. My nutritionist told me to consult a doctor," Ancy said. Ancy Sojan started sketching 'Avengers' on the cover of Blinkit bags and now regularly posts on a second Instagram account. (Credit: Mis.Picasso/Insta) Ancy Sojan started sketching 'Avengers' on the cover of Blinkit bags and now regularly posts on a second Instagram account. (Credit: Mis.Picasso/Insta) The doctor's diagnosis was PCOD-related hormone imbalance. Ancy manages a tricky balance even today. A side effect of the medicine she takes when she misses her period is weight gain. "If I start the medicine, that also results in weight gain. But once I get my period, the weight goes down. Before the Asian Games, I need to have the medication and get my period, so I can lose weight," Ancy said. Giving up comfort food is a challenge for Ancy, but she's willing to make the sacrifice. "I am eating salads, meat, fish, and one roti. The doctor told me, you are not a long-distance runner, so you don't need too many carbs. If you want to have rice, eat only brown rice. Even if I order food, I stick to a Subway sandwich," said Ancy, who hails from Natika in Thrissur. The change in diet, the medication, and learning to live with PCOD helped Ancy



improve. At the Continental Tour Silver in Bhubaneswar, five of Ancy's legal jumps were over 6.50 metres. When she broke Anju's national record at the Inter-State Championships in June, her series of jumps read: 6.73m, foul, 6.67m, 6.72m, 6.88m and 6.69m.

"Before, in India, 6.71 metres (Silver Tour) was a huge jump. Now it is average for me. 6.88 metres was a statement. From 2022 onwards, I started thinking of a 7-metre jump," Ancy said. Ancy Sojan, who has taken to sketching, has completed four coloring books. (Credit: Mis.Picasso/Insta) Ancy Sojan, who has taken to sketching, has completed four coloring books. (Credit: Mis.Picasso/Insta) Ancy's coach at the Jio Institute in Navi Mumbai, Anoop Joseph, said they began training for the 2026 season in September. "This year, the focus was on speed on the runway. Her strength has improved. Her clean lift is now 82kg plus. Previously, it was 75kg. She has a good technique, so that helps," Joseph said. Speed comes naturally to her: 11.82 seconds, her best time in the 100 metres, from 2021, when she was an active sprinter. The challenge for Ancy is to hold her peak form until the Asian Games. She broke the national record in June; the Games begin September 19. "She has to hold her peak. 6.88 metres is close to her maximum peak this season. So, we have not changed a single exercise. We don't want to add any new exercises. I know it is very boring for an athlete, but she understands. She has the potential to jump seven metres," Joseph said. When she isn't chasing the seven-metre goal, Ancy relaxes by sketching. She started with Avengers characters printed on bags from the delivery app Blinkit, and has since graduated to a full sketchbook. "I have a second Instagram page, mis.picasso, where I post randomly. I have completed four sketchbooks. When my boyfriend saw I was busy colouring, he called me 'hey Miss Picasso.' So I went with that name for Instagram."

Yaya Touré makes history as first African manager in UCL group stage



GNS News Agency, August 28

Manchester City and Ivory Coast legend Yaya Touré became the first-ever African manager to lead a football club to the group stage of the UEFA Champions League on Wednesday night. He achieved the feat with Slovan Bratislava of Slovakia. The team secured their ticket to the group stage after a 2-1 extra-time win over Celje in the second leg of the final qualifying-round match at Arena Zdele. Cristian Martínez scored the winner in the 100th minute as Slovan won the pulsating double-header 3-2 on aggregate.

Touré, who is in his first top-level managerial role, surpassed the achievement of Ndubuisi Egbro, the Nigerian coach who led FK Tirana of Albania to UCL qualification but failed to progress beyond the qualifying stage in 2020. Slovan Bratislava remain undefeated in the Slovak League with four wins from four matches and are the defending champions. In the first leg, the Slovak club produced a 1-1 draw at home. In the away leg, they survived a late onslaught before net-

ting the winner in the 100th minute. Andra Šporar put Touré's team ahead in the 18th minute, before Celje responded in the 34th minute through an awarded penalty, converted by Svit Šešlar. Before taking up the managerial role at Slovan in July 2026, the 43-year-old had a storied playing career with Barcelona and Manchester City, winning La Liga twice, the Premier League three times, and the UEFA Champions League in 2008-09. He also won the Africa Cup of Nations with Ivory Coast in 2015. After hanging up his boots in 2020, Touré served as assistant manager at multiple clubs, including Standard Liege and the Saudi Arabia national team. He also served as head coach of Tottenham Hotspur's U16 academy. The team will learn about their group stage opponents on Thursday after the UEFA Champions League group stage draw.

Four tons, six-wicket haul high-light HCA C-Division league

Hyderabad: Centuries by Siva Aditya Das Gupta (118) for Heeradi CC, Mohd Ameer (117 no) for Universal, P. Rayudu Nayak (179 no) for Walker Town, K. Vishal Sabarish (110) for Youth CC, fine spell by Akhil Mainam (six for 12) for HCA Districts were some of the highlights of the HCA C-Division one-day league cricket championship here on Wednesday. Heeradi CC 259/4 in 33 overs (Rishi Rathod Ramavath 55, Siva Aditya Das Gupta 118, Akshaj Goud 34 no) bt Raju C Academy 83/8 in 33 overs (K Mokshagna Karthikeya 30, Akshaj Goud 3/14).

Dinusha, lower order frustrate India as Sri Lanka extend lead



Colombo: A cramping Sonal Dinusha's bloody-mindedness blunted Indian bowlers for the second session in a row as a defiant Sri Lanka went to tea at 383 for eight on the fifth day of the second and final Test here on Thursday. Dinusha (98) and Lahiru Kumara (2) were batting at the break with Sri Lanka swelling their lead to 170 runs in the second innings after being asked to follow-on. It was an unimaginable situation once the hosts resumed the day from 229 for six, a mere 16 runs ahead.

India were expected to walk through the remaining Lankan batters, but first they hit a roadblock against the

Dinusha-Keshara Nuwantha (46, 150b) pair. The seventh wicket alliance produced 112 runs but more importantly it consumed 174 minutes and 246 balls. Their effort ensured that Indian bowlers added one more chapter to their eons-old struggles against late order batters. The pacers did try some short-ball and leg-side bowling tactics but they appeared largely flat throughout the session. Spinners — Manav Suthar, Saransh Jain and Ravindra Jadeja — managed to get some turn and bounce on occasions but the ball eluded the bat to the tourists' dismay.

In Sri Lanka's first innings of 290, the last three wickets had batted 45 overs between them while adding 117 runs. But the numbers only tell half the tale, as Dinusha continued to be a thorn in the flesh, a term used by spin bowling coach Sairaj Bahutule at the end of the fourth day here. The little left-hander produced his fourth 50-plus score in as many innings in this series as Indians might just seriously consider writing a calypso for him — "We couldn't out Dinusha." The 25-year-old reached his fifty in 99 balls with a single off Ravindra Jadeja. However, Jadeja eventually broke the stand at the beginning of the post-lunch session, inducing an edge from Nuwantha for Jurel at second slip. But Indians ran into another obdurate Lankan in Lahiru Kumara, who batted out 56 balls for his single digit innings which has as much value as Dinusha's epic.

Dehradun T20 League aims to fast-track Uttarakhand's young talent: Mahim Verma

Dehradun: Former BCCI vice-president and former Cricket Association of Uttarakhand secretary Mahim Verma believes the inaugural Dehradun T20 League 2026 will provide a crucial platform for young cricketers in the state, offering them greater exposure and an opportunity to develop in a professional competitive environment. The six-team franchise tournament will be held from September 2 to 9 at the Abhimanyu Cricket Academy in Dehradun, featuring Rishikesh Dragons, Doiwala Kings, Mussoorie Thunder, Herbertpur Knightriders, Vikasnagar Dhamaka and Selaqui Strikers. A total of 18 matches will be played during the competition.

Verma said one of the league's primary objectives was to bridge the gap between grassroots cricket and the professional game by giving promising players an environment in which they could test themselves under pressure. "Our main goal with the Dehradun T20 League is to give our boys the kind of environment that speeds up their growth. Uttarakhand has no shortage of raw talent, but what our young players needed was a high-exposure platform where they could test themselves under pressure, learn professional match standards, and get noticed," Verma said.

Navneet Mishra, CEO of the Dehradun T20 League, said organisers had focused on creating a professional ecosystem for players through investment in infrastructure, broadcast facilities and player welfare. "We haven't spared any effort in making sure this league matches the highest professional standards in terms of infrastructure, broadcast, and player facilities. Our focus is to create an ecosystem where young athletes feel valued and inspired to perform at their absolute best. Seeing the enthusiasm from players and franchises alike gives us complete confidence that this league will become a cornerstone for cricket development in the region," Mishra stated. According to Verma, one of the key benefits for emerging players will be the opportunity to share dressing rooms and playing environments with experienced domestic cricketers, helping them understand the demands of competing at higher levels.



"When an 18 or 19-year-old kid shares a dugout with established domestic names, their entire perspective changes. They learn how to handle big-match pressure, how to prepare mentally, and how to carry themselves as professionals. That exposure is priceless, and it will give them the confidence to perform at higher levels of Indian cricket," Verma added. All 18 matches, including 15 league fixtures, two semi-finals and the final, will provide the tournament and its players a wider audience. "Having nationwide coverage means these young players aren't just playing for their franchises; they are putting their names on the radar. I am confident that this inaugural season will mark the beginning of a new era for cricket in Uttarakhand, and we will see many of these boys step up to make the state proud in the coming years," Verma noted. With the inaugural edition set to get underway next month, the organisers are hoping the Dehradun T20 League will establish a stronger pathway for emerging talent and become a significant platform for the continued development of cricket in Uttarakhand.

Sehwag, Dravid's sons picked in India U-19 squads for Australia series



Hyderabad: The Men's Selection Committee has announced the India Under-19 squads for the upcoming tour of India by Australia Under-19, comprising three One-Day

matches and two Multi-Day fixtures. Aaryavir Sehwag, son of former India opener Virender Sehwag, and Anvay Dravid, son of former India captain Rahul Dravid, are among those selected. The three One-Day matches and the first Multi-Day fixture will be played in Rajkot, while the second Multi-Day fixture will be held in Ahmedabad.

India Under-19 squad for One-Day matches: Lakshya Raichandani (C), Yashbhardhan Chauhan (VC), Rajat Baghel (WK), Aaryavir Sehwag, V.K. Vineet, Kushagra Ojha, Arjun Rajput, Manal Chauhan, Anvay Dravid (WK), V. Yashveer, Rohit Yadav, Shavin Vinodh, Mohit Ulva, Chigurupati Venkata, Kavya Patel. India Under-19 squad for Multi-Day fixtures: Yashbhardhan Chauhan (C), Lakshya Raichandani (VC), Sagor Virk, Kushagra Ojha, Manal Chauhan, Kush Patel, Manav Krishna (WK), Abhipray Biswas (WK), Rohit Yadav, Ishan Om, Ayaan Akram, Pranav Ragavendra, Priyanshu Singh, Mohit Ulva, Aryan Yadav.

Rachin Ravindra reveals admiration for Manchester City



New Delhi: New Zealand all-rounder Rachin Ravindra has revealed his deep admiration for Premier League champions Manchester City, citing their controlling style of play

as the main reason for his allegiance to the English football giants. Manchester City will face Crystal Palace in the Premier League Season 2026/27 on August 29. "I'm a Manchester City guy. I've followed them for a while. I like the way they play and the style of football they bring. Watching them is always exciting, and I enjoy seeing how they control games," Ravindra said to JioStar on Wednesday.

Recalling his experiences of watching top-tier matches live at the stadium, Ravindra, the attacking left-handed batter who also bowls left-arm orthodox spin, singled out a visit to the Etihad Stadium as the pivotal moment that cemented his support for the club. "I've had two incredible football experiences. One of them made me a Manchester City fan. They hosted me at the Etihad (Stadium) for the first Premier League game of last season against Tottenham. We didn't win, but it was still a great day. "More recently, I went to the Round of 16 match between Spain and Portugal in Dallas. That was one of the best days of my life. It might have been Ronaldo's last international game, which was a bit sad, but it was special to be there," he added. Asked to identify a fellow international cricketer with exceptional football skills, Wellington-based Ravindra picked former England fast bowler Chris Woakes to captain a key defensive position. "I'd say Chris Woakes. He would make a very solid centre-back. He's good on the ball, comfortable under pressure, and reads the game well. I think he has the skills to play that role."

Inside Karan Johar's Traitors wardrobe: Blood all over, crow trench, roses on black



The devil really exists in the details, essentially when it comes to Karan Johar's wardrobe in *The Traitors*. If season 1 of Amazon Prime Video's reality show saw the filmmaker embrace the excess, season 2 is all camp on steroids. "Karan can wear a lot of capes. He can easily switch from being a director to an actor to a talk show host to an award show host to a reality show host. I haven't seen anyone be so at ease with who they are when they're doing such different things," his stylist Eka Lakhani tells SCREEN in an exclusive interview.

Inside Karan Johar's *Traitors* wardrobe Of all the many roles Karan Johar takes on with ease, *Traitors* is perhaps the furthest removed from his real-life persona. Somewhere, it feeds into his perceived image as Bollywood's dictatorial ruler, a persona he briefly embraced in Aryan Khan's *The Baaghi* of Bollywood on Netflix last year. "Traitors already carries a little bit of that crime thriller aspect to it within the reality show spectrum. Karan wanted his wardrobe to be very different from what he wears on *Koffee with Karan* or any other reality show he's done. We wanted *Traitors* to have the language of Karan not being himself, but becoming the character he is on *Traitors*. You'll see it happen not only with his wardrobe, but also with his personality. You don't see him chirpy and goofing around like he usually does," points out Eka.

It's probably the camp aesthetic of *Traitors* that helps Karan get an entry point into that personality. Because it's not just a random page taken out of the camp textbook, but a curated look in sync with not only the show, but also what the episode, its setting, and the task of the day entail. "We wanted to keep the opening episode somewhere in the 'love and war' space. Which is why you see him with a black robe with roses on it. That's when we introduced his cat, Boo. I don't know if you noticed it, but when Boo is introduced, he has a collar with a rose on it. In that episode, we see his second change where all his roses are gone, and he's just kept one big rose with him. So, we tried to keep the story going for that episode," underlines Eka. Another look that captured the audience's attention is the black overcoat with a cape designed like a crow feathers. Eka Lakhani claims that it's being called the "Moiri Rose outfit", referring to the iconic crow-inspired costume worn by late Catherine O'Hara in Netflix's popular comedy show *Schitt's Creek*. "We wanted to add that extra layer of mystery to the oath ceremony, just that feeling of hiding in the shadows," says Eka. Another look had blood-red splattering all across his white robe. "When there was a murder in the episode, we thought let it be all about blood. We didn't want it to be aesthetically spread blood, but just blood spattered all over," she adds, laughing. Not too many filmmakers — probably none in India — can pull off these looks, whether on television or Instagram. Eka understands that those who follow Karan Johar on Instagram may be surprised to see him this way on *Traitors*. But the shock value of that wardrobe is so high that the polarising response is almost embroidered into all the looks. "We know it's going to go viral. While creating a look, we know it's what people would love or hate. There's no in between. And we're okay with that. We're okay

with getting comments that they don't get the look. It's a high-impact look designed to make some noise," explains Eka. Eka Lakhani, Karan Johar go a long way back

Ironically, Eka Lakhani's collaboration with Karan Johar began with his least glamorous film — *Lust Stories* (2018) on Netflix. The short film, starring Kiara Advani and Vicky Kaushal, was too small for Karan's go-to costume designer Manish Malhotra. Which is when he roped in Eka, best known for her work in stylised yet rooted cinema like Santosh Sivan's *Urumi* (2011) and *Ceylon* (2013), and Mani Ratnam's *Kadal* (2013) and *Kaatru Veliyidai* (2017) in Tamil, and *Gulaab Gang* (2014), *NH10* (2015), *24* (2016), and *Ok Jaanu* (2017) in Hindi.

"My association with Mani sir is what defines me the most. He gave me my first break. All my basic learnings and film schooling is from him," says Eka, who as we speak, is on the set of the filmmaker's next in Puducherry. "What I've learnt the most from him is to keep it real. Whether I'm on a Mani Ratnam set, Karan Johar set or a Rajkumar Hirani set, I'm giving them what they want and the world they want to create. In the end, it's a director's medium. Their worlds are different, but they just want to show beauty in a certain way. I'm just adapting to their aesthetic," she adds. Given her background, she was the perfect fit to come up with those muted yet gorgeous cotton saris for Kiara in *Lust Stories*. She married her background in design with Karan's cinematic aesthetic to give those saris a quintessential small-town flavour, without falling prey to the "raw and grunge" textures of realistic cinema.

Lust Stories was followed by Karan's segment in another Netflix anthology, *Ghost Stories* (2020), where Eka designed costumes for Mrunal Thakur and Avinash Tiwary. She landed her first feature with Karan three years later — *Rocky Aur Rani Kii Prem Kahaani* (2023). She considers the Rocky Randhawa-West Delhi wardrobe for Ranveer Singh in the family comedy as her favourite work for the actor, whom she continues to style till date. "It was actually Karan who pushed me towards styling. I'd styled actors for promotions briefly, but not as much as I'm doing now. Karan gave birth to my parallel career of being a stylist," says Eka, giving credit where it's due.

After *Rocky Aur Rani Kii Prem Kahaani*, Eka began styling Karan for all his public appearances. Karan has maintained that while the bling and the love for diamonds in both his and Ranveer's wardrobe stems from their Sindhi genes, he's gone through a style evolution of his own, switching back to monochromes and all-black attires. Confessing that he no longer feels the need to attract attention for the sake of it, he said he had come into his own. Eka has been more than happy to adapt. "As a stylist, it's very important to grow with your client. It's not about what looks good today, but which phase of your life you're in now. Hence, I go along with them on their journey," she says.

"I was with Karan when he was enjoying all the colours and the diamonds. And now, I'm with him in this phase where he wanted it to be a little more subdued. But we're still serving a look. The genre might have changed, but we're not shying away from fashion," she insists, adding that both their aesthetics have also rubbed on each other. "I also keep learning from him. He's the first one to know what's in. You can take away the colour out of him, but not the fashion," says Eka Lakhani, echoing the same sentiment for Ranveer Singh, who was once a reliable head-turned on the red carpet. "My head still turns when he walks the red carpet. He's still a head-turner," asserts Eka, laughing. "Now, whenever I see Karan or Ranveer in a lot of colour, I take a beat and think we're doing something wrong. So, I'm very happy with where they are fashion-wise," she adds. Karan Johar also agrees that despite his fashion sense, he couldn't have shaped his styling journey sans her expertise. "Eka's skills as a stylist and curation of fashion is truly admirable. She has an old-world charm about how she approaches a garment," Karan tells SCREEN. "She has the immense ability to capture the right costume at the right moment. From her designing the costumes in my films to her styling me for the Met Gala, we've had an emotional and exceptional journey. I can't imagine being on a film set or at a big event without having Eka by my side," he adds. For someone who shaped the wardrobe of Shah Rukh Khan in the late 1990s at the peak of his superstardom, it's safe to say that in Eka Lakhani, he's found the Karan Johar he didn't know he was looking for.

Mukesh Khanna refused crores, won't let Ranveer Singh play Shaktimaan: 'He can be villain'

Actor Mukesh Khanna is widely known for his superhero character, Shaktimaan, who was an integral part of growing up in the 90s in India. The series was to be adapted into a film with Ranveer Singh was almost finalised to play the character on big screen. However, Khanna has strongly opposed this choice, and believes that only a fresh face has the potential to do justice to Shaktimaan. He said that actors like Shah Rukh Khan, Ranveer Singh, who have star value, won't portray the character convincingly. In a fresh interview with Subhojit Ghosh, Mukesh Khanna questioned "Why should I move on? I have made Shaktimaan" to those trolling him over not moving on from this character. Khanna also admitted that he has blocked not only Sony India but also Sony International from making this film, and added that Ranveer is, however, fit for Kilwish's role (an antagonist in Shaktimaan) because he has portrayed Khilji's role in *Padmaavat*. And, he offered this role to the star right at Mukesh Khanna's office.

"Ranveer Singh can play Dhurandhar, Gully Boy, Khilji but not Shaktimaan," said Mukesh Khanna to those who tried convincing him to let the star be the face of India's superhero. "For that, we need the right image and face, something he doesn't have. He has a mischievous face, a scheming face. Shaktimaan has to be very positive, very positive. So you're right that I have said something like that about that actor. I never said that he is a bad actor."

When the host prodded to know Ranveer Singh's reaction to Kilwish's offer, the senior actor said, "I sent him away from here after listening to him because he was very, very interested in Shaktimaan. I mean, he sat here for three hours and tried very hard to convince me. And I was even feeling guilty that I was turning him down, because I just couldn't see the kind of face I wanted for Shaktimaan in him. He was so energetic that during those three hours, he sat here and told his whole story. He sat down on the floor. Aditya Chopra came from behind. I was... and suddenly, I was amazed. I have never seen a more energetic man than him. After Dev Anand saab, this is the one actor I have



seen with so much energy. He just cannot sit still. If he sits here, he'll go there; from there, he'll jump onto the table; then he'll go somewhere else."

He further added, "When I praised him, people said, 'Mukesh Khanna praised him, which means he has become Shaktimaan.' But I said, 'I never said that. He is a good actor, a big actor, he has energy, he has everything, but I never said that I was giving him the role of Shaktimaan.' I even spoke in favour of Allu Arjun. I said that perhaps he looks positive, so he could possibly become Shaktimaan. People said, 'Oh, Arjun!' But I never said that I had offered him Shaktimaan. So people should understand my point."

Mukesh said that he has kept cheques on hold, "No doubt, commercially, I am behaving like a stupid person. I have held back a cheque worth crores, not lakhs, crores. People in my own office told me, 'Sir, take the cheque. You can fight later.' I said, 'Keep quiet. Don't talk about this.' I told them to wait. I said, 'I don't want to do it.' Money does not come before principles. I said, 'Suppose I take the money, and then there is drama over it?' I haven't taken it, because my second cheque was about to come, and I stopped it. I had taken the first one, but I stopped the second cheque. I said, 'I had told you that you would make Shaktimaan only after consulting me.' Now they have put in a condition saying, 'No, sir, we will consult you, but we will do things our own way.' I said, 'I

'Worst idea in history': KBC makers were told, 'Where have you brought Amitabh Bachchan from?'



Amitabh Bachchan-hosted *Kaun Banega Crorepati* was an instant success soon after it released in July, 2000. The show aired for a few years on Star Plus before it moved to Sony in 2010, but before it went on air, it was seen as a huge gamble by the channel. In a recent interview, Sameer Nair, who was heading programming at Star Plus at the time, revealed that it was "ten times more expensive" than other shows during that period.

'Bachchan was the only actor with Hindi-English proficiency'

The Social Reckoning trailer: Jeremy Strong's Mark Zuckerberg faces Facebook whistleblower

The *Social Reckoning* trailer: More than 15 years after *The Social Network*, Aaron Sorkin is returning to the world of Facebook with *The Social Reckoning*. The film stars Oscar winner Mikey Madison as Facebook whistleblower Frances Haugen and Jeremy Allen White as Wall Street Journal reporter Jeff Horwitz. Its trailer shows the two taking on one of the world's most powerful technology companies. Described as a companion piece to *The Social Network*, the film is based on the events behind *The Facebook Files*, the Wall Street Journal investigation into the company. Sorkin has written and directed the film, which is set to release in theatres on October 9, 2026.

What's in the trailer The trailer opens with Wall Street Journal reporter Jeff Horwitz, played by Jeremy Allen White, saying, "I'm an investigative reporter, and that guy and this company are playing an unprecedented role in our lives." "That guy" is Mark Zuckerberg, played by Jeremy Strong, while the company in question is Facebook. The trailer then follows Haugen as she approaches Horwitz with information about the company. But she makes it clear that her intention is not simply to bring Facebook down. "I want to help Facebook, not hurt it," she tells him. The film follows the whistleblower and the reporter as they dig into Facebook's internal workings and some of the company's closely guarded secrets. Jeremy Strong takes over as Mark Zuckerberg. The trailer also offers a closer look at Jeremy Strong as Mark Zuckerberg. Jesse Eisenberg played Zuckerberg in David Fincher's 2010 film *The Social Network*, but Strong takes over the role in Sorkin's new film. In the trailer, he describes himself as a "free speech absolutist" and insists that he is "not the one who's lying." While *The Social Network* focused on the early days of Facebook and the people behind its creation, *The Social Reckoning* moves the story forward to a period when the company was facing growing questions about the influence and impact of its platforms. Earlier, in a conversation with *People* magazine, Strong spoke about preparing to play Zuckerberg. He said that despite Zuckerberg being a controversial and unpopular figure, he did not want to approach the role with the intention of vilifying him. "Listen, I know that he is a reviled person and not a popular person in our culture, but I do not think you should have an actor playing him who wants to set out to condemn him. It feels incredibly fraught to talk about the movie, to talk about Mark and being the person who is playing Mark and representing Mark in a sense to the world and to posterity; I feel an enormous sense of weight and responsibility. And listen, my job is to understand and defend his point of view and fight his fight," he said.

Chiranjeevi praises Ravi Teja, Irumudi team after blockbuster success

Hyderabad: Telugu star Chiranjeevi on Thursday wholeheartedly congratulated actor Ravi Teja and his whole team of *Irumudi* for the film's blockbuster success even as he termed Ravi Teja's performance in the film as "phenomenal".

Taking to his X timeline, the Mega Star wrote, "Heartiest congratulations to my dear brother Ravi on the blockbuster success of *#Irumudi*. Thoroughly enjoyed the film from beginning to end. What a phenomenal performance @RaviTeja_offl, you carried Trinadh character entirely on your shoulders." The top star from the Telugu film industry also had words of praise for the film's director Shiva Nirvana and child artiste Nakshathra, who played Ravi Teja's daughter in the film.

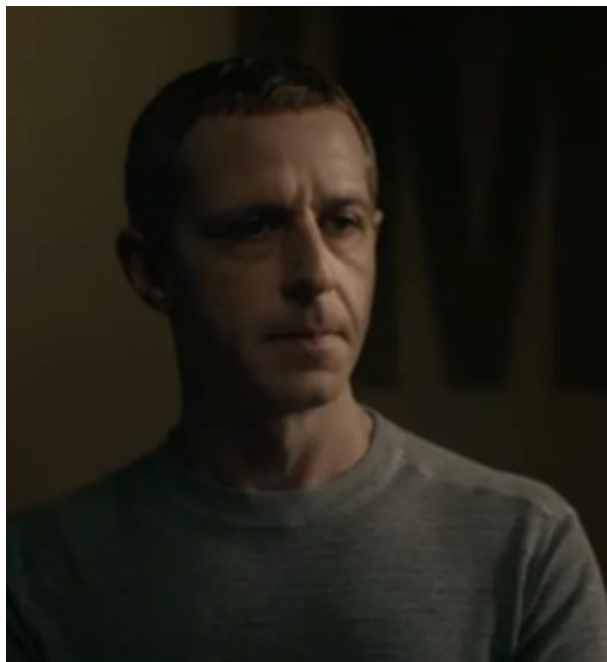
He wrote, "Director @ShivaNirvana, you have done a wonderful job presenting the film with such depth and emotion. Blessings to *#BabyNakshathra* for a very bright future, My warm congratulations to the entire cast and crew, and to producers Naveen Yerneni and Ravi Shankar of @MythriOfficial, on this well-deserved success." The makers of the film, Mythri Movie Makers, were quick to respond to Chiranjeevi's congratulatory post. The production house responded, saying, "Thank you so much, Megastar @KChiruTweets Garu. To get such beautiful appreciation from you means the world to the team of *#Irumudi*."

For the unaware, *Irumudi*, which was a film that combined the genres of devotion, family drama and thriller, hit screens worldwide on August 21 this year. The film, which

The British show, *Who Wants To Be A Millionaire*, which was adapted in India as *Kaun Banega Crorepati*, was not hosted by a film celebrity so the idea to bring Bachchan on board was seen with skepticism. "Bachchan was the only actor with that kind of proficiency in both Hindi and English. But more importantly, this was going to homes, where the remote is controlled by the mother. For that mother, it was Bachchan who was the beloved hero, not Shah Rukh Khan — who was catering to a younger generation," he said.

After watching a live taping of the British show, Bachchan agreed to host the Indian adaptation. "It was at least ten times more expensive than any show on Indian television — a dazzling production, staying completely true to the original, the exact same layout," the producer noted. The show was also Indianised as Bachchan switched between English and Hindi with utmost ease. He also addressed the computer as 'computer-ji' and even the questions were designed for an Indian audience. "Even the questions had large elements of Indian mythology and history," he said.

'Indians don't even like this' Sameer recalled that KBC was seen as the "worst" idea in "the history of bad ideas." He recalled being told by others, "Who puts a quiz show on prime time? Kahan se Amit-ji ko laye hain? (Where have you brought Amit ji from?) Indians don't even like this!" However, things changed soon after the show released. Amitabh Bachchan, who had been facing a career slump and some financial struggles, made a massive comeback. Months later, he was seen in YRF's film *Mohabbatein*, which solidified his comeback.



Strong also revealed that he personally reached out to Zuckerberg before filming began. "I wrote to him, I'm probably going to give Sony an aneurysm, I sent him an email. Just to say that I take this responsibility very seriously, and the veracity of it seriously, and I'm approaching it with respect," the actor said. Strong said Zuckerberg replied to his email, though he did not reveal what the Meta CEO told him. He also clarified that he had not met Zuckerberg, explaining that he prefers to maintain some distance while researching and preparing for his roles. The film draws from the real-life events surrounding *The Facebook Files*, the Wall Street Journal investigation based on internal documents from the company. At the centre of the story is Haugen, a former Facebook engineer, and her decision to work with Horwitz, helping bring information about the company into public view. The official synopsis describes their journey as one that ultimately exposes some of the social network's "most guarded secrets." Aaron Sorkin returns to familiar territory. The film marks Sorkin's return to a world he first explored with *The Social Network*, for which he won the Oscar for Best Adapted Screenplay. *The Social Reckoning* also stars Wunmi Mosaku, Betty Gilpin, Billy Magnussen and Bill Burr. Sorkin has written and directed the film and is producing it with Todd Black, Peter Rice and Stuart Besser.



featured Priya Bhavani Shankar as the female lead, went on to set the cash registers ringing. *Irumudi*'s collections went past the Rs 100 crore mark on August 25, making it one of the biggest successes in Telugu cinema this year. The film, which happened to be Ravi Teja's 77th film, was being tentatively referred to as *#RT77* until it was titled '*Irumudi*'. The title '*Irumudi*' carries deep spiritual significance, as it symbolizes a devotee's sacred offering and surrender to Lord Ayyappa.