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Boost for India's nuclear energy ambitions

India has learnt lessons the hard way on what it costs to be dependent on energy imports. The recent shock came due to the disruption in oil supplies through the Strait of Hormuz in the wake of war in Iran. Understandably, India has been making conscious efforts to explore new suppliers. More importantly, there has been a renewed focus on doubling down on nuclear power – the clean, carbon-free source of energy that is crucial for the country to achieve its target of 'net zero' carbon emissions by 2070. It is in this context that the agreement with Australia on the purchase of uranium, finalised during Prime Minister Narendra Modi's recent visit, assumes strategic significance. Australia holds the world's largest known uranium resources and can serve as a reliable long-term supplier of uranium. Nuclear power is no longer only about electricity for homes and industries. It is increasingly about reliable, low-carbon baseload power for data centres, artificial intelligence infrastructure and future industrialisation. India currently generates only a small share of its electricity from nuclear power, constituting roughly 2% of the installed capacity. Conventional gigawatt-scale reactors require huge upfront investment, long construction timelines and complex site-specific infrastructure. India will need international partnerships because the scale and urgency of its ambitions require capital, technology, risk-sharing and secure fuel supplies. Russia and France remain important partners. The new legal framework could finally make American participation more realistic. Canada, too, has been an important partner in supplying uranium to India. Australia could now become another reliable long-term supplier. South Asians & Diaspora Uranium partnerships are central to operating an expanding civilian reactor fleet. Imported uranium can support safeguarded civilian reactors while India continues its indigenous fuel-cycle work.

IRSHAD KHAN (UPPAL KHAN) Participates in Bonalu Phalaharam Bandi Procession in Beerappagadda Division

UPPAL, AUGUST 17 (INDIAN CHRONICLE): Congress senior leader Irshad Khan, popularly known as Uppal Khan, participated in the Phalaharam Bandi (Bonalu) procession held on the occasion of the Bonalu festival in Beerappagadda Division of Uppal constituency and conveyed his greetings to devotees and local residents. The procession was grandly organised under



the auspices of the Ambedkar Nagar Youth Association (Yakesh & Friends) and the Indira Nagar Colony Association (Paka Gopi & Friends). On the occasion, Irshad Khan (Uppal Khan) warmly interacted with the people of Beerappagadda Division, youth and members of various colony associations. "He said that the Bonalu festival is a symbol of Hyderabad's rich culture and traditions. He wished that all people would be blessed with happiness, peace, good health and prosperity. He also emphasised that unity, brotherhood and the preservation of cultural traditions are the strength of society. A large number of Congress leaders and devotees participated in the programme." [5:02 PM, 8/17/2026] +91 93911 09207: END

BRS Holds Massive Protest in Habsiguda Demanding Continuation of Kalyana Lakshmi and Shaadi Mubarak Schemes

UPPAL, AUGUST 17 (INDIAN CHRONICLE): A massive protest was organised by the Bharat Rashtra Samithi (BRS) at Habsiguda Crossroads on Monday, following the directions of Uppal MLA Bandari Lakshma Reddy, demanding that the Kalyana Lakshmi and Shaadi Mubarak welfare schemes be continued without any changes. Former corporators, BRS leaders, party workers, women and youth participated in large numbers and raised slogans against the Congress government. The leaders demanded that the Kalyana Lakshmi and Shaadi Mubarak schemes, which provide crucial financial support to poor and middle-class families, be continued as before without imposing any conditions or obstacles. Speaking on the occasion, BRS leaders said that continuing these schemes, which provide financial assistance for the marriages of daughters from economically weaker families, was the responsibility of the government. They urged the government to respond immediately and continue the schemes in the interest of public welfare. "BRS state women leader Rajitha Reddy, state BRS leaders Pasula Prabhakar Reddy, Somasekar Reddy, Bannala Praveen Mudiraj, Sai Jan Shekhar and Gandham Nageswara Rao, former corporators Devender Reddy and Prabhudas, and BRS leaders Mahesh Kumar Goud, Bethala Balaraj, Kasam Maipal Reddy, Badruddin, BV Chary, Kaleru Jai Naveen, Mushyam Srinivas, Anya Balakrishna, Mahender, Pooduri Jitender Reddy, Gudi Madhusudan Reddy and Madasu Lakshminarayana were among those who participated in the protest. A large number of party workers, women and youth also attended the programme.

Bhagyanagar Ganesh Utsav Samithi – New Committee 2026–27

New Committee Formed for Nacharam & HMT Branches



UPPAL, AUGUST 17 (INDIAN CHRONICLE): "A meeting was held under the aegis of the Bhagyanagar Ganesh Utsav Samithi to constitute the new committee for the 2026–27 term for the Nacharam and HMT branches. The meeting was organised under the leadership of Namalikhonda Sunil Reddy, the Convenor of the Bhagyanagar Ganesh Utsav Samithi for the 2025–26 term. During the meeting, members discussed the preparations and organisational responsibilities for the upcoming Ganesh festival celebrations and unanimously focused on strengthening coordination among the committee members and volunteers. As part of the organisational changes, Nadigotu Balakrishna was appointed as the new Convenor of the Bhagyanagar Ganesh Utsav Samithi

for 2026–27. The members expressed confidence that his leadership would help ensure the successful conduct of Ganesh Utsav celebrations across the Nacharam and HMT areas. "Following his appointment, committee members and leaders extended their warm congratulations and best wishes to the newly appointed Convenor Nadigotu Balakrishna. BJP leaders Kommagala Naveen Kumar, Prakash, Ragiri Mohan Reddy, Daya Goud, Sai, Abhishek, Naveen and Amarnath, along with Congress leaders Bhavana Goud and Santosh Reddy, participated in the programme and congratulated the new committee. "The meeting was also attended by Medchal-Malkajgiri District Parliament In-charge Phaninder Marne, Uppal In-charge Gane Srikanth, and Central Committee Member Ramesh. They conveyed their best wishes to the newly appointed committee and appreciated the efforts being made to strengthen the organisational structure ahead of the Ganesh festival. "Speaking on the occasion, the committee members said that the Ganesh Utsav celebrations should be conducted in a grand, peaceful and disciplined manner, with active participation from devotees, youth, women and local residents. They emphasised the importance of maintaining coordination among the organisers, volunteers and various stakeholders to ensure smooth arrangements during the festival. "The committee also discussed the need for proper arrangements concerning devotee facilities, procession management, cultural programmes, cleanliness, traffic coordination, safety measures and other essential arrangements during the Ganesh Utsav celebrations. "The newly appointed Convenor Nadigotu Balakrishna thanked the Bhagyanagar Ganesh Utsav Samithi members and all the leaders for placing their confidence in him. He assured that he would work together with the committee members and volunteers to organise the upcoming Ganesh Utsav celebrations successfully and in a spirit of unity and devotion. "The programme concluded with the committee members extending their cooperation to the new leadership and expressing their resolve to make the 2026–27 Bhagyanagar Ganesh Utsav celebrations a grand and successful event in the Nacharam and HMT areas.

Grand Bonalu Festival Celebrated at Government Degree College, Uppal

UPPAL, AUGUST 17 (INDIAN CHRONICLE):

The Bonalu festival was celebrated with great fervour at Government Degree College, Uppal, under the aegis of the Literary and Cultural Department. College staff and students participated in the celebrations dressed as Goddess Mahankali and Pothuraju. Bonam offerings were presented to the Goddess, followed by special prayers. "Reflecting Telangana's rich culture and traditions, special programmes featuring Dappu performances were organised. Students also presented cultural programmes highlighting the significance of the Bonalu festival, which captivated everyone present. "In-charge Principal and College Vice-Principal Dr. C.H. Satyanarayana, Literary and Cultural Department Coordinator J. Viswanath Kumar, Women Empowerment Department Coordinator Dr. N. Rajashree, Academic Coordinator K. Geetha, Dr. S. Yamuna Rani, P. Vijay Kumar, Dr. V. Srinivasa Rao, Dr. R. Chandrasagar, Dr. P. Venkateshwarlu, K. Sravanthi, L. Anusha and others participated in the programme. "Speaking on the occasion, Dr. C.H. Satyanarayana appreciated the talent displayed by the students and said that it is everyone's responsibility to preserve Telangana's culture and traditions. Literary and Cultural Department Coordinator J. Viswanath Kumar said that the Bonalu festival



reminds people of devotion, unity, discipline and the cultural values of Telangana. He advised students to respect and uphold their culture and traditions while progressing in their education and careers. Women Empowerment Department Coordinator Dr. N. Rajashree expressed gratitude to everyone who contributed to the successful conduct of the programme. The celebrations concluded with college staff and students joining together in a festive and joyous atmosphere. [5:04 PM, 8/17/2026] +91 93911 09207: END

Unsubstantiated allegations against public leader will not be tolerated

THUNGATURTHI RAVI UPAL, AUGUST 17 (INDIAN CHRONICLE): Congress leaders strongly con-



demned the allegations made by former IPS officer R.S. Praveen Kumar against Medchal-Malkajgiri District DCC President and Medchal Assembly constituency Congress Party in-charge Thotakura Vajresh Yadav. "Speaking at a press conference held on Monday at Bandi Convention in Peerzadiguda, DCC General Secretary Enugu Jalender Reddy, Pocharam Division President Karre Rajesh, Medipally Division Congress Party President Thungathurthi Ravi, Peerzadiguda Congress Party President Bandi Sriramulu, Darga Dayakar Reddy and Vangeti Prabhakar Reddy condemned the allegations. "Thungathurthi Ravi said that Vajresh Yadav

had served the people as Vice-Sarpanch on one occasion and as Sarpanch on another. Despite losing elections three times from the Medchal constituency, Vajresh Yadav has remained continuously among the people and has been fighting for their issues, he said. "Ravi alleged that those who spent crores of rupees during elections and won belonged to the BRS party, and criticised outsiders for making allegations against leaders who have been working continuously for the people without first knowing the facts. "He said it was shameful for a former IPS officer to make allegations of land grabbing without producing any evidence. If the allegations are true, the evidence should be placed before the public, Ravi demanded. "Instead of making allegations without knowing about a leader who remains among the people and fights for their welfare, one should first ascertain the facts. If there is evidence, it should be presented; otherwise, the baseless allegations should be withdrawn," Ravi said. "He further stated that while political criticism is natural in a democracy, making baseless allegations that damage an individual's reputation is unacceptable. "Ranjith Kumar Reddy, Mudigonda Ramesh, Balaram, Yasaram Nagesh, Mohan Kumar, Sudarshan Reddy, Mohammed Mazar, Barla Nagaraju, Maniram Naik, Jayander, Raja Raju, Mahesh Goud, Somaiah, Srinu Naik, Sairam Goud, Bolguri Nagaraju, Sharath Goud, Kapil, NNK Durga, Tanda Parameshwari, Srilatha and others were present.

Praja Vani Held at Uppal Zonal Office – 10 Petitions Received

UPPAL, AUGUST 17 (INDIAN CHRONICLE): The Praja Vani programme was held at the Uppal Zonal Office on Monday under the supervision of Zonal Commissioner Radhika Gupta. During the programme, a total of 10 petitions were received from citizens regarding various public issues. "Of the petitions received, four were related to the Town Planning Department, while six concerned the Engineering Department. Each petition was

duly registered and forwarded to the concerned departmental officials for immediate action. "Zonal Commissioner Radhika Gupta directed the officials to accord top priority to resolving public grievances and take necessary action within the stipulated time frame to address the issues raised in the petitions. Heads of various departments and concerned officials from the Uppal Zone participated in the programme.

Meenakshi Natarajan Meets Secunderabad District Congress Leaders

"SIR Process, Party Strengthening and Key Political Issues Discussed" Indian Chronicle, "Secunderabad, August 17: "A meeting of the Secunderabad District Congress Political Affairs Committee was held at Gandhi Bhavan in Hyderabad on Sunday under the chairpersonship of AICC Telangana in-charge Meenakshi Natarajan. "Secunderabad District Congress President and Chairman of the Telangana Christian Minorities Finance Corporation Deepak John, Ministers



Ponnam Prabhakar and Mohammed Azharuddin, and MP Anil Kumar Yadav attended the meeting. MLAs Sri Ganesh and Naveen Yadav, PCC Vice-President Kota Neelima and senior leader Adam Santhosh were also present. "The leaders held detailed discussions on strengthening the party organisation, the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) process and other key political issues. The meeting resolved to further strengthen the party at the grassroots level and work collectively to take the Congress forward in the coming days.

Minister Ponnam Prabhakar Meets Senior Congress Leader Janumpalli Venkateshwar Reddy

UPPAL, AUGUST 17 (INDIAN CHRONICLE): Senior Congress leader Janumpalli Venkateshwar Reddy met Telangana State BC Welfare and Transport Minister and Hyderabad In-charge Minister Ponnam Prabhakar on Monday as a courtesy meeting. "On the occasion, Venkateshwar Reddy felicitated Minister Ponnam Prabhakar with a shawl and presented him with a bouquet, extending his greetings. "During the meeting, the



two discussed the latest political developments in Uppal, the development of Hyderabad city, welfare schemes being implemented for the people, and various public issues prevailing across constituencies. Venkateshwar Reddy said. "They also discussed the need to identify public problems from time to time, bring them to the attention of the concerned officials, and work towards their resolution, he stated. "The leaders further discussed strengthening the Congress party at the grassroots level, coordinating with party leaders and workers to reach out to the people more effectively, and taking the government's welfare programmes to the public on a wider scale. Venkateshwar Reddy said Minister Ponnam Prabhakar stated that resolving public issues remains the government's primary objective. The government, under the leadership of Chief Minister Revanth Reddy, is working to implement the promises made by the Congress party and provide better governance to the people, he added.

Power Supply to Be Suspended in Uppal for Four Hours Tomorrow: Uppal Bhagayath AE B. Kiran Kumar Reddy

UPPAL, AUGUST 17 (INDIAN CHRONICLE): Power supply to the 11 kV Uppal Feeder and 11 kV Navabharath Feeder under the Uppal Substation will be suspended from 10:00 AM to 2:00 PM on August 18, Uppal Bhagayath AE/Operation B. Kiran Kumar Reddy said in a statement. "He said the shutdown is necessary to carry out underground (UG) cable connection and testing works as part of the Uppal Elevated Corridor project at Uppal X Roads. The power interruption will affect areas including the locality opposite the Electricity Office on Uppal Main Road, Raghavendra Colony, Lakshma Reddy Nagar, Shobha Diagnostic Centre Lane, and surrounding areas. "The Electricity Department officials appealed to consumers to cooperate during the scheduled shutdown."



GOVERNMENT OF TELANGANA ROADS & BUILDINGS DEPARTMENT e-PROCUREMENT NOTICE	
NIT No. 08/AEE/DB/EBD/2026-27/e-proc/1034	Dt: 17.08.2026
Name of work : Providing fluted glass partition in the peshi of Special Secretary to Government, Ind & Co Dept., in room no. 33 of 3rd floor in the premises of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Telangana Secretariat, Hyderabad (2nd call).	
ECV: Rs. 1,00,224.00. Bid submission Start Date & Time : 18-08-2026 from 11:00 AM. Bid Submission Closing Date & Time : 21.08.2026 up to 11:30 AM. Bid Evaluation opening Date & Time : 21.08.2026 - 2026 after 11:30 AM. Further details can be seen at 'e-procurement' market place at www.tender.telangana.gov.in .	
DIPR No. 8049-PP/CL/ADVT/11/2026-27, Dt: 17.08.2026	Sd/-, Executive Engineer (R&B), East Buildings Division, Hyd.,

Medipally Police Solve Husband's Murder Case – Woman Arrested

“MEDIPALLY, AUGUST 17 (INDIAN CHRONICLE): Medipally Police have successfully solved the murder of a man and arrested his wife, who was allegedly responsible for the crime. She was produced before the court and remanded to judicial custody.”According to Medipally CI G. Jalandhar Reddy, the deceased, Satyanarayana (51), a resident of Raghavendra Colony in Peerzadiguda, returned home at around 12 noon on August 6 after completing his night duty. His wife, Sunitha (44), returned home at around 1:30 p.m. after completing her daily work. “A quarrel reportedly broke out between the couple after Satyanarayana consumed alcohol. Police investigation revealed that he allegedly abused and mentally harassed his wife during the argument.”Police said Sunitha, angered by his behaviour, decided to kill him. As part of the alleged plan, she tied Satyanarayana's hands and legs with a saree and attacked him repeatedly with a centering rod on his head and other parts of the body. He sustained severe injuries and lost consciousness. Later, Sunitha allegedly called Satyanarayana's son, Nikith, and falsely informed him that his father had accidentally slipped from his vehicle and sustained injuries. “Satyanarayana was initially shifted to MediStar Hospital in Boduppal and, on the advice of doctors, was taken by ambulance to Gandhi Hospital. A doctor on duty examined him at around 10:18 p.m. and declared him dead.”Police launched an investigation and examined the post-mortem report, medical opinion, scene of offence and CCTV footage. As there was no evidence supporting the claim of an accident, police questioned Sunitha. During interrogation, she allegedly confessed that she had attacked her husband



after tying his hands and legs with a saree, citing his alleged mental harassment of her and their children. “Based on information provided by the accused, police recovered the saree used to tie the victim and the centering rod allegedly used in the attack, in the presence of panch witnesses.”Based on the evidence collected, police established Sunitha's alleged involvement in the murder. The case, initially registered under Section 106(1) of the BNS as a road-accident case, was subsequently altered and registered under Sections 103(1) and 238 of the BNS for murder and related offences. “Medipally Police said the accused was arrested as per law, produced before the court and remanded to judicial custody.

Precautions Needed to Stay Healthy During Monsoon-Indoor Air Quality Expert Dr. Priyanka Kulasreshtha

“Hyderabad, August 17 (Indian Chronicle) : With rising humidity and reduced air circulation during the monsoon increasing the risk of mould, dust mites and allergens indoors, people should take necessary precautions, said Dr. Priyanka Kulasreshtha, Indoor Air Quality Expert, in a statement on Monday. She said that while rainfall may reduce larger particles in the air to some extent, it

does not completely eliminate indoor pollutants. Following the suggestions of Logan Thomson, Senior Technical Engineer at Dyson, she advised people to keep homes dry and clean and regularly clean carpets, curtains, mattresses and sofas. Using an air purifier when necessary can also help reduce allergens, she said. Dr. Priyanka stressed that maintaining good indoor air quality should be given importance throughout the year.

Government Must Clarify Its Stand on Journalists' House Sites

TWJF Urges Immediate Resolution of Journalists' Issues TWJF Leaders Meet Minister Ponguleti Srinivas Reddy

“Hyderabad, August 17: Indian Chronicle”“The Telangana Working Journalists Federation (TWJF) has demanded that the state government clearly announce its policy on the allotment of house sites to journalists. Federation leaders said it was not appropriate to delay the allotment of house sites to eligible journalists citing the Supreme Court judgment as a reason.”“On Monday, TWJF State President Mamidi Somaiah and General Secretary Tanneeru Srinivas, along with other leaders, met Ponguleti Srinivas Reddy, Minister for Information & Public Relations, Revenue and Housing, at the Secretariat. They held detailed discussions on various issues faced by journalists and submitted a memorandum containing several demands.”“Accreditation for Cable and IP News Channels”“The TWJF leaders urged the government to immediately issue accreditation cards to all eligible cable television news channels operating in the state. They also requested the government to extend accreditation facilities to Internet Protocol (IP)-based news channels.”“They appealed to the minister to take steps to provide four accreditation cards at the district level and 12 at the state level for cable news channels.”“Health Cards for All Eligible Journalists”“The federation leaders brought to the minister's notice the difficulties being faced by journalists with regard to health cards, despite accreditation cards being issued to them.”“They requested the government to provide health cards to all eligible journalists on par with government employees and ensure free medical treatment at private and corporate hospitals.”“House Sites for All Eligible Journalists”“The TWJF leaders urged the government to explore all possible legal avenues and take steps to allot house sites to all eligible journalists, irrespective of the Supreme Court judgment.”“They also requested that the families of journalists who died while on duty or due to other reasons be considered under the scheme. The leaders further appealed to the government to identify journalists who played a significant role in the Telangana movement and provide them with special assistance and welfare measures.”“Clear Pending Adver-



tisement Bills”“The federation demanded immediate payment of government advertisement bills pending for the past two years to small and medium-sized newspapers.”“They also requested the government to include small and medium newspapers in the government advertisement empanelment system and extend necessary support for their continued survival.”“Pension for Retired Journalists”“The TWJF demanded the introduction and implementation of a special pension scheme for senior and retired journalists.”“The federation also requested the government to issue a special Government Order (GO) providing free education in private schools and colleges for the children of journalists, irrespective of their level of education.”“In addition, the leaders demanded free life insurance coverage for all journalists and urged the government to introduce a scheme providing ?10 lakh insurance compensation to the family of a journalist in the event of their death.”“Minister Assures Positive Action”“The federation leaders said that Minister Ponguleti Srinivas Reddy assured them that the issues raised by journalists would be examined positively and that necessary steps would be taken to resolve them at the earliest.”“Those who met the minister included TWJF National Council Member Kuncham Srinivas, Hyderabad District Convener V. Ravikumar, Co-Convener R. Srinivas Goud and S. Ravikumar, among others.

District Best MPDO Yarraiah Felicitated

“Khammam, Nelakondapalli, August 17: Indian Chronicle”“Nelakondapalli MPDO M. Yarraiah, who received the award for being selected as the Best MPDO of the district, was felicitated by several people on Monday.”“A felicitation programme was organised at the Mandal Parishad office under the leadership of Bachalakuri Nagaraju, District Congress Official Spokesperson. Speaking on the occasion, Nagaraju appreciated Yarraiah for setting an example in the implementation of various government welfare schemes in the mandal.”“He congratulated Yarraiah on receiving the district-level award and expressed the hope that he would receive many more awards in recognition of his services in the future.”“Youth Congress State Secretary Jerripothula Anjini, Sultan Veerababu, Kadiyala Naresh, Kondamidi Venkanna, Somanaboyina Sai Naveen, Sheikh Lal Pasha, Gadipalli Naveen, Bachalakuri Veerababu and Vishnu, among others, attended the programme.”“Felicitation by Sarpanchs' Association”“The Sarpanchs' Association also felicitated MPDO Yarraiah in recognition of his achievement and services.”“Market Committee Chairman Vennapusala Seetharamulu, Sarpanchs' Association President Rayapudi Rama Rao, Secretary Duddela Pavan, and others participated in the programme.



Government's Goal Is to Ensure Everyone Eats Fine-Quality Rice

“Khammam, Nelakondapalli, August 17: Indian Chronicle”“The government is supplying fine-quality rice with the objective of ensuring that everyone, including the poor, gets an opportunity to consume it, said Rayagudem Sarpanch Boyina Venu.”“On Monday, Venu launched the distribution of three months' free supply of fine-quality rice at Rayagudem village in Nelakondapalli mandal.”“Speaking on the occasion, Venu said the government was providing fine rice with the intention of ensuring that poor families could also consume the same quality of rice as others. He urged beneficiaries not to sell the PDS rice provided to them and instead use it for their own consumption.”“He appealed to villagers to immediately inform the authorities if traders entered the village to purchase PDS rice. He warned that strict legal action would be taken against those involved in the illegal purchase or sale of PDS rice.”“Venu said that despite facing financial difficulties, the government was moving forward with the objective of providing fine-quality rice to poor families. He warned that any attempt to undermine this welfare initiative would not be tolerated.”“Former Chairman of the District Animal Husbandry Development Corporation Korla Kuntla Nageswara Rao, Kattukacharam



Sarpanch Saidulu, Veerababu, Lakka Nagaraju, Kosuri Panakalu, Rajababu, Boyina Guravayya, Boyina Renukarao, Boyina Narasimha Rao, Brahman, Ramakrishna, Kittayya, Kamalakar, Boyina Nagarani, Mekala Bhadrana, Maniky am, Srilatha, Mekala Lakshmi, Sravani, Uttaramma, Sukanya, Leelavathi and Triveni, among others, participated in the programme.

Representation Submitted in Prajavani Seeking 50% Allocation in Graveyard for Mallapur Locals

“Nacharam, August 17 (INDIAN CHORNICAL):”“A representation was submitted at the Prajavani programme seeking 50% allocation in the graveyard for the local residents of Mallapur. The representation was submitted on behalf of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) under the leadership of Mallapur BJP President Sri Guduru Shailesh Reddy.”“The BJP leaders highlighted the difficulties being faced by the local residents and requested the concerned authorities to ensure that a 50% share of the graveyard is specifically reserved for the people of Mallapur. They stated that the facility is an important requirement for the local community and that priority should be given to the residents who have been living in the area for a long time.”“The representation was handed over to Dr. Mamatha, who responded positively to the request. She assured the BJP leaders that necessary steps would be taken to address the issue. She further informed them that a signboard would be installed at the graveyard within two to three days, clearly indicating the allocation for Mallapur locals, and assured that efforts would be made to facilitate the 50% allocation for local residents.”“The BJP leaders expressed their appreciation for the positive response and stated that they would continue to follow up with the concerned authorities until the issue is resolved and the promised arrangements are implemented.”“Speaking on the occa-



sion, the leaders said that protecting the rights and interests of Mallapur residents remains one of their priorities. They assured the local people that the BJP would continue to raise public issues through the appropriate platforms and work towards securing necessary facilities and benefits for the community.”“BJP senior leader Sri Enamula Mahesh Kumar, General Secretaries Sri Keshavaram Yadagiri Chary and Sri Sheelta Vijay Kumar, along with Murali, Veeresh, Madhav, Manohar and other party leaders and activists, participated in the programme.”“The leaders reiterated that their efforts for the welfare, rights and legitimate demands of Mallapur residents would continue in the days ahead.

Prajavani applications should be resolved promptly, says Collector

Officials directed to clear applications pending for over 30 days; 225 petitions received at Monday's grievance programme.

Karimnagar August 17 (Correspondent): Collector Chitra Mishra has directed officials of various departments to dispose of applications received through the Prajavani public grievance programme promptly and avoid keeping them pending.

Ms. Mishra, along with District Revenue Officer (DRO) Swamy and officials of various departments, received petitions from the public at the Prajavani programme held at the Collectorate auditorium here on Monday.

A total of 225 petitions were received, with the Karimnagar Municipal Corporation accounting for the highest number at 58, followed by the Housing Department with 56 applications.

The Collector said the Prajavani programme was being monitored continuously by the Chief Minister's Camp Office and the Chief Secretary. She directed officials to take immediate action on applications pending for more than 30 days and update the status of disposed applications in the respective online logins without delay.

Ms. Mishra also instructed officials to ensure that eligible people did not face difficulties while applying for pensions and that no eligible beneficiary was left out. She directed the authorities to take foolproof measures to prevent inconvenience during the distribution of uniforms.

Food Security Card basis for pension applications

District Rural Development Officer (DRDO) Geetha and MEPM Project Director Swaroopa Rani said applications were currently being accepted for all categories of Cheyutha pensions except old-age pensions, including pensions for single women, handloom workers, toddy tappers and persons with disabilities.

They said the Food Security Card was being treated as the basis for applications for new pensions and clari-



fied that there had been no change in the existing eligibility norms.

Help desks have been established at every gram panchayat, mandal headquarters, municipality and municipal corporation to assist applicants with pension-related queries, they said.

Those who had already applied for pensions during gram sabhas, ward sabhas or Praja Palana week programmes need not submit fresh applications. However, those who had not submitted the required documents earlier or had not applied may now apply with the documents prescribed by the government. Officials would scrutinise the applications and subsequently undertake door-to-door verification to identify eligible beneficiaries, the officials said. Officials from various departments participated in the programme.

Prajavani petitions to be disposed of expeditiously, says civic commissioner

23 applications received at Karimnagar Municipal Corporation grievance redressal programme.

Karimnagar August 17 (Correspondent): Karimnagar Municipal Corporation Commissioner Praful Desai directed officials to take prompt action on petitions received during the Prajavani grievance redressal programme held at Kalabharathi on the corporation premises here on Monday.

A total of 23 applications were received from residents of various divisions of the city. The Town Planning Department received 12 petitions, followed by five by the Revenue Department, two by the Engineering Department, one by the Sanitation Department and three relating to the Indiramma housing programme.

The petitions mainly concerned removal of encroachments and action against unauthorised and illegal constructions under the Town Planning Department. Residents also submitted applications relating to tax revision, registration of new properties, Indiramma housing and sanitation issues.

Mr. Desai directed officials of the respective sections to conduct field-level inspections wherever necessary and take appropriate measures to resolve the grievances. He instructed them not to keep the applications pending and to dispose of them at the earliest.

Additional Commissioner Ayaz, Assistant Commissioner Raj Manohar, DCP Basheeruddin, ACP Venu, in-charge Executive Engineer Lachireddy and section superintendents attended the programme.



KLH GBS Welcomes New Students for 2026-27 Academic Year

“Hyderabad, August 17 (Indian Chronicle) : KLH Global Business School(KLH GBS), Kondapur, organised an orientation programme for students newly admitted for the 2026-27 academic year, KL Deemed to be University Vice President Er.Koneru Lakshman Havish said in a statement on Monday. Speaking along with KLH GBS Dean Dr.Anand Bethapudi, he said retired IAS officer Dr.Jayaprakash Narayan, who attended the programme as the chief guest, advised students to develop leadership qualities along with knowledge and professional skills. Dr.Srikanth Parikibandla, Vikas Surendran, Dileep Kumar, Sai Doma, Srinivasa Rao, Mallikarjuna Rao, Dr.J.Srinivasa Rao, Dr.M.Kishore Babu and Dr.Surya Praveen also participated in the programme. They provided students with insights into industries, career opportunities and leadership development, he said.”[6:54 PM, 8/17/2026] +91 99661 71672: End



MULUKALAPALLI RAJESH MUDIRAJ Visits Bonalu Palaharam Bandi Events in Chilkanagar



“UPPAL, AUGUST 17 (INDIAN CHRONICLE): Congress Party Chilkanagar Division former President Mulakalapalli Rajesh Mudiraj participated in the Palaharam Bandi celebrations organized in Chilkanagar on the occasion of the Bonalu festival and visited various food stalls.“On the occasion, he interacted warmly with the organizers of the Palaharam Bandi events and local residents. He appreciated the people of Chilkanagar for celebrating the Bonalu festival with devotion, enthusiasm and joy.“Rajesh Mudiraj congratulated the organizers for successfully conducting the programme and extended Bonalu festival greetings to the people of Chilkanagar.Congress Party leaders Ramcharla Balaram, Erram Yadagiri, David, Marapaka Sailu, Qasim, Musheekil, Pasha (Chotu), Prasad, Rambabu, Sandeep, Praveen and Irfan, along with other party leaders, workers and Congress family members, participated in the programme.

14-Year-Old Boy Held for Stealing Four Bikes in a Month

“MEDIPALLY, AUGUST 17 (INDIAN CHRONICLE): Medipally police apprehended a 14-year-old boy from Chengicherla for allegedly stealing four motorcycles in the past month for his personal needs.According to police, the boy had stolen four bikes and concealed them at an open place with the intention of selling them. Acting on credible information, a crime team, under the supervision of SHO Jalandhar Reddy, apprehended the juvenile and recovered the stolen motorcycles.“Police issued notices to the boy and produced him before the Juvenile Justice Board for further proceedings.”



Bandaru Dattatreya Meets Vallapu Jagan Yadav at BJP OBC State Executive Meeting



“UPPAL, AUGUST 17 (INDIAN CHRONICLE): Vallapu Jagan Yadav, OBC Urban General Secretary of the Medchal–Malkajgiri district, attended the OBC State Executive Meeting held at the BJP State Office. On the occasion, he met former Union Minister, former Governor and senior BJP leader Bandaru Dattatreya and exchanged greetings.During the meeting, leaders discussed various issues concerning the development of OBC communities in Medchal district urban areas, including their rights, welfare, social and political empowerment. They highlighted the efforts being made by the BJP for the welfare and advancement of OBC communities.“The meeting also discussed strengthening the party at the grassroots level, mobilising OBC communities, effectively taking up public issues and chalking out future programmes and strategies.Several OBC leaders, senior party leaders and activists participated in the meeting.

Antibiotics Should Be Used Only as Advised by Doctors District Medical and Health Officer Dr. D. Rama Rao

“Khammam, August 17: Indian Chronicle““District Medical and Health Officer Dr. D. Rama Rao advised the public to use antibiotics only when necessary, strictly as prescribed by doctors, in the correct dosage and for the prescribed duration.““He said antibiotics do not work against many infections caused by viruses, such as the common cold and flu. Self-medication with antibiotics for viral infections not only provides no benefit but can also increase the risk of Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR).““Dr. Rama Rao explained that when antibiotic resistance increases, even bacterial infections that are normally treatable may fail to respond to medicines. This can result in prolonged illness, hospitalisation and increased treatment costs.““Key Guidelines for the Public““ Do not purchase or use antibiotics without a doctor’s advice.““ Do not use antibiotics prescribed for another person.““ Strictly follow the dosage and schedule prescribed by the doctor.““ Do not stop the antibiotic course on your own before completing the prescribed duration.““ Do not use leftover antibiotics on your own in the future.““ Remember that antibiotics are not required for every illness such as cold, cough or sore throat.““ Consult a doctor if you have any doubts regarding the use of antibiotics.““Dr. Rama Rao also advised doctors to prescribe antibiotics only when necessary, based on proper diagnosis, and to create awareness among the public about their responsible use.““Let us prevent the misuse of antibiotics, reduce antimicrobial resistance and protect effective treatment options for future generations,” he said.



Two Arrested for Organizing Cockfights in Chengicherla

“MEDIPALLY, AUGUST 17 (INDIAN CHRONICLE): Medipally police arrested two persons for allegedly organizing cockfights in the Mandi area near Chengicherla under the Medipally Police Station limits in Medchal–Malkajgiri district.“Acting on credible information, the police conducted a raid in the Chengicherla Mandi area and apprehended the two accused while they were conducting cockfights. During the search, police seized cash amounting to ₹3,005 and two mobile phones from their possession.“A case has been registered against the accused, and legal proceedings have been initiated. Medipally Inspector Jalandhar Reddy warned that strict action would be taken against anyone involved in organizing or participating in illegal cockfights and gambling activities.



Commissioner Abhishek Agastya Names Baby Girl ‘Jaswika Sri

“Khammam, August 17: Indian Chronicle““A baby girl was born to Kampati Rakesh and Madhavi, residents of Khammam district headquarters, on May 9, 2026. Twelve days after her birth, the family came to know that the baby was suffering from a heart-related medical condition. As the treatment and surgery required a substantial amount of money, the family became deeply concerned.““The baby’s grandmother, Narasamma, who works in sanitation services at the Khammam Municipal Corporation, brought the matter to the notice of Municipal Commissioner Abhishek Agastya.““After learning about the child’s health condition, the Commissioner responded immediately and worked with a heart-related voluntary organisation and the government to facilitate financial assistance of ₹14 lakh required for the baby’s heart surgery.““With this financial assistance, the baby successfully underwent heart surgery on July 28 and is now recovering well.““The baby’s parents later brought their daughter to the Municipal Commissioner’s office during the grievance programme and expressed their gratitude for the timely assistance extended to their family.““The family members requested Commissioner Abhishek Agastya to name their daughter. Accepting their request with pleasure, the Commissioner named the baby “Jaswika Sri.” He wished the child a healthy, happy and prosperous future.““The baby’s family members expressed their heartfelt gratitude to Commissioner Abhishek Agastya for responding promptly to their difficult situation and taking steps to ensure that the child received the necessary medical assistance.



Draft Electoral Roll Released; Claims and Objections Can Be Filed Till September 16

10,85,927 Voters in Khammam District Draft Electoral Roll Notices to Be Issued to 1,76,135 Voters Collector Divakar T.S. Meets Representatives of Political Parties on SIR Process

“Khammam, August 17: Indian Chronicle““The draft electoral roll under the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) process was released on Monday as per the schedule of the Election Commission of India, District Collector Divakar T.S. said. He urged voters to submit claims or objections, if any, by September 16, 2026.““The Collector, along with Additional Collector Dr. P. Sreeja, held a meeting with representatives of recognised political parties on Monday to explain the SIR process and the draft electoral roll. Details regarding anomalies identified in the draft roll, unmapped voters, submission and disposal of claims and objections were discussed during the meeting.““10,85,927 Voters in the District““According to the Collector, the draft electoral roll contains a total of 10,85,927 voters in Khammam district. Of these, 5,24,894 are male voters, 5,60,973 are female voters and 60 are third-gender voters.““He said 1,33,004 voters (12.24 per cent) had been identified under anomalies, while 43,131 voters (3.97 per cent) were found to be unmapped. Notices will be issued through the Electoral Registration Officers to a total of 1,76,135 voters.““Voters Receiving Notices Must Submit Relevant Documents““The Collector said voters who receive notices should submit the relevant documents prescribed by the Election Commission of India based on their date of birth.““Check Your Name in the Draft Electoral Roll““The Collector urged everyone to check whether their name is included in the draft electoral roll published on August 17. Those whose names are missing may contact the Booth Level Officer (BLO), Assistant Electoral Registration Officer (AERO) or Electoral Registration Officer (ERO) concerned.““Voters can also check their names through the official CEO Telangana website. If a name is missing

from the draft roll or there are objections regarding the details, claims or objections can be submitted by September 16, 2026.““Eligible New Voters Can Register““The Collector said eligible persons who will attain the age of 18 years by October 1, 2026, and are not registered as voters in any Assembly constituency, can apply for registration as new voters through Form-6.““Applicants should submit the required documents, including a recent photograph, age proof and declaration, along with the application.““Form-7 can be used to raise objections regarding deceased or duplicate voters, while Form-8 can be used for updating mobile numbers, changing addresses and correcting details in voter identity cards.““Claims and Objections Till September 16““Claims and objections regarding the SIR draft electoral roll can be submitted from August 17 to September 16. The process of issuing notices and disposing of claims and objections will continue from August 17 to October 15, the Collector said.““Final Electoral Roll on October 19““The final electoral roll under the SIR process will be published on October 19, 2026, Collector Divakar T.S. said.““He urged representatives of political parties to create awareness about the SIR process among voters in their respective areas and help ensure that every eligible person is registered as a voter and that their details are correct.““For further information regarding the SIR process, voters may contact the concerned BLO, AERO or ERO. They may also call the toll-free number 1950.““Municipal Commissioner Abhishek Agastya, Kalluru Sub-Collector Ajay Yadav, SDC Sadanandam, RDO Srinivas, Collectorate Election Section Supervisors Raju and D.T. Ansari, representatives of various political parties and concerned officials attended the meeting.

Gujarat court rejects SIT closure report in 2021 encounter killing case of man, his minor son



GNS News Agency, August 17

A court in Surendranagar has rejected the closure report of the Special Investigation Team (SIT) in the alleged killing of a man and his minor son in an encounter in 2021, and admitted a protest petition filed by the man's mother-in-law while issuing summons to the investigation officer to be present in court on August 8 with the probe details.Hanif Khan alias Kalo Munno Amrikhan Jatmalik,44, alleged leader of the 'Talpatri Gang' of highway robbers, and his son Madin Khan, said to be around 15-years-old, were allegedly killed in a police encounter on November 6, 2021. The family had accused police sub inspector Virendrasinh Jadeja and six other cops from the Bajana police station in Patdi taluka of Surendranagar of allegedly killing the father-son duo in an encounter.Hanif Khan's daughter Suhana Khan and her guardian Hanifa Khan Jatmalik who is Hanif's mother-in-law had filed a PIL before the Gujarat High Court in 2022 seeking justice. The HC in 2024 directed the family to approach the magisterial court in Surendranagar. The police in their affidavit before the HC then had said that they had fired at the two in "self defence" after a "riot-like situation" broke out when they went to arrest Hanif Khan at Gediya village.

Suhana Khan had then filed an application with the Surendranagar district Dhrangadhra-Patdi Judicial Magistrate First Class Court on April 17, 2025. The court had directed the police to register an offence against the seven policemen — sub inspector Jadeja, head constables Rajeshbhai Mithapara and Kirit Solanki, and constables Shaileshbhai Kathevadviya, Digvijaysinh Zala, Prahladbhai Charmata, and Manubhai Fatepara — and ordered an investigation by a Deputy Superintendent of Police-level officer.A police complaint was registered by Hanifa Khan against PSI Jadeja and the six policemen accusing them of

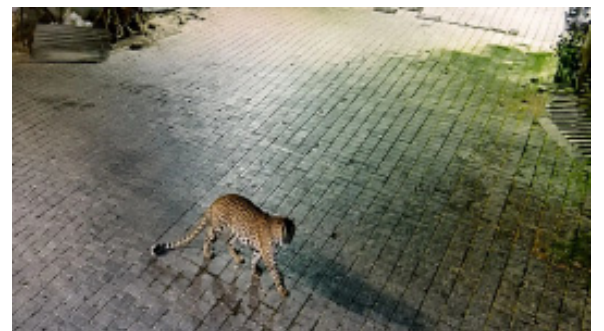
murder, at the Bajana Police station on May 29, 2025. The SIT under DSP J D Purohit was set up, which filed a C summary (closure report) before the court last year, following which Hanifa Khan filed a protest petition in December last year.The Judicial Magistrate First Class at Patdi, Puthu Sharma, on July 18 rejected the C Summary Report filed by the SIT in the case.In the order issued on July 18 and made available on Tuesday, JMFC Puthu Sharma stated, "The C Summary Report submitted by police has been rejected, and the protest petition of the defence has been accepted. Summons should be issued to PSI Virendrasinh Jadeja and six other police men to remain present in the court on August 8, 2026. The investigating officer should submit the case details before the court on August 9, which would be handed over to the accused."The protest petition alleged that the probe team had supported the seven accused police personnel."The accused are police officials and the SIT members are also police officers. The probe team had harboured and supported the seven accused police officials and filed a "C-summary" in the case. The C Summary Report should be rejected. The accused killed the son-in-law of the complainant and his minor son (12 years old) on November 6, 2021, in a police encounter. Several facts had come on record showing that the accused had intentionally killed both Hanif Khan and his minor son Madin".The FIR, based on Hanifa's complaint, said: "On November 6, 2021, a police team headed by PSI Jadeja, all in plain clothes, came in a private vehicle and caught Hanif Khan alias Kalo Munno, who was absconding in a criminal offence, in Gediya village, Patdi taluka in Surendranagar district. The accused police men took him to a private vehicle. Meanwhile, Hanif's son Madin Khan saw his father being taken by some plainclothesmen and tried to stop them. PSI Jadeja took out his service revolver and fired at Madin Khan on the chest. After the death of Madin Khan on the spot, his father Hanif Khan had a scuffle with police. PSI Jadeja fired another round on Hanif Khan, killing him on the spot. The cops later fled the spot, leaving their vehicle behind."Talking to The Indian Express, Hanifa Khan's lawyer P R Dave said, "The evidence that came on record clearly states that PSI Jadeja and his team had killed both Hanifa Khan alias Kalo Munno and his minor son Madin Khan. The police had filed a C-Summary, which clearly indicates that they are protecting the accused officials. We are very much satisfied with the court's order."Suhana Khan said, "The investigation police team are protecting the accused police personnel. We are satisfied with the JMFC court order, and we hope that those involved in killing my father and my brother will get strict punishment."

No spreading leopard rumours, appeals Ahmedabad forest department

GNS News Agency, August 17

The Ahmedabad Social Forestry Department on Wednesday urged people not to panic or circulate rumours, warning against fake videos and unverified claims of leopard sightings on social media as the search for a big cat spotted inside a residential society in the Ghuma area entered its second day.The department said a leopard was captured on CCTV at Serendeep Mansions in the early hours of July 20, following which forest officials rushed to the spot.

Following the sighting, the Forest Department said it carried out a recce of the area, installed cages to capture the leopard and deployed more than 20 forest guards, foresters, veterinarians and rescuers with all necessary equipment to continue the intensive search."The leopard usually comes out during the evening and night hours and is a shy animal, and humans are not its natural prey; hence, people do not need to panic, but maintaining vigilance is definitely necessary. The forest department team is alert and fully prepared, and an intensive search for the leopard is ongoing," the department said in a statement in Gujarati. Cautioning against the dangers of fake information, the department said a recent viral video on social media had a message that a leopard had been rescued from the Chandkheda area, which was in fact an old video shot in some other state. "People are requested to stay away from such rumours and not to spread them," the release stated.Four teams of the forest department are involved in



the search operation, including thermal drones, to rescue the leopard.Meanwhile, on Wednesday morning, messages spread on sighting of a leopard cub from under a car in another housing society in the Ghuma area — Green City. A video of the same also went viral on social media.However, in another statement issued in this context, the Ahmedabad Social Forestry Department said that on reaching the spot, the team of forest officials found it to be pugmarks of a kitten. "A cat had emerged from under another car. So, the video comes out to be that of a cat and not a leopard," the statement said.It reiterated the appeal not to spread rumours and issued a contact number — 76000 09845 — to get any information on any wildlife

Day after Mankhurd accident, BEST inspection finds one in three wet-lease buses had technical defects

GNS News Agency, August 17

A comprehensive inspection by the Brihanmumbai Electric Supply and Transport (BEST) undertaking has found that one in three wet-lease buses had defects in their braking or steering systems, even as the administration maintained that recent fatal crashes were primarily caused by human error.The inspection, carried out between April and July following a series of accidents involving BEST buses, found defects in 868 of the undertaking's 2,553 wet-lease buses, or around 34 per cent of the fleet.

According to data presented before the BEST Committee on Tuesday, repairs have been completed on 774 buses, while work on the remaining 94 has been pending for nearly three months."The remaining buses are currently undergoing repairs at respective depots and will only be released on roads after thorough scrutiny and repairs," a senior BEST official told committee members.The data was presented in response to objections raised by committee member Nitin Nandgaonkar, who had questioned the condition of buses operated by private wet-lease contractors during an April meeting. Nandgaonkar alleged that 50-60 per cent of wet-lease buses suffered from mechanical defects that remained unattended, posing risks to commuters and pedestrians.The findings come amid scrutiny of BEST's wet-lease operations following a string of accidents over the past two months. On Monday, a BEST bus in Mankhurd killed a senior citizen after the driver allegedly lost control of the vehicle. Earlier, another accident in Dadar claimed one life, while a major pile-up involving a BEST bus in Andheri left two persons injured.Despite the inspection findings, the administration maintained that the recent accidents were largely due to driver error.Officials said the preliminary inquiry into the Mankhurd crash suggested the driver was speeding and lost control of the bus. In the Dadar accident, they said the driver was suspected to have pressed the accelerator instead of the brake while moving the vehicle forward.The administration's position drew criticism from committee members, who cited repeated complaints about brake failures.Committee member Ajay Singh said 89 buses reported brake failures in April, followed by 91 in May and another 49 during the first half of June."The



brake failures are likely linked to air pressure leakages, an issue several drivers and conductors flagged during an inspection I conducted at the Kurla depot in June," Singh said.Official data showed that more than 42 fatalities involving wet-lease buses were reported over the past two years, compared with eight deaths involving BEST-owned buses during the same period.Singh also raised concerns over the working hours of the driver involved in the Mankhurd accident, claiming that staff at Pratiksha Nagar depot had informed him that the driver had been assigned overtime after operating buses through the previous night.BEST officials denied the allegation, stating that the driver had reported for duty at 7.30 am on Monday and that the accident occurred a little over an hour later. They, however, assured the committee that the allegation regarding overtime deployment would be examined.The discussion prompted BEST Committee Chairperson Trushna Vishwasrao to call an urgent meeting with all wet-lease operators.Vishwasrao singled out Mateshwari Urban Transport Solutions, the contractor operating the bus involved in the Mankhurd accident, claiming that buses operated by the company had figured in the highest number of fatal accidents over the past two years.She sought a review of the operator's existing contract with BEST and called for its cancellation. Mateshwari currently operates around 600 buses in BEST's total fleet of 2,802 buses. Vishwasrao also claimed that a proposed contract for an additional 150 buses to the operator had already been revoked.

Delhi Police probe assault on RAF personnel by 'CJP protesters'



The Delhi Police registered an FIR after personnel of the Rapid Action Force (RAF) were allegedly assaulted by protesters of the Cockroach Janata Party (CJP) near Jantar Mantar late Tuesday.A senior police officer said the First Information Report was registered against unidentified persons under relevant provisions of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS), including charges of assaulting public servants.The police said the incident occurred around 10 pm at the intersection of Tolstoy Marg and Parliament Street while RAF personnel were changing shifts. According to the police, a "group of protesters" was shouting slogans and standing at the intersection when a few RAF personnel attempted to cross the road.A 35-second video circulating

on social media shows two RAF personnel being attacked by a crowd. One officer falls on the road and is kicked and punched by several people before others intervene and pull him to safety.The injured personnel were taken to a hospital and are undergoing treatment, the police said.The incident came a day after clashes erupted during a CJP protest march from Jantar Mantar towards Parliament. The Delhi Police have so far registered nine FIRs in connection with Monday's violence.Of the nine FIRs registered over Monday's violence, three were lodged at Parliament Street Police Station, three at Connaught Place Police Station, and one each at Mandir Marg, Barakhamba Road, and Kartavya Path police stations.The cases were registered against unidentified persons under sections related to rioting, damage to public and private property, and assaulting public servants. Around 70 protesters were detained during Monday's clashes but were released later the same day.The police said no arrests have been made so far.Investigators are examining whether Monday's violence was part of a larger conspiracy, with the Special Cell and Crime Branch assisting local police in the investigation.Security has been tightened around the protest site at Jantar Mantar and officers have been instructed to exercise restraint and avoid confrontation with demonstrators, a senior police officer said.Besides the Delhi Police, about 12 companies of paramilitary forces, including RAF, have been deployed around Jantar Mantar to maintain law and order.

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Many detained protesters back at Jantar Mantar — straight from police stations

Less than 24 hours after being detained during the Cockroach Janta Party's (CJP) march to Parliament, many protesters were back at Jantar Mantar on Tuesday evening. Some among them returned straight from police stations where they spent the night.Among them was Sameer Dorwal (21). Having come to Jantar Mantar straight from Mandir Marg police station where he was kept in the night after being detained from Tolstoy Road, the Delhi University School of Open Learning student was now more anxious about facing his parents than he had been while facing police barricades, lathis and tear gas."I told my parents I was staying at a friend's place. They have no idea I was detained," said Sameer.But he is firm on one thing: he will go back home and return to the protest site again.The education system is rotten from the inside. If we will not do something now, who will?" he asks.He said he had furnished a bail bond of Rs 5,000 and has been asked to appear before a magistrate in August.For Siddharth (22), a law student at IP University, the experience was frightening."I was very scared yesterday when I was picked up by the police. I had no idea what was going to happen. But surprisingly the police were very kind to us."Siddharth, who has been

staying at the Jantar Mantar for the last three days, said Monday's events had only strengthened his determination."Education is something that will decide the nation's future, that is why it is important to keep protesting," he said.At 7.37 pm, cheers erupted across Jantar Mantar as CJP spokesperson Ashutosh Ranka announced that all those detained during Monday's protest had been released.

Among those applauding were Seema Yadav (38) and her 16-year-old daughter Krishna, who had travelled from Aligarh after learning about the protest through social media. For the last five days, they had been staying at Gurdwara Bangla Sahib despite knowing no one in Delhi.At least 20 police officers took me and my daughter on Monday. They separated us and dragged me for nearly a kilometre. I fainted," Seema alleged.Krishna, a Class 12 student who wants to become a professor, was detained and taken to Parliament Street police station. She alleged that several women police personnel pulled her by the hair."I used to think the police protected people. Yesterday, they pulled me by my hair and told me to go to jail," she said.

Days after C-section surgery, 5 women land in ICU: Telangana orders probe

Five out of 10 new mothers who had undergone C-sections on July 9 and 10 at the Area Hospital in Banswada of Telangana's Kamareddy district developed postoperative complications and were moved to the Government General Hospital, Nizamabad, and later to Nizam's Institute of Medical Sciences (NIMS), Hyderabad, for specialised treatment. The state government has constituted an inquiry committee to investigate the cause of complications.Speaking to The Indian Express, Dr M Vijay Bhaskar, Medical Superintendent, Banswada, and in-charge District Coordinator of Health Services (DCHS), Kamareddy, said a total of 10 Caesarean sections were performed — five each on July 9 and 10.After the surgery, a patient developed hypotension late in the night on July 9 and was referred to the Nizamabad district hospital. Another woman complained of chest pain on July 10 evening, and was also referred to the Nizamabad hospital. On July 11, three more women developed complications and required referral. "Though the symptoms were different, we felt that there was a possible pattern and initiated a detailed review," Bhaskar said.

Kidney-related issuesThree of the women had low urine output and were referred to the Hyderabad hospital for dialysis, indicating kidney-related complications. Two of these three responded well to the treatment, with their kidney function improving, and were taken off dialysis."One was moved to the general ward, and two others continue to be in the Medical Intensive Care Unit (MICU)," Bhaskar said on Wednesday.Five other women who had undergone C-sections at Banswada did not develop complications. Seven of the total of 10 mothers have already been discharged after suture removal, Bhaskar said.The inquiry committee constituted by the state government, meanwhile, has been testing the fluids given to the women. "The fluids, including IV, have been proven to be sterile. We are now pharmacologically testing the drugs administered to the women," Bhaskar said, adding there is a low possibility of contamination. "We are not sure what caused the distress among the women. We are doing everything in our power to find out the causes," Bhaskar added.Meanwhile, the matter has become a politi-

cal flashpoint in Telangana, with the Opposition demanding action over what they called "botched surgeries".

BRS leader T Harish Rao told the media on Tuesday, "We demand compensation to the affected families, and the government must provide the victims quality healthcare until their recovery."This comes at a time when parts of Rajasthan are dealing with a maternal health crisis, with several women who underwent C-sections at government hospitals in the state developing kidney-related complications over the last two months. The crisis came to light when five new mothers died in Kota in May, and several others were hospitalised in critical condition.

Telangana, Centre differ on urea supply during Vanakalam

Hyderabad: The State and Central governments have presented contrasting claims on availability of urea in Telangana during the ongoing Vanakalam season. While the State government has reported a fertiliser shortage, the Centre has maintained that urea supply has been adequate.On July 8, Agriculture Minister Tummala Nagewara Rao wrote to Union Minister for Chemicals and Fertilisers JP Nadda seeking additional urea allocation for July to offset the shortfall reported between April and June.The Minister maintained that the fertiliser demand had increased as sowing was completed in 55.52 lakh acres this season, compared to 52.04 lakh acres during the corresponding period last year. He said Telangana was facing a shortage of 45,000 tonnes of urea, 1.04 lakh tonnes of DAP and 2.53 lakh tonnes of complex fertilisers.Rao also urged the Centre to allocate more than 90 per cent of the urea produced at Ramagundam Fertilizers and Chemicals Limited (RFCL) to Telangana.

Pilot disoriented by laser beam, Kolkata-bound flight circles mid-air before landing



GNS News Agency, August 17

A Malaysia Airlines flight from Kuala Lumpur carrying 159 passengers was delayed for landing at the Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose International Airport in Kolkata as the pilot was momentarily disorientated by a laser beam, airport officials said. The flight was scheduled to land at 11.20 pm on

‘Who is responsible for his death’ asks father of 18-year-old swept away in Delhi drain



GNS News Agency, August 17

"Who is responsible for the death of my son" asked the father of an 18-year-old man who drowned in a rainwater-filled drain in Southeast Delhi's Sarita Vihar area on Friday. Ankit Kumar, 18, was swept away by a strong current while crossing a drain in the Madanpur Khadar area on Friday evening, prompting a search-and-rescue operation by the police, the Delhi Disaster Management Authority (DDMA), and the Delhi Fire Service. His body was recovered near the Agra Canal on Saturday evening, after nearly a day of search operations.

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Kumar was the elder son of his parents. His father, Sunil Kumar, works in the pantry of a private company. The family lives in a rented house in Ali Village's Bhim Colony and pay Rs 5,000 in monthly rent. Speaking to The Indian Express, his father said, "What was my son's fault? He was returning from work and called me at around 7.30 pm on Friday to say that he would be home soon, as he was near the Shiv Temple. But after some time, a neighbour came and told me that my son had drowned in the drain." "In previous years, we had also heard about people slipping into the same drain. However, no one had died like this," he said. He further alleged, "The administration took 24 hours to search for my son's body. In fact, on Friday night, they stopped the operation and went back to their homes. On Saturday, when people protested, they came back and restarted the search operation. They finally recovered his body from the Agra Canal, which is around half kilometer away from the spot." The father added that his son had recently started a private job in Noida and would often tell him that he would now take care of the family. According to the police, the drain is open, though a cemented bridge has been constructed over it for people to cross. On Friday evening, Kumar was crossing this bridge when he was swept away by rainwater in the drain. The police said the drain is maintained by Delhi's Irrigation and Flood Control Department. A response from the department is awaited.

LG orders rotation of long-serving officials, tells Delhi govt to redraw list of sensitive departments



GNS News Agency, August 17

This comes two days after the government effected an administrative reshuffle involving 16 IAS and DANICS officers, making changes across the Urban Development, Finance, Environment, Education, Food Safety and Transport departments. Chief Minister Rekha Gupta has also recently pushed for a systematic rotation of officials, particularly those who have remained in the same department or assignment for long periods. Officials had told The Indian Express last month that the Delhi government is planning a major administrative reshuffle, with around 60-70% of cadre and ex-cadre officials likely to be transferred. These officials and staffers "have been working in a 'comfort zone' for over five years" in their departments, sources had said.

Sandhu has also directed that Chief Vigilance Officers (CVOs) be posted immediately in all sensitive departments of the Delhi government, according to government sources. The directions follow a review by the LG of the vigilance systems, processes and practices that have been in place in the Delhi government for over a decade, officials added. He recently met the Principal Secretary (Vigilance), Government of the National Capital Territory of Delhi (GNCTD), on the subject, an official said. As part of the directions, the existing circular governing postings of longer duration is to be reframed, with all officials posted at one

Saturday, but when the aircraft was approximately eight nautical miles from the runway, the pilot reportedly noticed a bright laser beam flashing towards the cockpit from the Madhyamgram-Barasat side, officials said, adding the sudden glare briefly disoriented the pilot, forcing the aircraft to circle mid-air before making a second, safe landing at 11:25 pm. All passengers and crew members were reported safe, officials said.

Following the incident, the airline informed the airport authorities. The Kolkata airport authorities also lodged a complaint with the NSCBI Airport Police Station, the officials added. The officials said that the use of laser lights around the airport is prohibited, but such incidents occur occasionally and can potentially affect aircraft operations. "There is already an order by Bidhannagar police over the prohibition of laser lights. Although no major delay happened this time, the incident was reported to the police," a senior airport official said.

private company. The family lives in a rented house in Ali Village's Bhim Colony and pay Rs 5,000 in monthly rent. Speaking to The Indian Express, his father said, "What was my son's fault? He was returning from work and called me at around 7.30 pm on Friday to say that he would be home soon, as he was near the Shiv Temple. But after some time, a neighbour came and told me that my son had drowned in the drain." "In previous years, we had also heard about people slipping into the same drain. However, no one had died like this," he said.

He further alleged, "The administration took 24 hours to search for my son's body. In fact, on Friday night, they stopped the operation and went back to their homes. On Saturday, when people protested, they came back and restarted the search operation. They finally recovered his body from the Agra Canal, which is around half kilometer away from the spot." The father added that his son had recently started a private job in Noida and would often tell him that he would now take care of the family. According to the police, the drain is open, though a cemented bridge has been constructed over it for people to cross. On Friday evening, Kumar was crossing this bridge when he was swept away by rainwater in the drain. The police said the drain is maintained by Delhi's Irrigation and Flood Control Department. A response from the department is awaited.



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place for long periods to be moved out, sources said. The LG has also directed that the government's list of sensitive departments be reframed. During the review, it emerged that some departments with higher financial allocations had not been included in the list of sensitive departments, while others that were seemingly less sensitive figured on it, according to officials. Sandhu further directed that a standard mechanism and operational guidelines be devised for CVOs, detailing how they should supervise adherence to the Central Vigilance Commission guidelines in contracts and tender processes. The Vigilance department has also been asked to hold regular meetings of departmental CVOs to review vigilance work, officials added.

NALSAR students oppose CJI as convocation guest

Hyderabad: A section of the students of city-based NALSAR University of Law have written to the Vice-Chancellor, Registrar and professors of the institution, opposing any proposal to invite Chief Justice of India Surya Kant as chief guest to the varsity's convocation. In an email communication sent on July 23, some of the students of 2026 batch at the university said their concern arises from the refusal of the Supreme Court Bench led by the CJI to allow urgent listing of a plea concerning the alleged brutal police action against protesters during the peaceful 'Chalo Sansad' demonstration at Jantar Mantar on July 20. They said they are writing to express their concerns regarding the proposal to invite the CJI as the chief guest for the upcoming convocation. There was no immediate response from the university officials when their comments were sought on the matter. The students cited CJI's reported comments that the bench was not interested in watching videos when the lead counsel offered to show video evidence of the alleged police excesses during the protest on July 20.

When a Maharashtra minister walked out of his own meeting



GNS News Agency, August 17

A Maharashtra minister reportedly walked out of a district healthcare review after officials raised a funding shortage affecting rural hospitals. A Maharashtra minister reportedly walked out of a district healthcare review after officials raised a funding shortage affecting rural hospitals. This week, a sudden burst of education announcements raises eyebrows, a minister walks out when the conversation turns to money, and the Bombay High Court once again finds that some civic problems become visible only when they reach a judge's doorstep. Season of announcements

With the Union Education Ministry under scrutiny over the NEET controversy, there has been a flurry of activity in Maharashtra's School Education Department, with Education Minister Dada Bhuse appearing to have hit the accelerator. First came the announcement of more than 30,000 teacher recruitments. Then, the state cleared a decade-old

Security guard accused of raping Ahmedabad student shot at trying to escape, say police

GNS News Agency, August 17 The Ahmedabad City Police after 1 am on Monday (August 10), confirmed that they had shot and injured the man who had been arrested on Sunday for allegedly raping a 23-year-old design student on the terrace of the building where she lives on rent. The incident took place on Sunday night when the police had taken the accused, Dharam Singh Ramshankar Singh, for recovery and panchnama of the woman's mobile phone which the accused had allegedly stolen during the rape late evening on Saturday. Visuals from the hospital showed police vehicles peeling into the trauma ward of the GMERS Sola Civil Hospital on SG Highway and, later, the accused lying on a stretcher with a bandage around a singular gunshot wound on his right foot. Speaking to the media outside the Hospital, Zone-7 DCP Shivam Varma said, "Dharam Singh Ramshankar Singh had been arrested by the police on Sunday. After his medical tests and drawing of DNA samples, he was taken by the police to the Hebatpur area of the city to recover the mobile phone of the victim, which he had stolen." "During the process of this recovery panchnama, the accused, in an attempt to escape police custody, tried to snatch the service revolver of PI RS Parmar. A scuffle ensued and Constable Virendrasinh was hurt in the process. An officer fired two rounds at the leg of the accused, one of which hit him. The condition of the accused and the injured Constable is stable."

An FIR of attempt to commit culpable homicide will be filed at Bodakdev police station against the accused person, said DCP Varma. Earlier on Sunday, speaking about the incident and the arrest of the accused, Joint Commissioner of Police (Sector 1) Neeraj Badgujar had said that

demand to regularise over 3,000 contractual Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan employees and announced the launch of 'Super 100', a programme to prepare government school students for JEE and NEET. The flurry of announcements comes even as demands for Bhuse's resignation over the TET leak have surfaced sporadically. Uncomfortable question

A district-level healthcare review in north Maharashtra was proceeding routinely, with officials flagging a shortage of doctors, poor infrastructure and the difficulty of posting medical staff to remote areas.

The mood changed when a senior official raised the funding crunch with the minister presiding over the meeting. The official pointed out that the district was so short of funds that even transporting medicines to rural hospitals on time had become a challenge. That, sources said, was not a subject the minister was keen to pursue. He abruptly walked out of the meeting, leaving the issue unresolved. Issues faced by citizens do not reach the courts only through formal petitions; they also surface through the judiciary's own experiences. During a hearing last week, Bombay High Court Acting Chief Justice Ravindra Ghuge raised concerns over what the court described as selective enforcement by the Nashik Municipal Corporation. The court noted that a retired HC judge had been struggling with loud music from a marriage hall next door till 4 am while his wife was ill. Despite repeated complaints, the civic body took no action, the court observed. In June, the court had highlighted civic failures over drinking water, noting that former judges living in another city had reported receiving water only once in 10 days.



the accused Dharam Singh had sneaked up on the woman while she was taking an after-dinner walk on the roof of her apartment building around 10.30 pm on Saturday. He had allegedly thrown a wire around her neck and tightened it, constricting her breathing and causing her to collapse.

"He raped her after she blacked out due to the strangulation," Badgujar had said. After committing the crime, the accused allegedly escaped after bolting the door of the terrace from the outside, the police have said. After the woman came to, she raised an alarm, and was heard by others in the building. The police had deployed 10 teams to apprehend the accused and he had been arrested near Hebatpur, where they had taken later on Sunday night to recover the phone of the victim which he had allegedly stolen. The accused belongs originally to Uttar Pradesh, and had come to work as a security guard in the woman's apartment complex only four days before the alleged rape, police had said on Sunday.

Global AI models struggle with Indian wildlife sounds. 59 volunteers built a fix



Last year, a collective of ecologists and enthusiasts set out to capture the sounds of India's key ecosystems. They came up with nearly a hundred hours of recordings across ecologically varied terrain — from the drenched corridors of the Western Ghats to the deciduous forests of the East Deccan. Birdsong dominated, mixed with the calls of insects, frogs, bats, reptiles and even marine animals.

Trained ears combed through the 5,815 minutes to pin down the exact species behind each sound. Where the listener's expertise allowed, the seconds and frequency of the call were marked on a spectrogram, a visual map of the sound. Where it didn't, they simply noted that the species was present. On July 21, the result was published on bioRxiv, an online server where scientists post studies while a journal reviews them — in this case Scientific Data, published by Nature Research. With it, India has its first open-access, crowdsourced ecoacoustic dataset of multiple distinct groups of organisms, a library of wild sound built by volunteers and free for anyone to use — a chorus of 518 species across 25 states and union territories. Birdcall, insect flutter: Experts capture sounds of forest — and their meaning Manipur Fulvetta Set against the staggering scale of the subcontinent's wildlife, the tally may be modest, but it is a step towards using sound to study nature in the country. Until now, India's ecoacoustic recordings existed in scattered collections. This open-access dataset gives scientists a shared resource to improve biodiversity monitoring and helps AI identify Indian wildlife more accurately. "When ecologists do bird surveys on the field, we usually do a point count," said Pooja Choksi, a Mumbai-based ecological restoration scientist and a co-founder of the Indian Ecoacoustics Network (IEN), the collective behind the dataset. "You go to a spot in a forest, wait for 15 minutes, and note down all the birds you can observe in the distance. But if you rely only on sight, especially in a dense forest, you'll end up missing out on most of the wildlife," she said.

"Recordings can be a perfect time capsule for how an ecosystem sounds like in time and space. They can capture more species, over frequencies the human ear can't

hear, note how they vocalise, and do it periodically over long periods of time. This makes acoustics a game changer for biodiversity monitoring in any ecosystem," Choksi said.

Ecologists have used ecoacoustics to chart changes in a habitat over time, through conservation efforts or after tree felling. Tigers have been found to have vocal fingerprints, their chuffing unique to each. With AI, the arduous task of manually listening back has been simplified — deep learning models like BirdNET and Perch automatically detect the species heard. All of this is done non-invasively, with a nondescript recorder wrapped around a tree. In all this, there is a gap for India. Kadambari Devarajan, a Mumbai-based independent researcher who uses data science for conservation, explained why. "Machine learning models for recognising species/ birds through acoustics are largely trained on data from the Global North," she said. "And as every ecosystem has its unique soundscape, made up of a mix of endemic and common species, background noises and weather interruptions, ambient noise, the models perform poorly in tropical regions like India," she said. The gap is not for want of effort. State governments, researchers and institutions have been using ecoacoustics, said Sarika Khanwilkar, a Pune-based conservation scientist, but their recordings sit scattered, most not labelled in the detail AI needs. An open, labelled dataset puts hours of ready-to-use audio in the hands of anyone who needs it. A field researcher mapping an ecosystem with BirdNET can feed this data into the model, instead of depending only on recordings their own team has gathered over time. "Researchers in India already use global deep learning models for acoustic analysis, with individual modifications and data inputs to fine tune the model's accuracy in the habitat they're working in. But this is all happening in individual silos, wherein the data and resources are fragmented. With a one stop for a vast amount of data, all those efforts can be pooled together," Khanwilkar said. Birdcall, insect flutter: Experts capture sounds of forest — and their meaning Listening to changing forest soundscapes in the rainforests of Western Ghats using passive acoustic recorders.

The IEN grew out of Project Dhvani, a collective that Khanwilkar, Choksi and avian ecologist Vijay Ramesh began as PhD students at Columbia University in 2018. Relunched as the network in 2024, it drew over 600 people interested in ecoacoustics, formal expertise not required. In 2025, a core group of ecologists and engineers put out the call, with a few ground rules: the recordings would be free for anyone to use under a Creative Commons licence, labelled and published, and anyone who sent in at least 30 minutes would get their name on the paper as a co-author. The finished paper credits 59 contributors. "The bottleneck is that there is not enough training data from actual ecosystems in India. What we want is noisy data. We want that bird song, overlapping and competing, with all the insect buzz and human noise in the background, interrupted by rain and wind, rocks and leaves,"

Can you lose weight without working out?



In the realm of small talk, comments about weight - whether gained or lost - are among the most common. While we may think we've heard every response to "How did you manage to lose all that weight?" there's always a new diet or hack going viral. Today, it has become increasingly difficult to keep up and figure out what truly works for weight loss. The latest one? Losing weight without working out. Yes, you read that right! From Vidya to Madhavan: Losing weight without going to the gym Losing weight without breaking a sweat at the gym sounds like a dream, doesn't it? Interestingly, a lot of Bollywood celebrities are now adopting this approach to achieve major weight transformations. One of the first stars to talk about this method was R Madhavan, who underwent dramatic weight loss simply by eating right. In July 2024, the actor shared his journey on X, detailing the steps he followed to shed the extra kilos.

Intermittent fasting, heavy chewing of food 45-60 times (drink your food and chew your water) .. last meal at 6.45 pm . (only cooked food -nothing raw AT ALL post 3 pm) .. early morning long walks and early night deep sleep (no screen time 90 min before bed) ... plenty of fluids... https://t.co/CsVL98aGEj — Ranganathan Madhavan (@ActorMadhavan) July 18, 2024 Intermittent fasting, chewing food 45-60 times (drink your food and chew your water), having the last meal at 6:45 pm (only cooked food—nothing raw after 3 pm), early morning long walks, early night deep sleep (no screen time 90 minutes before bed), plenty of fluids, lots of green vegetables, and food that's easily metabolised and healthy. Nothing processed at all," Madhavan explained. Then came Vidya Balan, who revealed that her sudden weight loss was due to an 'anti-inflammatory' diet she had adopted. "You know, all my life, I've struggled to be thin. I've dieted and exercised like crazy, and sometimes I'd lose weight, but it would come back. Then, earlier this year, I met a nutritional group called Amura (Amura Health) in Chennai. They said, 'It's just inflammation; it's not fat.' So, they put me on a diet to eliminate the inflammation—it's called the elimination of inflammation—and it worked beautifully for me. The weight just went like that because they removed foods that didn't suit me," she shared in a viral interview. She also mentioned that she hasn't worked out for almost a year now. The latest to join this trend is Himanshi Khurana. Speaking at ABP Live's Health Conclave Punjab 2024, she discussed her weight loss journey, sharing how she shed 11 kilos through a simple diet. Another key factor, she said, was managing her stress, which played a significant role in her transformation.

Exercise: essential or optional?

Exercise often comes to mind as a cornerstone of any weight loss journey, but experts clarify that while it's beneficial, it isn't the only way to shed those extra kilos. Weight loss is fundamentally about creating a calorie deficit, i.e, burning more calories than you consume. This can be achieved through diet alone, but incorporating exercise offers significant advantages. Dr Siddhant Bhargava, co-founder of Food Darzee, notes, "Exercise is not essential for weight loss, as weight loss is primarily driven by a calorie deficit. However, the absence of exercise, particularly resistance training, can lead to muscle loss. Muscle is metabolically active, so maintaining it is crucial for sustaining weight loss and a healthy metabolism." Building lean muscle through activities like weightlifting and bodyweight exercises increases your resting metabolic rate, meaning you burn more calories even when at rest. This is a critical factor for long-term weight management. Chetan, a fitness content

creator, adds, "You can lose weight with just diet, but exercise accelerates the process. It's not just about shedding fat; exercise strengthens your muscles, improves stamina, and enhances your overall health." Moreover, physical activity has benefits beyond calorie burning. Regular exercise improves cardiovascular health, reduces stress, enhances mood, and strengthens bones and joints. Even low-impact activities like yoga, brisk walking, or swimming can contribute to weight loss while boosting mental well-being.

The role of diet in weight loss While exercise can fast-track weight loss and improve overall fitness, experts agree that diet plays the most significant role in the process. Palak Koradia, RD, CDE, and co-founder of Health Hatch, explains, "Weight loss is fundamentally about creating a calorie deficit, which can be achieved solely through diet. However, for sustainable results, a balanced diet is key." A calorie deficit doesn't mean starving yourself or drastically cutting food groups. Instead, it involves making thoughtful dietary choices that ensure you're consuming fewer calories while meeting your nutritional needs. Key dietary strategies for weight loss: Portion control: Eating smaller servings prevents overeating while still allowing you to enjoy your favourite foods. Include fibre-rich foods: Adding vegetables, fruits, and whole grains to your meals promotes satiety and aids digestion, keeping hunger at bay. Prioritise protein: Foods like lentils, eggs, chicken, and tofu keep you feeling full and support muscle preservation during weight loss. Stay hydrated: Drinking water before meals can reduce calorie intake, while staying hydrated supports metabolism. Limit high-calorie, low-nutrient foods: Minimise sugar, fried foods, and processed items to avoid consuming empty calories. Dr Preeti Seth, founder and CEO of Pachouli Aesthetics and Wellness, says, "Extreme calorie restriction is not the answer. While it may lead to quick weight loss, it often results in nutritional deficiencies, weakened immunity, and hair or skin issues. A balanced diet that includes complex carbohydrates, healthy fats, and protein is crucial for sustainable weight loss."

Stress and weight loss: A deeper look Stress has long been linked to weight gain, with numerous studies reinforcing its impact (social media and Bollywood suggest it too). According to research published in Obesity Reviews, chronic stress triggers elevated cortisol levels, which increase appetite, promotes fat storage (especially around the abdomen), and can even lead to unhealthy food cravings. Dr Sujith, the functional medicine specialist and senior medical officer at Vieroosts Biohack Centre, explains, "Stress does not directly cause weight gain; however, obesity can increase sensitivity to stress. When an obese individual experiences stress, their body releases excess cortisol, triggering the mobilisation of polyunsaturated fatty acids (PUFAs) into the bloodstream. This creates a feedback loop that amplifies stress responses."

Furthermore, a study by the American Psychological Association found that individuals under chronic stress are more likely to engage in emotional eating, turning to high-calorie comfort foods. This behaviour disrupts calorie balance, leading to weight gain. Managing stress is not a stand-alone solution but an integral part of a broader weight-loss strategy. Dr Sujith emphasises the need for "a holistic approach that includes addressing stress, following a balanced diet, and improving gut health to break the cycle of stress and obesity effectively." Stress management techniques, such as mindfulness, yoga, and ensuring adequate sleep, can help regulate cortisol levels. Simple lifestyle changes - like deep breathing exercises, walking in nature, or reducing screen time before bed - also contribute to better stress control. The combination of a balanced diet and regular exercise creates a synergy that accelerates weight loss while enhancing overall health. Exercise burns additional calories and supports muscle growth, while diet ensures you're fueling your body with the nutrients it needs to recover and thrive. Dr Preeti Seth, says, "Diet plays a major role, but combining it with simple activities like walking or yoga makes weight loss faster and more sustainable. Managing stress and staying active ensures long-term success." So, can you lose weight without working out? The answer lies in finding what works best for you - whether it's focusing on diet, managing stress, staying active in everyday life, or embracing exercise for faster results and overall health benefits.

Detox bars, IV drips: Indian wedding hangovers get a swanky cure

Wedding planners and modern couples have introduced the ultimate antidote to keep the wedding festivities alive the morning after the party: detox bars and IV drips. The morning after a night of a wild cocktail bash is inevitably about a bad hangover and a regretful headache. Not anymore, though. Wedding planners and modern couples have introduced the ultimate antidote to keep the wedding festivities alive the morning after the party: detox bars. From fresh juices to wellness drinks and even IV drips, these detox bars offer everything needed to cure a hangover. Just like a chaat corner or a wedding favours stall, detox bars are a dedicated space at the venue to help you recover from the effects of alcohol.

"Indian weddings are known for being grand and indulgent, but now, couples are looking to balance all that fun with wellness touches. Detox bars add a thoughtful twist, something modern and unique that makes guests feel cared for. It's a trend we're seeing more and more, especially at weddings that want to stand out," says Reshma Ramaiah, co-founder, director, and partner for US Operations at luxury wedding planning company Resh&Co. "Detox bars play a crucial role, especially at destination weddings, where multiple functions feature an array of amazing cocktails. In such settings, detox bars serve as a much-needed



saviour," Ruchin Kohli, director and founder of Occasion Xperts, and vice president of North EEMA (Event and Entertainment Management Association of India), tells India Today. Aesthetics are not a problem. These detox bars are often adorned with fresh fruits, vegetables, lush greenery, and charming signage, ensuring top-notch visual appeal. In fact, they often double as another Instagram-worthy spot at the wedding.

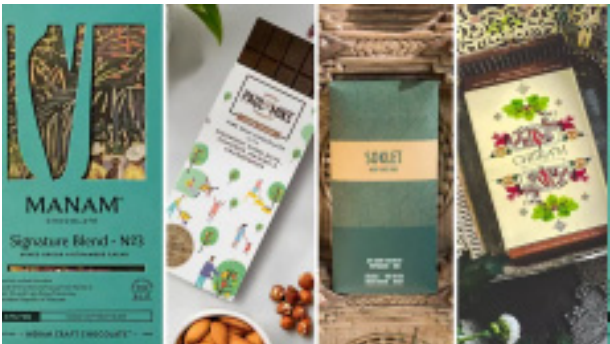
"You'll usually find infused waters with fruits and herbs, fresh juices, electrolyte drinks, natural or flavoured options for quick rehydration, and maybe even wellness shots like apple cider vinegar and chlorophyll shots," Reshma Ramaiah shares. Some couples take it a step further with rose or lavender-infused teas for a touch of luxury, or healthy smoothies. The idea is to essentially create a space

where guests can recharge in style. These shots aren't just popular at weddings; they've also become a trend at corporate offsite gatherings, helping individuals feel refreshed the next day," says Ruchin Kohli. "A detox bar should look beautiful - imagine fresh fruits, vibrant drinks, and maybe even some flowers or greenery to tie it into the wedding theme. Variety is key too; offering a mix of juices, waters, and other options ensures there's something for everyone," suggests Reshma.

You can also add interactive elements, like a make-your-own smoothie station, to make it a more fun experience for guests. Not just morning functions, these detox bars work just as well for late-night parties. "Detox bars have also become a kind of extension to main bars, allowing people to take wellness shots before they go to sleep," Kohli shares.

What's the buzz about IV drips? IV drips – intravenous infusions meant to deliver a mix of antioxidants, vitamins, and minerals straight into the bloodstream for health benefits – have also made their way to weddings. Popular for boosting health and providing an instant glow, these drips are increasingly seen as quick fixes to cure hangovers at weddings. For instance, influencer Alanna Panday included this at her bachelorette party for her bridesmaids, and she herself was also spotted receiving an IV drip while having her hands adorned with mehendi. Wedding planners often collaborate with wellness centres, which bring their staff and equipment to offer IV drip services at weddings. "IV drips are becoming a thing, especially at luxurious or destination weddings! It's like next-level pampering for guests who've partied a little too hard the night before.

Lindt, who? Indian craft chocolates are stealing the show one bar at a time



A couple of days ago, a piece of information shocked chocolate connoisseurs worldwide. To settle a class action lawsuit, Swiss chocolatier Lindt & Sprüngli - a chocolate lover's favourite - admitted that their products may not be "expertly crafted" after all and could contain heavy metals like lead and cadmium. A few weeks ago, grabbing a chocolate bar was as casual as it could get. But who would have thought that a simple treat could pose potential health risks? Experts have long touted dark chocolate as a great source of antioxidants, so this revelation came as a surprise. Perhaps it's a reminder of why it's more important than ever to stay aware of what we put into our bodies.

While our love for Swiss and Belgian chocolates may linger for years to come (and may never die), it's worth taking a moment to look closer to home. The Indian chocolate scene is undergoing a serious transformation, and you should take a moment to witness, love and celebrate. "Mind share comes before market share," says Vikas Temani, founder of Paul and Mike (farm-to-bar chocolates). For him, it's not just a marketing mantra - it's the heart of a growing revolution in India's chocolate industry. Over the past decade, the market has quietly shifted. Once dominated by mass-produced brands like Cadbury, it's now thriving with homegrown, craft chocolate makers like Temani and others who are carving out a niche and reshaping how we experience cocoa in its best form.

For decades, cocoa farming in India was a low-margin business, dominated by bulk buyers with little regard for quality. But in the last ten years, a new breed of chocolatiers has emerged - crafting bean-to-bar chocolates that rival global brands are putting Indian cocoa on the world map. From hand-harvested beans in the southern states to elegantly packaged bars in luxury stores, these craft chocolate makers are reshaping how Indians indulge in chocolate. A new wave of chocolate makers Back in 2015, India barely had any bean-to-bar chocolate makers. According to Karthikeyan Palaniswamy, founder of Soklet, brands like Naviluna and Mason & Co. were amongst the first to emerge around 2012-2015. These early players disrupted a market where nearly 90 per cent of Indian cocoa production was controlled by just two companies - Campa and Cadbury. "They essentially functioned like a cartel," says Palaniswamy. "Farmers had no say in pricing, as domestic cocoa production was minuscule and couldn't meet local demand." The reason, he mentions, behind this was because India was a net importer of cocoa beans. "The domestic production was minuscule and couldn't even meet the local demand. With just two major buyers in the market, there was little competition. The price difference between the two buyers during the season was negligible. Farmers got the same price irrespective of the bean's quality, fermentation, drying, or sorting," he adds. Fast forward to today, and the landscape looks very different. Craft chocolate brands have not only created new demand but also helped farmers improve post-harvest processes, such as fermentation and drying. Why Indian craft chocolate is gaining traction

For years, luxury chocolates were synonymous with global giants like Lindt and Ferrero Rocher. However, a shift in consumer preferences is driving growth for local craft brands. "Consumers are becoming more aspirational across categories, from cars to coffee—and now chocolates," explains Temani. "People are looking beyond Ferrero Rocher and Cadbury for something better." But it's not just about aspiration. The desire for quality, sustainability, and healthier options is playing a significant role. Urban consumers, in particular, are becoming more informed about what they consume. Each chocolate is crafted with a lot of precision at Manam Chocolate Karkhana. "Health consciousness is a major driver," says Palaniswamy. "Consumers today want products that are natural, minimally processed, and free of harmful additives. This aligns well with what craft chocolate brands offer." Many consumers today are very conscious of the carbon footprint of the products they buy and are unwilling to compromise on this. Take, for example, the cocoa sourced from Africa, which is then processed into chocolate in Switzerland before eventually landing on your supermarket shelf. That's a journey of thousands of kilometres, contributing significantly to the carbon footprint. This growing awareness is one of the reasons why homegrown craft chocolates are gaining a better response - they offer a more sustainable alternative. How farmers benefit from the chain Chaitanya Muppala, co-founder of Hyderabad-based Manam Chocolate, doesn't like his brand to be associated with the cliché term bean-to-bar because he believes the journey begins much before, with the genetics of the cacao trees, the soil, and the fermentation process. The brand works with over 150 farmers, providing them with education on soil management and cultivation techniques to increase yield and quality. Breaking of cacao pods by workers at Distinct Origins Cacao Fermentery in West Godavari District owned by Manam Chocolate.

"We actually work very closely with over 150 farmers

Kidney issues heighten stroke risk, experts warn

New Delhi: Metabolic risk factors such as hypertension, high blood sugar, obesity, and abnormal cholesterol are the major conditions that are linked to kidney problems, and worsen the risk of strokes in patients with kidney disease, said experts. Chronic kidney disease (CKD) is independently known to exacerbate the risk of stroke. A recent study published in the European Heart Journal showed that people with kidney failure are many times more likely to have a heart attack or stroke. They also have a higher risk of dying as a result, the study showed. "Patients with reduced glomerular filtration rates (indicating kidneys are not filtering waste properly) face a 40 per cent higher likelihood of experiencing a stroke. In addition, proteinuria (excess protein in the urine), a common feature of CKD, can raise stroke risk by approximately 70 per cent," Dr PN Renjen, Senior Consultant, Neurology, Indraprastha Apollo Hospitals, told IANS.

Renjen said that the interrelationship between CKD, metabolic syndrome (MetS), and stroke is significant and complex. MetS, characterised by obesity, hypertension, dyslipidemia, and insulin resistance, is a major risk factor

and have developed a new model around cacao procurement. We don't just buy the beans from farmers, but we actively collaborate with them on genetic selection, farming practices, soil management, and all other factors that contribute to creating complex, flavourful cacao. For us, chocolate making begins on the farm, not with the bean," he explains. In July this year, Manam Chocolate was featured on TIME's list of the World's Greatest Places, becoming the first Indian craft chocolate brand to achieve this recognition. Indian craft chocolate makers are creating a positive impact on farmers by establishing direct, fair relationships and promoting sustainable farming practices. This has also helped farmers get a fair price for their produce and hard work which was earlier not even considered by the big players as the yields were bought by industries at throwaway prices. "We pay a fair price to farmers — unlike industrial chocolate, which compensates farmers poorly. In our system, farmers get around 25-30 per cent of the profit, whereas in the global value chain, only about 6 per cent goes to them," states Chaitanya. Dr Arun Viswanathan SK is the founder and CEO of Chitram Craft Chocolates based in Coimbatore, another brand taking the Indian chocolate game a notch higher. He mentions that one thing that each brand is trying to work towards is collaborating with farmers who have not been associated with or supported by any big brand. "For instance, we work with a farmer from a region called Pachamalai in Tamil Nadu. Not many people know that cocoa is grown there. Our motive is more towards reaching out to those farmers and improving their fermentation practices to develop better products, helping them reach the bigger market. For us, it's about giving customers another opportunity to choose a lesser-known region. Through these partnerships, craft chocolate brands are not only improving the quality of Indian chocolate but also benefiting farmers by ensuring they receive proper training, better compensation, and a fairer share of the value chain. The appreciation for Indian flavours You've probably heard of kunafeh, and if you haven't, you must be living under a rock. This Arabic dessert has taken the world by storm, largely thanks to Dubai-based chocolate brand Fix, which has pushed it into the spotlight. It's become an obsession - people are lining up at their stores, getting it delivered overseas, and if they can't, they're making it themselves with whatever ingredients they can get their hands on.

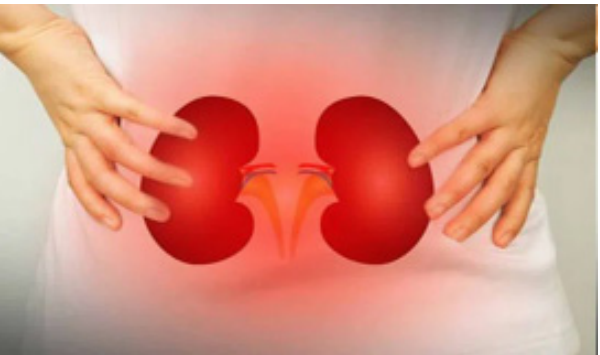
Now, just like that, it is possible for Indian flavours to reach the masses, and that's what these brands are striving to do. Indian chocolates are starting to gain recognition for their distinctive flavours, thanks to the incorporation of local ingredients and superfoods. Chitram, for instance, pioneered the creation of Moringa-based chocolates, which won an International Chocolate Award in 2019. Their award-winning Mango Lassi chocolate brings an Indian twist to the chocolate-making process, blending classic flavours with bold, homegrown ingredients. "We're not just making chocolates; we're telling a story about India's rich agricultural heritage," Dr Arun notes.

A few brands are going above and beyond to infuse flavours that were once unimaginable in chocolates—rose, sandalwood, banana, mango, beetroot, filter coffee, masala chaas, lemon, ginger, tulsi green tea—name it, and you might just be surprised to find it on the supermarket shelf. When investing in an Indian craft chocolate bar, which retails for about the same price as a luxury Swiss brand (around Rs 400), how do consumers make their choice? This is where consumer education plays a crucial role. As Vikas Temani already mentioned, "mind share" plays a very important role and if these craft chocolates are to witness the boost that they should, educating consumers about why Indian chocolates should be held in high regard is important.

For Viswanathan, educating consumers is a key focus. "It's about coming together to do festivals, events, or pop-ups to connect with the audience," he says. "In markets like Bengaluru, where we've participated in the Craft Chocolate Festival, we've seen a significant change in consumer knowledge and response to our products." Many consumers are still unfamiliar with the origins and production processes behind these chocolates, but brands are actively addressing this by emphasising storytelling, transparency, and sustainability. Chaitanya, for example, stresses how educating the consumer on the quality and traceability of ingredients is vital. By showcasing the journey of cocoa beans from farm to bar, they create a deeper connection with the product. Arun also highlights that this push towards education allows consumers to appreciate the complexities of flavours and the ethical impact of their purchases. With growing awareness, consumers are shifting towards chocolates that not only taste unique but are also produced with a commitment to fair trade and sustainable practices, benefiting both farmers and the environment. As the market continues to evolve, consumer education remains at the heart of craft chocolate's success, transforming indulgence into a conscious, informed choice.

What lies ahead for Indian craft chocolate?

The future looks promising for India's craft chocolate makers. With increasing consumer awareness, a growing appreciation for locally made products, and initiatives like craft chocolate festivals, the market is poised for further growth. As Palaniswamy puts it, "When we launched our first chocolate bar in 2016, it was priced at Rs 200, and customers hesitated to buy. Today, price is no longer a deterrent for those who truly enjoy our products." The journey from farm to bar is one of passion, perseverance, and a commitment to quality. And as more Indian consumers



for CKD and cardiovascular diseases, including stroke. Studies indicate that individuals with MetS have a 50 per cent higher risk of developing CKD compared to those without it. "The mechanisms linking these conditions include oxidative stress, inflammation, and endothelial dysfunction, which adversely affect kidney function and increase stroke risk," Renjen explained.

Justin Trudeau: The autumn of a liberal



GNS News Agency, August 17

Once a liberal icon who represented the values of the ‘cultural Left’, Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, now in the last year of his third term, is mired in a crisis of unpopularity, dissension and defections from within his Liberal Party fold. The embattled Mr. Trudeau has been in power for nearly a decade since November 2015, for three terms. Few Canadian Prime Ministers have survived to rule for four terms. But in both the 2019 and 2021 federal elections — the latter called in September 2021 after Mr. Trudeau advised the country’s Governor General to dissolve parliament — the Liberal Party was reduced to leading a minority government. In March 2022, Mr. Trudeau was able to retain power after the Liberals and the social-democratic New Democratic Party (NDP) agreed to a confidence and supply agreement, entailing NDP support in parliament tied to the Liberals backing the NDP agenda on welfare and taxes.

In the years since, Mr Trudeau’s popularity has plateaued. Recent approval ratings show that he enjoys barely 26% support compared with the 63% he had in the early days of his first tenure. Liberal Party leaders within his caucus have called for his resignation and earlier this month, a key Minister and someone widely considered to be his successor, Finance Minister and Deputy Prime Minister Chrystia Freeland, resigned abruptly, calling Mr. Trudeau’s policies as a “costly political gimmicks”. Meanwhile, a resurgent Conservative Party, led by Pierre Poilievre, has steadily upped its popularity due to negative perceptions in the electorate about Mr. Trudeau’s governance. And the social democrats have been miffed too because of ideological differences with the Liberal Party.

Recent approval ratings show that Justin Trudeau enjoys barely 26% support compared to the 63% he had in the early days of his first tenure. His current unpopularity is tied to the problems related to the economy: issues such as raging inflation, a housing crisis and opposition to immigration have led to a significant decline in opinion for Trudeau. Elections are supposed to be held in October 2025 but there is an increasing likelihood that the Liberal Party will seek a leadership change before that. In September, the NDP had ended its 2022 agreement but Mr. Trudeau survived three no-confidence motions called by the Conservative Party since then, as the NDP and the federalist Bloc Quebecois have been reluctant to vote alongside the conservatives. Elections are supposed to be held in October 2025 but there is an increasing likelihood that the Liberal Party will seek a leadership change before that to mitigate the loss of support due to Mr. Trudeau’s unpopularity. The opposition in Canada apart, Mr. Trudeau has had to chart unsteady waters in Canada’s external affairs as well. The re-election of Donald Trump as the U.S. President and his open hostility to Mr. Trudeau, besides threats of tariffs on Canadian goods, is a major irritant.

Canada’s relations with India also took a nose-dive over allegations by Mr. Trudeau that Indian intelligence agencies were linked to the killing of Hardeep Singh Nijjar, a Khalistani separatist and Canadian citizen, even as the Indian government upped the ante over its concerns that Mr.

Trudeau’s government was providing safe haven to Khalistani extremists. Mr. Trudeau was also confronted publicly by the Chinese President Xi Jinping for “leaking” discussions between the two sides on “Chinese interference” in Canada to the media.

How did things go so south for the “liberal darling” of the northern hemisphere?

Mr. Trudeau rode to power in Canada promising a liberal agenda and delivered on some issues that were dear to the “cultural Left”. He acted on promises of instituting gender equality by appointing a Cabinet with 50% representation to women and appointing more women judges in Canada’s Supreme Court. Recreational marijuana’s sale and use was legalised in Canada in 2018. A carbon tax was introduced as Mr. Trudeau sought to implement climate-friendly policies — the Conservatives have vowed to remove this on coming to power. Child care agreements were implemented as was representation for and reconciliation with Indigenous people. The reforms on dental care, pharma care and a federal “anti-scab” (employers replacing striking workers) law were made possible due to the aforementioned support from the NDP. But Mr. Trudeau’s image as a reformer reforms committed to liberalism had already been hurt because of a number of scandals. While he appointed an indigenous woman to the post of Justice Minister in Jody Wilson-Raybould in his first term, she resigned over alleged interference and threats from government officials to favour a firm embroiled in a corruption trial. In 2020, in his second term, Mr. Trudeau faced an ethics scandal involving a government contract for a charity that worked with his family members.

His current unpopularity is now tied to the problems related to the economy. Issues such as raging inflation, a housing crisis and opposition to immigration have led to a significant decline in opinion for Mr. Trudeau and the conservative party has benefited from this. With opinion polls pointing to a possible rout for the Liberal party if elections were held now, a number of his party colleagues have urged him to step down, none more prominent than Ms. Freeland. The NDP has also promised a no-confidence motion in the New Year and it remains to be seen if Mr. Trudeau can weather that storm as he has managed in his three terms. His boyish looks and charm and the fact that he is the scion of the Trudeau family — father Pierre Trudeau served two terms (one abridged one) as Prime Minister in the late 1970s and early 1980s — helped him garner popular support when he embarked on his first term, calling himself a representative of the younger generation in Canada. Taking a leaf from the playbook of former U.S. President Barack Obama, Mr. Trudeau won a mandate at a time when liberalism was popular in the early 2010s in the Americas in particular.

Rise of populism But with high inflation affecting people across Europe and North America and voters — particularly those from working class sections — turning toward right-wing populists who are avowedly opposed to free trade and the liberal international order, Mr. Trudeau finds himself as an anomaly. The phenomena of working class voters being wooed by the Right on issues such as immigration and “culture wars” is not unique to Canada as experiences of other Western democracies, including that of the U.S. shows. Ms. Freeland characterised his efforts to win back voters such as a “two month sales holiday” and 250 Canadian dollars as rebate for workers as reckless policies but it also suggested a desperation by Mr. Trudeau to wean away detractors from working sections. The manner he has attended festivals with Khalistani insignia and others glorifying extremists could also be seen as a way to pander to the influential Sikh community, but his rhetoric about Indian involvement in Nijjar’s murder reflects an intention to better his image as a “weak leader”. With signs pointing to drastic Liberal losses, Mr. Trudeau could be persuaded to relinquish power to a colleague as elections beckon, akin to how Joe Biden withdrew from the Presidential race in the neighbouring country. But considering his record in his earlier tenure and how he addressed allegations against him, it is increasingly likely that he will try to portray himself as a defiant leader who will stay in power till the end of his term. One way to do so would be to prorogue parliament and prevent any no-confidence motions till elections are scheduled in October. As things stand, no Liberal leader has the heft to close the gap between the Conservatives but Ms. Freeland’s resignation seems timed to push the party to find an alternative. Whether Mr. Trudeau will succeed in fending off this fresh challenge will be known quickly as 2025 beckons in Canada.

dition. That is because I am a bit of a purist in this matter. Any careless or ham-handed tampering or tinkering with the infinitely delicate and filigree-like structure of a raga can have disastrous consequences, distorting the original. Experiments with established and highly evolved art forms succeed only in the hands of those who are rooted in that tradition and know the limits of what can change and what cannot. The world may be flat, but not everything lends itself to fusion. This is especially so for ragas, which through their structured elaboration are meant to evoke a mood, redolent of the different seasons or the different times of the day or of different emotions. Any attempt to render it like an adolescent pop band, by racing through the initial, slow phases of a composition to reach the fast-paced crescendo, foundationally mutilates the genre. Sometimes, in the search for the new, I get the distinct impression that we are inflicting terrible violence on the old. But I also understand, that even classical music cannot be etched in stone and must evolve. The tastes of audiences are changing—alas often for culturally illiterate reasons—but they are changing. And, if the change is necessary, the key to dexterously adapting to the new depends on the calibre of the artist initiating it. If it is someone like Shankar Mahadevan, the end result, even if very different from how the raga would have been sung in its original format, is scintillating. Moreover, a great deal depends on what the fusion music is being used for. Fusion would be completely out of place for a stage meant for traditional classical music performances. But fusion, as Air India’s brand track, which combines the beautiful melodic structure of raga Yaman with something innovatively light and catchy and foot-tapping, simultaneously pays tribute to our ancient musical legacy, while adapting it to the new purpose for which it has been composed. So, I think a round of applause is due to the refurbished Air India brand, and to Tatas. I know the recreation of Air India is still a work in progress. Not everything undesirable of the past has been jettisoned. But at least an attempt is being made to restore it to the Maharaja of airlines that it once was. I can say for myself that there was a time, many years ago when my airline of preference was Air India. I hope it becomes so again, and I take this occasion to convey my best wishes to the management, and the creative people associated with it, t

India must revisit the animal welfare framework at its zoos



The move by the World Association of Zoos and Aquariums (WAZA) to suspend the membership of the Delhi’s National Zoological Park (originally the Delhi zoo) has sparked much debate on the animal welfare framework in Indian zoos. On October 7, WAZA notified suspension of the Delhi zoo’s WAZA membership, effective from October 8, 2024, with the possibility of cancellation if the conditions laid down by WAZA in the said notification are not fulfilled by the zoo by April 7, 2025. The decision has evoked shock but also relief as the Delhi zoo’s 29-year-old African male elephant, Shankar, which was given to India as a diplomatic gift by Zimbabwe in 1998, has been consistently neglected. Shankar had a female companion which passed away in 2005 and was never replaced. The male elephant exhibits maladaptive behaviour. This situation is problematic as elephants are extremely social animals forming complex relationships. WAZA was made aware of the elephant’s plight through numerous complaints. A team from WAZA also visited the zoo on March 18, 2024, which showed the elephant to be in a poor physical and mental state. It was found to be tethered by a chain in a solitary enclosure without the normal stimulants or the immersive environment found in the wild which keep elephants content and healthy.

The WAZA team thereafter urged the Delhi zoo to take note of the elephant’s plight and act within the next 15 days to end the animal’s suffering in line with WAZA’s Animal Welfare Strategy which specifies the ‘Five Domains Animal Welfare Model’. Nothing substantial was ever done, compelling WAZA to indefinitely suspend the Delhi zoo’s WAZA membership. But this suspension has been made subject to two conditions: either get the animal relocated or address its health concerns by April 7, 2025. The deplorable condition of the elephant goes against every ideal of WAZA carved out through its science-based knowledge in animal care and welfare, environmental education and global conservation, since its inception in 1935, with the aim of guiding zoos and aquariums across the world and ensuring animal welfare and conservation.

Plight of other elephants Delhi zoo also has two Asian elephants — a male and a female. It is hard to ignore the mental distress that these Asian elephants exhibit through their incessant ‘head-bobbing’, which is a classic sign of mental distress in elephants. The elephants are also in an enclosure with insufficient area. It is agonising to see them in distress. Studies suggest that on average, a wild elephant, under non-extreme environmental conditions, walks for up to 10 kilometres a day. They also forage in a forest for up to 19 hours a day during which they undertake a range of behaviours that are regarded as essential for their survival. It appears that it was the poor nutrition, unsuitable environment and poor physical health of Shankar which compelled WAZA to act against the Delhi zoo. Notably, these are also problems which affect the two Asian elephants causing them to lose motivation to undertake survival-related behaviours. The situation at the Delhi zoo is an outright violation of global standards in the maintenance of zoos and its animals in other countries such as the United Kingdom and Ireland. The British and Irish Association of Zoos and Aquariums (BIAZA), in its ‘Management Guidelines for the Welfare of Elephants’, states that zoos must ensure that the standards of husbandry practices, housing, health and welfare management of elephants are humane, appropriate and in line with their intelligence, social behaviour and longevity. The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) of the United Kingdom, in its ‘Standards of Modern Zoo Practice’, acknowledges that as elephants are highly-intelligent animals with large natural ranges and a complex social life, meeting their needs in captivity is challenging. It further states in paragraph 8.8.4 that elephants have to be kept in stable, female groups with matriarchal herds being the norm and that even the non-productive, older or problem elephants have to be kept in groups considering their indispensable need to socialise. In paragraph 8.8.6, it further states that even the bull elephants in musth, if separated from cows or other bulls, cannot be subjected to prolonged physical or social

isolation from other elephants. But the Delhi zoo has kept Shankar in social isolation for a very long time. Pertinently, in paragraph 8.8.5, it states that female elephants must have contact with other female elephants at all times and shall ideally be part of a group of at least four female elephants that are over two years old. The female Asian elephant has not had any female company for a very long time. Thus, the zoo is violating every single one of these global standards despite being the object of international censure.

CZA is remiss in statutory duties It is hard to believe that the Central Zoo Authority (CZA), constituted under the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972, has not been aware of the rampant violations of law at the zoo, being the nodal authority under the said Act. These violations seem all the more worrisome considering the fact that in 1982, the Delhi zoo was renamed as the National Zoological Park with the idea of it being the model zoo of the country. If its poor management so far is any indication, the zoo has only been a major let-down for animal rights activists. As a member of WAZA, the CZA has been repeatedly informed by WAZA, since at least March of this year, about the shortcomings in its approach when it comes to the framing and enforcement of up-to-date guidelines—in line with the global norms—regarding animal welfare applicable to zoos across India.

The CZA, by letting the zoo deprive its elephants of the company of other elephants and a healthy environment, and by not addressing their mental and physical health needs, is violating its statutory duty as can be inferred from a conjoint reading of Section 38C(a) and Section 38H(6) of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972 — which mandates that the CZA has to specify the minimum standards, in line with global standards — for housing, upkeep and the veterinary care of animals at Indian zoos and that it shall cancel the recognition granted to a zoo if it is found to be failing to meet or maintain those standards. In fact, by not cancelling the recognition of the zoo, the CZA is also violating the scheme of law underlying the Recognition of Zoo Rules, 2009, wherein the central government has laid down the general standards to be observed by zoos; these include not separating any animal from its group unless it is for the welfare of that animal and ensuring that it is treated for health issues which includes mental health. Considering that elephants have an innate need to live in herds, not being in herds adversely affects their welfare. Thus, the zoo has no justification for the way it has been treating its elephants for so long now.

It is bizarre that even though the zoo does not have the infrastructure, the capacity or the suitable environment to keep these majestic animals, it still insists, in the face of condemnation, on having these animals at the cost of their welfare. The CZA has turned a blind eye to the woes of these elephants. Even though it has framed guidelines titled ‘Elephants’ Upkeep in Zoos’, wherein the CZA has emphatically asserted its ban on zoos that lack an appropriate environment for housing elephants, and has asserted that elephants must be housed in small groups, it is baffling that it has not enforced the full rigour of these guidelines. Maybe the CZA should look at and draw inspiration from the work of Indian rescue centres such as ‘Wildlife SOS’, which is dedicated to the care of abused, diseased, wounded and malnourished elephants. It is sad that even though there are robust laws on paper regarding elephant care and welfare which empower the CZA to resolve these problems, it has not been enforcing these laws the way it ought to. Perhaps, this is because the law does not prescribe any consequences for CZA itself in cases where the CZA wilfully neglects to discharge its statutory duties. It would help if the Indian government introduces checks and balances in the law with respect to the CZA and even for errant zoos that do not follow prescribed standards of animal care. The CZA has fallen short of the expectations of animal rights advocates and there are huge shortcomings in its attitude towards its statutory duties. While it would not be right to denounce the Delhi zoo solely based on its callous handling of its elephants, it does beg the question: is it even ethical for any zoo to have such animals when it does not have the infrastructure or the capacity to have them? Delhi zoo and the CZA have clearly sprung into action and are now looking at long term and ‘WAZA-worthy’ solutions to the problems of their elephants. With WAZA indicating in its October 7 notice that it might also cancel the CZA’s WAZA membership, WAZA’s membership of nine Indian zoos hangs in the balance. If the CZA’s WAZA membership is cancelled, it will spell disaster for India’s animal welfare and conservation efforts. The CZA must ensure that it complies with all the conditions which have been set out by WAZA and also make sure that the Delhi zoo has its house in order soon. Nipun Bhushan is an advocate practising law at

From Turbulence to Triumph: Air India’s New Avatar

Air India is reinventing itself with thoughtful service upgrades, and cultural nuances like a creative safety video and a soulful fusion soundtrack. I received a very pleasant gift from Air India just before Christmas on a flight from Bengaluru to Delhi. The plane was spanking new. Business class seats consisted of a cubicle for each passenger. The service was excellent, and the food was several notches above the usual tasteless fare on flights. I had planned to work on my laptop. But soon after take-off right on time past noon, lunch was served. Then the temptation of taking a siesta was irresistible—as the seat stretched to a full-length bed—and I readily succumbed. An hour later when I woke up, the plane was about to land. I did not do the writing I had planned to do, but it was one of the most pleasurable flights I have had in an airline from which expectations had plummeted very low for quite some time now. The reincarnated Air India, merged with Vistara, promises a new experience, at least in those sectors where new planes are flying, and the staff has been trained to provide world-class service. I was happy too at the degree of thought that has gone into all aspects of the flight experience. The mandatory safety instructions were narrated and enacted on the screen in a novel manner. The short film, while giving the instructions, creatively incorporated all the classical dances of India, and some leading folk genres too. I am told that my good friend, the poet and writer, Prasoon Joshi, has designed the presentation. Well done, Prasoon. The new Air India brand music, which plays before take-off and landing, has been composed by Shankar Mahadevan, with contributing artists Taufiq Qureshi, Prasoon Joshi, and others. It is a fusion piece in the lovely raga Yaman, rendered in the tarana style, combining vocalists, instruments like the tabla, flute and piano, and western orchestration done by the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, London. Its refrain or bandish is so catchy that—at least for me—the tune got fixated in my mind. I asked the air hostess for the name and composer of the soundtrack. She did not know, which is sad, because all Air India employees—and certainly the on-plane staff—should proudly be able to provide the details of this stellar composition. I must confess that I do have my reservations about fusion music involving the Indian classical music tra-

dition. That is because I am a bit of a purist in this matter. Any careless or ham-handed tampering or tinkering with the infinitely delicate and filigree-like structure of a raga can have disastrous consequences, distorting the original. Experiments with established and highly evolved art forms succeed only in the hands of those who are rooted in that tradition and know the limits of what can change and what cannot. The world may be flat, but not everything lends itself to fusion. This is especially so for ragas, which through their structured elaboration are meant to evoke a mood, redolent of the different seasons or the different times of the day or of different emotions. Any attempt to render it like an adolescent pop band, by racing through the initial, slow phases of a composition to reach the fast-paced crescendo, foundationally mutilates the genre. Sometimes, in the search for the new, I get the distinct impression that we are inflicting terrible violence on the old. But I also understand, that even classical music cannot be etched in stone and must evolve. The tastes of audiences are changing—alas often for culturally illiterate reasons—but they are changing. And, if the change is necessary, the key to dexterously adapting to the new depends on the calibre of the artist initiating it. If it is someone like Shankar Mahadevan, the end result, even if very different from how the raga would have been sung in its original format, is scintillating. Moreover, a great deal depends on what the fusion music is being used for. Fusion would be completely out of place for a stage meant for traditional classical music performances. But fusion, as Air India’s brand track, which combines the beautiful melodic structure of raga Yaman with something innovatively light and catchy and foot-tapping, simultaneously pays tribute to our ancient musical legacy, while adapting it to the new purpose for which it has been composed. So, I think a round of applause is due to the refurbished Air India brand, and to Tatas. I know the recreation of Air India is still a work in progress. Not everything undesirable of the past has been jettisoned. But at least an attempt is being made to restore it to the Maharaja of airlines that it once was. I can say for myself that there was a time, many years ago when my airline of preference was Air India. I hope it becomes so again, and I take this occasion to convey my best wishes to the management, and the creative people associated with it, t

It mends with us: Simran Mangharam writes on lessons learnt in love, in 2024

It struck me, as I sat down to write this, that I talk quite a lot about how we should love each other. That is, of course, my job. But I would like to focus a little more, today, on our relationships with ourselves. That’s where it all begins, after all... But there I go again, linking it to a larger mission. I’d like to end 2024 by offering an unequivocal reminder that you have every reason to be kinder to yourself, more patient, and more forgiving. I have three quick tips to help you get started. First, get into the habit of asking: “How am I treating myself?” “What’s the nicest thing I’ve said to myself lately?” “In what little way could I make myself a priority today?”

This should help lead into Step 2: Making time for the things you love (call it self-care, downtime, a hobby; whatever makes it work). Reach out for help, if need be, to make this me-time possible. Let it become part of the culture of how things are done, in your home and in your life. Step 3: Extend your new self-regard to interactions with other people. Start, perhaps, by learning how to take a compliment. I am often surprised by how many people will toss one back at the deliverer, as if it were a grenade. I understand that this is driven by embarrassment, but it does two small injuries: it discourages the other person from ever offering another one and, more importantly, it reinforces an inherent idea that you didn’t deserve it. My recommendation: Try smiling and simply saying: Thank you. It can be a game-changer.

These are small steps, but reinforced as habits, they act as a reminder that we do deserve love. And that journey does begin within. What else have I learnt this year, that put a new spin on things? Here are my key pointers.

* Forgive. Yourself, others, the past... it doesn’t matter. Drop the dead weight. Let it go. You’ll be surprised by how forgiveness can help emotions such as anger, resentment and hurt, accumulated over years, dissipate like a fog. This is something I find myself discussing often, with clients. Take the action required; sever a tie that causes harm. Move on. But even then, forgive. It is a great force of

healing, and of good.

* Make room for change. Aim to always love your partner, even when you don’t really like them. There will be missteps between any two people sharing a life: issues with money, sex, temperament, career, the kids. People change over time too. I’ve seen couples driven to the brink simply because one of them rather suddenly turned into a party-loving extrovert. Trust that, together, you can course-correct. But in order to do that, there will need to be a certain degree of flexibility in how you view each other.

* Boundaries, boundaries, boundaries. Of course you should be able to be your authentic self with a partner (or even a friend). But, in my experience, it isn’t sustainable to try to mash two lives together as if they were play dough. You will need to figure out where the separations lie: friends, bathrooms, bedrooms. Find the line that works for you, or it may just end up drawing itself somewhere you never wanted it.

* Reach out: Physical contact can be the keystone in the arch that holds a relationship up. Simple hugs, holding hands, even loving eye contact or a peck on the cheek can boost emotional well-being and reinforce a bond. As a habit, they serve to tell a partner, like few other things can, that they are loved and valued.

* Have the difficult conversation. This one is specifically for couples who may be struggling: It takes regular maintenance to keep anything ticking over healthily. It isn’t just you; but also, it won’t just go away. Talk, talk, talk — through whatever it is that is threatening the foundation you have built. I have seen too many couples opt for denial over a difficult conversation. The difficult discussion will come anyway; it will just be harder to have when it does. Argue, if that’s what it takes; try to do so without personal attacks or judgement. Learn to admit when you are wrong; that certainly helps. And remember, even in the worst times, you are not opposing teams on a football field. You are lamplighters, trying to keep the same flame alive.

Standalone health insurers gain market share as general insurers lose ground



Standalone health insurers are steadily gaining ground in India's non-life insurance market, with their share of premium income rising sharply in the first four months ended July of FY27 even as the broader general insurance segment ceded market share in the overall premium pool, according to General Insurance Council (GI Council) data.

The market share of standalone health insurers accounted for 14.10% of total non-life insurance premium, up from 11.72% in the corresponding period a year-ago. This represents a gain of 2.38 percentage points. In contrast, the share of general insurers — which offer a wide range of cover for motor, fire, marine and marine segments — declined to 85.34% from 86.43%, a fall of 1.09 percentage points, according to GI Council's provisional data for the cumulative four-month period ended July 2026. The shift becomes more striking when viewed through premium collections. General insurers recorded a cumulative gross direct premium of Rs 101,812 crore during the four months ended July 2026, up 8.09% from Rs 94,196 crore a year earlier. Standalone health insurers, however, grew much faster, with premiums rising 31.74% to Rs 16,827 crore from Rs 12,773 crore, data from GI Council, the body that represents non-life insurers. "General insurers have witnessed a decline in fire insurance premium income. They reported a growth of 19.9% in the health insurance segment for three months ended June 2026," said an insurance official. The trend is consistent with the broader pattern seen in FY26, when standalone health insurers' market share had already risen to 13.6% from 12.5% a year earlier. The sector has benefited from strong demand for health cover, with the

scrapping of GST on retail health insurance also supporting affordability and policy sales. Among the five largest general insurers by market share in the July 2026 data, performance has been mixed. New India Assurance remains the largest general insurer, but its overall market share fell to 14.27% from 15.08%, a decline of 81 basis points. Its cumulative premium grew 3.58% to Rs 17,023 crore.

ICICI Lombard General Insurance, the second-largest among the five, saw its market share decline to 8.99% from 9.38%, a fall of 39 basis points. Its premium nevertheless increased 4.95% to Rs 10,723 crore. United India Insurance was relatively stable, with market share edging down to 7.19% from 7.24%. Its cumulative premium grew 8.69% to Rs 8,572 crore, according to GI Council data. The other two major players bucked the market-share decline. Tata AIG General Insurance increased its share to 7.07% from 5.91%, while its premium surged 30.86% to Rs 8,430.85 crore. Bajaj General Insurance also gained marginally, with market share rising to 6.83% from 6.67%. Its cumulative premium grew 11.98% to Rs 8,143.55 crore. Taken together, the five largest general insurers accounted for about 44.35% of the overall non-life premium market, broadly unchanged from 44.28% a year earlier. This suggests that the loss of share by the general insurance category is not simply a story of the largest insurers losing ground to smaller general insurers. Standalone health insurers are capturing a growing portion of the overall insurance premium pool. Among standalone health insurers, Star Health remained the largest, with its market share rising to 5.11% from 4.69%. Its cumulative premium grew 19.06% to Rs 6,090.72 crore. Care Health recorded 42.12% growth, while Niva Bupa grew 32.30%. Aditya Birla Health Insurance reported an even stronger 45.06% increase, data shows. However, IRDAI revised its reporting format from October 1, 2024, excluding premiums from long-term policies. The regulator has clarified that insurers had already deducted these premiums from the current-year figures, making the reported growth rates not directly comparable with those of the previous year. The broader trend is clear. Standalone health insurers are growing significantly faster than general insurers, reinforcing their position in India's increasingly health-focused non-life insurance market.

Dovish RBI's emphasis, views on core inflation puzzles economists

RBI's 4% inflation target remains unchanged, but recent comments suggest the MPC may be focusing more on core inflation and underlying price pressures. RBI's 4% inflation target remains unchanged, but recent comments suggest the MPC may be focusing more on core inflation and underlying price pressures. The Reserve Bank of India's (RBI) legal target is 4%, in a band of 2-6%, in terms of the headline inflation rate as measured by the Consumer Price Index (CPI). But comments last week, when it left the policy repo rate unchanged at 5.25%, are making experts believe it is actually targeting core inflation — specifically, inflation minus food, fuel, and precious metals.

As per the latest data, headline CPI inflation in June rose to 4.38% from 3.93% in May, with core inflation unchanged at 3.9%. Core inflation excluding precious metals stood at 2.5%. This would not be the first time economists think the RBI's Monetary Policy Committee is focusing more on underlying price pressures than the headline number. However, there is a certain lack of clarity that has left economists scratching their proverbial heads.



suggest the RBI is going to ignore above-target headline inflation — it expects it to average 4.7% in July-September, 5.9% in October-December, 5.5% in January-March 2027, and 5.3% in April-June 2027 — "raises question marks about the inflation target itself".

Is core inflation benign?

Another question is whether core inflation excluding precious metals is indeed benign.

"Unlike the RBI, we see early signs that price pressures are spreading beyond food and fuel," said ANZ economists Dhiraj Nim and Sanjay Mathur. According to them, although core inflation excluding precious metals was only 2.5% in June, the month-on-month momentum in prices was "firm, with annualised inflation in this sub-basket already running at 4-4.4%." "Rising inflation expectations, elevated global commodity prices and resilient domestic demand suggest underlying inflation could build faster than the RBI currently anticipates," they added. Item-level data from the CPI basket indicates broadening of price pressures. The CPI basket contains 358 items. In February, 236 of them saw higher prices compared to the previous month. This number rose to 286 in March, 282 in April, 302 in May, and 317 in June. Data for July will be released on Wednesday.

Decision first, reasons later?

I-Sec PD is not alone in thinking the RBI may be targeting core inflation. In an interview to The Indian Express, Murthy Nagarajan, Head of Fixed Income at Tata Asset Management, said the general view is the RBI is looking at core inflation and core inflation excluding precious metals, which is "slightly confusing for the market". "I think the RBI has taken a call that it'll be prudent to do it (raise interest rates) after six months. They have first decided they don't want to hike rates and then looked at the (reasons)," Nagarajan said. It is precisely because of this core inflation focus that the RBI is being viewed as unexpectedly dovish, with Nomura economists expecting a recalibration of policy rates "primarily if there are signs of higher underlying inflation". They don't expect a rate hike this year.

UPI free for citizens, merchants may face 'nominal' fee: Government



ALLAYING user concerns, the Ministry of Finance "categorically" stated Saturday that consumers making UPI payments will not face any transaction charges, and all person-to-person transactions will continue to be free of charge. It, however, said as and when MDR (Merchant Discount Rate) charges are introduced, they will apply at a nominal rate only above a certain threshold, and on a limited set of merchant transactions. "It would be far lower than debit or credit card MDRs," the statement said.

MDR is a fee levied on merchants by banks to help meet costs related to processing of transactions, settlement and infrastructure. Credit cards face an MDR of 1-3% of transaction value while it is up to 0.9% for debit cards. The Finance Ministry's statement comes amid a raging debate over a potential fee on UPI payments after the government introduced The Taxation and Other Laws (Amendment) Bill, 2026 in Parliament. Passed by the Lok Sabha on Thursday, the Bill proposes changes to the Payment and Settlement Systems Act, 2007, which open the door for banks and payment system providers to charge fees on UPI and RuPay debit card payments.

The Bill led to fears that merchants which may face MDR charges in the future will pass on the cost to consumers. On Friday, the Payments Council of India (PCI) had clarified that consumers will not have to pay extra while making UPI transactions to large merchants. In its statement, the Finance Ministry said the amendment to the taxation Bill has been misinterpreted "as a move to impose charges on ordinary users". Two days after the Bill was introduced, Congress leader Jairam Ramesh on Thursday said in a post on social media platform X that the cost of the MDR "will inevitably be borne by ordinary people who will now have to pay to use UPI transactions". Responding to his post, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman had said the UPI and Services Steering Committee, headed by the National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI), is yet to make a decision. In its statement, the Finance Ministry said "vast majority" of UPI transactions will remain free of charge for merchants and an MDR, "if introduced, will only be threshold based and not blanketly levied to all". According to a poll of more than 20,000 people by social media polling company LocalCircles, only 2% of respondents said they would continue using UPI if merchants were to recover any transaction fee from customers for UPI payments of more than Rs 3,000. Since its launch in April 2016, UPI has democratised finance in India with QR codes replacing complex bank details for money transfers. In 2025-26, there were more than 24,000 crore transactions (30% more than the previous year) worth Rs 314 lakh crores (21% more). Today, it is the world's largest real-time payment system.

In its statement, the Finance Ministry said to expand UPI further into rural and semi-urban areas and maintain competitiveness, it must be self-sustainable and affordable. "Reliance on subsidies alone is not viable for the next wave of growth. A balanced framework is required to ensure that UPI remains robust, inclusive, and future-ready." For this, Jairam Ramesh had said Thursday that the Reserve Bank of India could fund the UPI ecosystem — with no charge on merchants and consumers — considering the central bank transferred Rs 2.86 lakh crore to the Centre as dividend for 2025-26. The government has been subsidising UPI payments of up to Rs 2,000 made to only small merchants through its 'Incentive scheme for promotion of RuPay Debit Cards and low-value BHIM-UPI transactions (P2M)'. The incentive offered is capped at 0.15% of the transaction value and is shared between banks, payment service providers and third-party app providers. The Centre paid out Rs 8,730 crore under the incentive scheme from 2021-22 to 2024-25. However, this was only 11% of the cost incurred by the payment industry, according to a report by the Standing Committee on Finance. Congress' Jairam Ramesh had also expressed concerns in his August 6 post that the amendment follows a report by the US Trade Representative criticising UPI and RuPay "for being free and accuses them of having driven out American payment platforms like Visa and MasterCard".

The Finance Ministry said any suggestion that "external influences may be driving policy changes" is "unfounded, completely false and misleading". The USTR, in its National Trade Estimate Report for 2026, had said the US had continued to raise concerns "relating to informal and formal policies with respect to electronic payments services that appear to favour Indian domestic suppliers over foreign suppliers, creating a non-level playing field". Specifically, it noted that US electronic payment services suppliers were unable to participate in the UPI ecosystem, including credit transactions on UPI, like RuPay could. It also mentioned the 30% market share cap, in terms of the number of UPI transactions, for third-party apps. Originally to come into force in January 2023, the implementation of this cap has been deferred multiple times and the current deadline is December 2026. This cap is crucial as Walmart-owned PhonePe and Google Pay together handle almost 80% of all UPI transactions. Payments industry experts have said in recent days that small merchants such as kirana stores would not have to pay any MDR fee. In 2025-26, only 4% of person-to-merchant (P2M) UPI payments were greater than Rs 2,000. However, these 4% of transactions made up around two-thirds of UPI payments by value. The Taxation and Other Laws (Amendment) Bill, 2026, seeks to amend Section 10A of the Payment and Settlement Systems Act, 2007, such that the exemption from any bank charges to electronic payments under section 269SU of the Income-tax Act, 1961 is removed. Section 269SU applies to every person having an annual business turnover of over Rs 50 crore. It is this threshold that may be used to determine which merchants face an MDR, said payments industry executives. Some experts, however, said it could be lower at Rs 1 crore-Rs 1.5 crore. Section 10A of the Payment and Settlement Systems Act, 2007 says no bank or system provider can impose any charge on payments made through electronic modes prescribed under Section 269SU. These modes are RuPay debit cards, BHIM-UPI, and UPI-QR code.

At 209 kg, he couldn't breathe: How AIIMS team made patient fit for bariatric surgery and drop 50 kg

Vivek Saxena, 32, has just begun to savour life and emerge out of his shell. He loves songs from the 1990s, especially those from the Bobby Deol film 'Soldier', and now wants a future that once seemed impossibly far away: finishing his graduation, getting into an LLB programme and becoming a corporate lawyer. For now, though, even ordinary things require patience. He is recovering from a life-altering surgery at AIIMS Delhi, the one that got him down from 209 kg to almost 160 kg. For much of his adult life, his world had grown smaller as his body grew heavier. He could not move easily, stand for long or breathe without difficulty. His abdomen measured nearly two metres around. Severe sleep apnoea had compromised his breathing so badly that even a CPAP device support was no longer enough to ease his breath at night. Eventually, he needed a tracheostomy — a tube insertion through a small opening in his neck and into his windpipe — for prolonged respiratory support just to stay alive. He needed bariatric surgery.

When surgery was the toughest challenge Vivek lost his mother when he was six and was overweight since childhood. He did well academically but rarely participated in class or mingled with other children. At 19, just after his Class XII examinations — in which he scored a first division — Vivek was diagnosed with depression. The anti-anxiety medication he was prescribed changed something in him. "I started eating a lot and sleeping most of the time," he says. His weight, around 120 kg in 2013, began to climb steadily. Over the next decade, it reached 200 kg as he tried herbal concoctions and fad diets. When Vivek arrived at AIIMS on June 16, his BMI was 74 kg/m². He had hypertension, prediabetes, high cholesterol, acid reflux, severe obstructive sleep apnoea and pain in both knees. "He was in an inoperable condition," says Dr Manjunath Maruti Pol, Professor of Surgery in the Surgical Disciplines Department at AIIMS Delhi and part of the multidisciplinary team that treated him. The team was concerned if they could make him fit enough to survive the operation. An elaborate pre-surgery protocol

What followed over the next several weeks was less a single surgical procedure than a carefully choreographed protocol, involving anaesthesia, critical care, physicians, infection control, dietetics and surgery. His breathing had to be stabilised. His infection had to be managed. His body had to be brought down to a size at which doctors could safely position him on an operating table. And the team had to wait for a narrow window in which his respiratory condition was stable enough to withstand the operation. For 32 days, Vivek was kept on a medically supervised very-low-calorie diet. His weight fell from 209 kg to 172 kg. His abdominal girth shrank from 198 cm to 178 cm. Only then could the operation be attempted. Even the tracheostomy presented a logistical challenge. "Because of his size, the procedure itself had to be performed on his own bed inside the operating theatre — he could not be safely placed on a standard operating table," Dr Manjunath says. On July 24, Vivek underwent bariatric surgery. The challenges during the surgery were airway stabilisation and respiration. "We needed him stable for at least two hours before the operation could even be considered," he adds. The procedure took two hours and ten minutes. By the 13th day after surgery, he was talking, walking and passing urine on his own. When he was discharged on August 6, he weighed 160 kg — nearly 50 kg less than when he had first arrived.

Why is the surgery significant?



An internal AIIMS case summary described the approach as a "multidisciplinary rescue strategy" that converted an almost inoperable patient into an operable candidate.

The significance was not simply that bariatric surgery had been successfully performed in a patient with extremely morbid obesity. Rather, it was the way preoperative optimisation — particularly airway stabilisation, respiratory optimisation and a very-low-calorie diet — had made the surgery possible. It showed that extreme body weight is not a contraindication to bariatric surgery when a patient is managed by an experienced multidisciplinary team. "Obesity is not merely excess weight, it is excess risk," says Dr Manjunath, noting that Indians tend to develop metabolic complications at a lower BMI and younger age than Western populations. Citing ICMR-INDIAB data, he says over 250 million Indians have generalised obesity, and more than 350 million suffer from abdominal obesity. Explaining why weight loss isn't simply a matter of willpower, Dr Manjunath says, "Once excess fat accumulates, adipose tissue behaves like an active endocrine organ — it releases hormones and inflammatory signals that affect appetite, insulin sensitivity and metabolism. As obesity progresses, the body actively defends the higher weight, making sustained loss harder. Telling every patient to just 'eat less and exercise more' is often inadequate — this is a disease involving biology, behaviour and environment, not a failure of discipline." There is a very large population that may qualify for medical or surgical treatment — particularly those with severe obesity or conditions like uncontrolled diabetes, hypertension, sleep apnoea or fatty liver disease. "But India performs only around 20,000 bariatric procedures a year, a fraction of the actual need, largely due to lack of awareness, fear, and misconceptions. The goal of metabolic surgery isn't to make someone thinner. It's to make them healthier, and reduce the burden of obesity-related disease," says Dr Manjunath. Teach the body to recover

The operation was not the end of the process. After surgery, Vivek was placed on a recovery diet and lifestyle management and his weight continued to fall. He is still on a liquid diet, drinking around four litres of water a day and having dal. Because of the tube in his neck, he cannot yet eat solid food. "I have a follow-up with the doctor next Friday — they will decide then whether I can start on solids," he says, pausing for a deep breath. In between, Vivek is preparing for B.Com Honours from Delhi University's School of Open Learning. Then he wants to do an LLB. The surgery has changed his body. For the first time in years, Vivek is thinking less about how much his body weighs and more about where his life might go next. "I am no longer breathless," he says.

The heart problem that can quietly steal your stamina as you age

A few decades ago, growing older was often viewed as something to accept rather than actively manage. Slower days, less movement and lower energy were simply explained away as "age." Today, that conversation has changed. Healthy ageing is increasingly about disease prevention, preserving independence and maintaining quality of life.

Families now remind parents to check their blood sugar, monitor blood pressure, review cholesterol medication, undergo bone density and eye examinations and keep up with recommended screening tests. Healthy eating, regular walking, adequate sleep and even memory health have become part of everyday conversations. In many ways, preventive healthcare has moved beyond the doctor's clinic into the family calendar. Yet preventive care often focuses on what appears in blood reports, scans and routine measurements. An equally important question can sometimes be overlooked: Can the person still do what matters most to them? The World Health Organization (WHO) defines healthy ageing as "the process of developing and maintaining the functional ability that enables wellbeing in older age." Heart health is central to preserving that free-

dom. Yet discussions usually focus on cholesterol, blood pressure and blocked arteries. A quieter, but equally important, aspect of heart health often receives far less attention — the heart valves. The heart beats nearly 2.5 billion times during an average lifetime, continuously pumping blood to every organ and tissue. About the size of two clasped hands, it relies on four valves that open and close with every heartbeat, ensuring blood flows in the correct direction. As we age, these valves can gradually become thickened, stiff or narrowed. One of the most common and serious valve disorders is aortic stenosis, a condition in which the aortic valve narrows, restricting blood flow from the heart to the rest of the body. The American Heart Association recognises aortic stenosis as one of the most common and potentially serious forms of heart valve disease. Unfortunately, heart valve disease often remains outside the healthy ageing conversation until symptoms begin to interfere with everyday life. Heart valve disease is missed because it usually develops slowly. According to the National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute (NHLBI), symptoms may include fatigue, shortness of breath, chest pain, dizziness or fainting.

PM Modi lauds Lovlina for flagging incorrect map of India in Glasgow restaurant after CWG 2026



GNS News Agency, August 17

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has lauded boxer Lovlina Borgohain for pointing out an incorrect map of India that was in the logo of a restaurant in Glasgow, Scotland, where the Indian boxing contingent had a celebratory dinner after the 2026 Commonwealth Games. India won 10 medals, seven of which were gold, and thus broke the record for most medals won in the sport in a single edition of the Commonwealth Games. The video of Lovlina, who had won silver in women's 75kg, pointing out the map, which

didn't have India's north-eastern states, went viral. Modi met India's medallists from the 2026 CWG on and a video from the event showed him speaking to Lovlina at the incident. "Kya hua wo restaurant waale se jhagda kar rahi thi? (What happened, you were fighting with that restaurant guy?)" Modi asked Olympic medallist Lovlina in the video of the interaction shared by his office on Monday.

The Assam boxer laughed and replied, "We had such a good performance and it was the last day of the Games. It was a happy occasion sir, we were celebrating and I didn't like it when I saw the distorted flag. I politely told them and they have made the changes also." Modi then commended Lovlina for what she did. "To be able to recognise the significance of that map at a time when you were celebrating and the Games were over, I can tell you truthfully, that video was not ordinary. It will be remembered by people for a very long time," he told Lovlina. Lovlina had been assured of at least a bronze medal even before she threw a punch at Glasgow 2026. She was handed a first-round bye in the five-boxer draw, automatically securing a place in the last four and assuring herself a podium finish. Lovlina beat Tuvalu's Taronah Khanum Badi Pasoni Taafaki by a unanimous decision to proceed to the final, where she lost to Australia's Emma-Sue Greentree by a 4-1 decision.

'Absolutely ready': Bhuvneshwar Kumar on playing in 2027 World Cup, 'rest is selectors' call

Calls for Bhuvneshwar Kumar to be recalled to the Indian ODI squad and for him to play in the 2027 World Cup has been on a steady increase ever since the veteran pacer's stellar performances in the 2026 Indian Premier League (IPL), coupled with injury struggles of India's star fast bowlers, including spearhead Jasprit Bumrah. Amid all of it, though, Bhuvneshwar has said that his only focus is to do his job of playing cricket to the best of his abilities for whichever side it is that he is representing. Currently, that team is the Lucknow Falcons in the UPT20 League. "Why would I say no if I get a call? Absolutely ready," Kumar said when asked on Sunday about possible selection for the World Cup.

"Honestly, I cannot say exactly how ready I am. My job is to play cricket and that is why I have come here to play in the UP T20 league. I didn't come here with the intention of moving to another place or reaching another level," he said. "We play IPL knowing we have to perform and win matches for the team, but I didn't come here to the UP T20 league hoping to get picked elsewhere or because someone said something. How prepared I am is not for me to decide; the rest is the selectors' call." Briefly considered an all-format spearhead for India, Bhuvneshwar's international appearances dwindled due to his struggles with injuries, which coincided with the emergence of Jasprit Bumrah and subsequently Mohammed Siraj and Mohammed Shami establishing himself in the Indian team. He remained in contention in limited overs cricket but he hasn't played for India



since a T20I in November 2022. Bhuvneshwar's last ODI was in January that year. While there are calls from the likes of Ravi Shastri, Dinesh Karthik and Ravichandran Ashwin for him to be included in the Indian ODI squad, Bhuvneshwar's career in Test cricket seems to have been accepted as a closed chapter. He played the last of his 21 Tests in January 2018 but has continued playing first class cricket. Bhuvneshwar has said that he is not concerned for now with taking a call on whether he will play in the Ranji Trophy or not this year. "There's still plenty of time, and a lot of cricket to be played before that. I can't say right now whether I'll play first-class cricket or not, but my aim is to keep playing as much cricket as I can," the veteran pacer said

Sarfraz Khan dons India's training kit, celebrates comeback with his father



GNS News Agency, August 17

Sarfraz Khan celebrated his return to the Indian team with a post of himself wearing their training kit and posing with his father, the former club cricketer and coach Naushad Khan. Sarfraz has been included in the Indian side for their two-Test series in Sri Lanka as a replacement for the injured Sai Sudharsan. With Devdutt Padikkal impressing during India's warm-up match that ended on Sunday, it remains to be seen if Sarfraz will be included in the team but the call-up marks a comeback to the squad after being fro-

zen out for over a year. Sarfraz's last inclusion in the squad was in the 2024/25 Border-Gavaskar Trophy in Australia, which India lost 4-1. The 28-year-old boasts a first class average of 64.73 in 62 matches but has played just six Tests thus far for India, the last of which came in November 2024. Eyebrows were then raised when he was kept out of the India A squad that faced South Africa A ahead of the two-match Test series between the two countries. India ended up losing that series 2-0 as well. "Sai Sudharsan has been ruled out of the Test series against Sri Lanka. The left-handed batter, who has been at the BCCI Centre of Excellence (COE) in Bengaluru, has made significant progress in his recovery from the right toe stress reaction and is recovering well. The BCCI Medical Team is closely monitoring his progress," the BCCI had said in a statement on Sunday. "The Men's Selection Committee has named Sarfraz Khan as a replacement for Sai Sudharsan for the two-match Test series against Sri Lanka. He will link up with the Indian squad in Colombo before the team travels to Galle for the first Test match, starting August 15, 2026," it added. Last Friday, the batter had posted a photo from the 2019 Telugu film 'Jersey' with a caption that read: "I may not fit in, but I'll fight with everything I've got."

We've shown we can win finals, no pressure of winning home World Cup: Rabada



The men's ODI World Cup returns to South Africa next year, with the country having last hosted it in 2003. At the time, they had co-hosted the tournament with Zimbabwe and Kenya and this time, it is with Zimbabwe and Namibia. South Africa's ace fast bowler Kagiso Rabada has said that the Proteas don't feel any pressure to win this tournament but have a quiet confidence in their beliefs having won the last World Test Championship final.

South Africa have also finished runners-up in the 2024 T20 World Cup and the semi-final in 2026 and in the 2023 World Cup before that. "We've shown that we can go and play in finals and in the semi-finals," Rabada is quoted as saying by the ICC. "It's just about that last step. So the confidence is there. The belief is most definitely there, just about going that one extra step." "One World Cup moment from the past that I'll never forget, because I'm a bowler, I'm going to go to the bowlers' club was Wasim Akram against England in the final," Rabada said. "Him just cleaning up (the stumps) and putting on a show to take it home for his country and showing the passion and the skill."

"He was fast, had so much skill, and just had this presence, this heightened energy about him that he was there to play." South Africa's victory in the 2025 WTC Final was a

Basant, Shahnnavaz make history at U20 World Championships, India's jumpers share global podium in US



India's jumpers rarely make a global podium. On Saturday, they did it twice at the U20 World Championships in Eugene, US. Basant Kumar (19) became the first Indian high-jumper to win a medal at the U20 Worlds, claiming silver. Shahnnavaz Khan (19) followed with bronze in the long jump, becoming the first Indian male long-jumper to reach the podium at the championships. With these two medals, along with Ashish Yadav's silver in the javelin, India equalled its best-ever haul at the U20 World Championships, matching the tally from the 2021 and 2022 editions.

Basant, who is coached by former national record-holder Sahana Kumari, equalled his personal best with 2.21m but lost gold to Algeria's Younes Ayachi on countback. "A big moment for him and the country. I always knew Basant was going to deliver on the big stage," Sahana Kumari told. Shahnnavaz, who was the title favourite after setting a personal best of 8.30m earlier this season, could not replicate that effort due to cramps and a heel injury. He still managed a best jump of 7.87m. "My first and second jumps were fine, but after the third jump, I started getting cramps and also injured my heel. That became the main problem. I had come here hoping to set a personal best because I was in good form," he said.

Basant is a Petty Officer in the Indian Navy and has improved massively under the tutelage of Kumari, with his first breakthrough coming earlier this year at the Junior Fed-

eration Cup. "When he jumped 2.21m at the Junior Federation Cup, I could see that he had improved massively. When he started training with me, he used to jump 2.11m," said Sahana. Basant has been on a phenomenal run in the 2026 season, winning gold at the Asian U20 Athletics Championships. Hailing from Anupgarh village in Sri Ganganagar, Rajasthan, he is part of the rising generation of Indian high jumpers following Sarvesh Kushare's exploits at the World Championships, Diamond League and Commonwealth Games.

Hailing from Pratapgarh in Uttar Pradesh, Shahnnavaz has been one of the breakthrough long jumpers of the season. Training alongside Sreeshankar Murali at the National Centre of Excellence (NcoE) in Thiruvananthapuram, Shahnnavaz announced himself with his 8.30m jump at the Inter-State National Championships in Bhubaneswar. While his performance at the U20 Worlds was not what he had hoped for, a world championship bronze medal at 19 is a strong start to his long-jump CV. "Today, I was only thinking about one thing: somehow, I had to finish on the podium and win a medal for India. It's a proud moment for me, and I'm happy that I didn't miss the opportunity to win a medal for India," he said. Last year, when he crossed the 8m mark for the first time at the World Continental Bronze event in Bhubaneswar, Shahnnavaz took a moment to remember his late father, Naseemudin. He wrote on his bib, "8+ jump, I miss dad", as a tribute. "Writing on the back of the bib was my way of paying tribute to my father, who passed away in 2018 because of an ailment. My father drove a jeep to ferry passengers between villages. I miss him," he had told this newspaper. Shahnnavaz is now part of a growing pool of Indian long jumpers. "This is probably the best year for the Indian long jumpers overall. The competition has increased and these youngsters are pushing each other and me also," two-time Commonwealth Games medallist Sreeshankar had said last month at the Inter-State Championships. Asked about Shahnnavaz, Sreeshankar said: "He is one of those guys who would always want to improve. He works extremely hard in training and when I see his work ethic, it just tells me how far this guy can go."

India's spin lineup for 1st Test vs Sri Lanka to be decided in Galle

India's only warm-up game ahead of the two-Test series against Sri Lanka starting in Galle on August 15 ended in dramatic fashion with Mohammed Siraj blasting three consecutive sixes to help cross the finish line. While the visitors found answers to most questions, one dilemma they would face is the spin combination that would play in the series opener. Kuldeep Yadav bowled 18 overs in the first innings but did not bowl in the second innings, whereas Saransh Jain delivered 15 overs in the match.

Addressing the issue at the end of the game, spin bowling coach Sairaj Bahutule said that each of the spinners was unique and a decision on who plays would be taken after reaching Galle. "I think that call will be taken only once we reach Galle. But all four spinners have that uniqueness. We have got experience with Jaddu. We have got, you know, great accuracy levels with Manav Suthar," Bahutule said after the match. "And, obviously, Saransh has got experience. He has performed really well in domestic cricket. And that is how he has earned his spot. And that experience will help us in making the decision if it is needed. And Kuldeep, being a wrist spinner, it always helps to have a wrist spinner in the side so that there is variety. And, you know, all four bowlers are looking forward to the Test match. So, we will decide only once we reach Galle," he added. Bahutule also said that Kuldeep did not bowl in the second innings because he wanted to take a break and understand his body better. "Kuldeep bowled almost 20 overs in the match — 18 in the match and about two-three overs before the game also. He had a very good outing, and he just wanted to take a break in terms of just understanding how his body is. And the rest of the spinners got that opportunity and they bowled their overs. One bowled 14, Manav bowled about 14-15 overs, Jaddu bowled about 14-15 overs. So, they got a very good outing. They under-



stood how the pitch reacts, and I think it was a great preparation for them," he said. Shubman Gill did not take any part in the warm-up fixture until the last session on the third day, when he made 44 runs from 54 balls. Bahutule said that his absence from the first two days was only a precautionary measure. "I think it was just a precaution more than anything else. And he has been absolutely fine. He has been doing his training. And the management decided that we could just take that precaution of not putting him into that first day. And I think everything, the way he batted in the second innings, was again flawless. And he is very much ready for the Test match," he said. The match also saw some of India's lower-order batsmen like Manav Suthar and Saransh Jain get valuable batting time. Bahutule stressed that India was looking to give confidence to them to get better. "There is a process. All the lower-order bowlers, who basically bat in the lower order, their contribution will always be very useful to achieve a good total in the Test match. And that is the entire process. We are encouraging them to bat as much as possible in the nets and see how they can contribute towards the team score," he said.

Sarfraz Khan replaces injured Sai Sudharsan for India vs Sri Lanka Test series



The Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) on Sunday officially announced that batter Sai Sudharsan was ruled out of the upcoming Sri Lanka Test series and named Mumbai batter Sarfraz Khan as replacement.

"Sai Sudharsan has been ruled out of the Test series against Sri Lanka. The left-handed batter, who has been at the BCCI Centre of Excellence (COE) in Bengaluru, has made significant progress in his recovery from the right toe stress reaction and is recovering well. The BCCI Medical Team is closely monitoring his progress," the BCCI statement revealed. "The Men's Selection Committee has named Sarfraz Khan as a replacement for Sai Sudharsan for the two-match Test series against Sri Lanka. He will link up with the Indian squad in Colombo before the team travels to Galle for the first Test match, starting August 15, 2026," it added.

Sudharsan, who had suffered a toe injury last month during in India A's tour to Sri Lanka, failed to recover on time and will hence sit out the 2-Test series, scheduled to start on August 15. He had scored two tons in two 'A' Test matches before he was hit during the second game against Sri Lanka 'A' and since then has been in rehabilitation at the Centre of Excellence in Bengaluru. Sarfraz had last played a match for India in November 2024 against New Zealand. He boasts a first class average of 64.73 in 62 matches but has played just six Tests thus far for India, the last of which came in November 2024. His last involvement with the Indian team was on their 2024/25 tour of Australia for the Border-Gavaskar Trophy, which they lost 4-1. Last Friday, the batter had posted a photo from the 2019 Telugu film 'Jersey' with a caption that read: "I may not fit in, but I'll fight

with everything I've got." India's updated squad for the Test series against Sri Lanka: Shubman Gill (Captain), KL Rahul (Vice-Captain), Yashasvi Jaiswal, Rishabh Pant (WK), Dhruv Jurel (WK), Ravindra Jadeja, Kuldeep Yadav, Manav Suthar, Mohammed Siraj, Prasidh Krishna, Gurnoor Brar, Devdutt Padikkal, Saransh Jain, Aaquib Nabi, Sarfraz Khan

Shabana Azmi joins CJP protest march, dismisses Bollywood’s absence: ‘Wrote to PM, got no reply’



Veteran actor Shabana Azmi joined Cockroach Janta Party (CJP)’s ‘Sansad Chalo’ march on Monday, July 20, a day after she arrived at Delhi’s Jantar Mantar to join the protest over the NEET paper leaks and demand the resignation of Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan. The march is being led by CJP’s Abhijeet Dipke and activist Sonam Wangchuk’s wife Gitanjali Angmo as Wangchuk continues his indefinite hunger strike at the Safdarjung hospital after being forcibly removed from the protest site by the Delhi Police on Saturday. Several film personalities have since voiced their support for the movement and appealed for the protest to remain peaceful. Shabana Azmi marches towards the Parliament. Shabana Azmi, 75, was seen walking alongside students and protesters as they marched towards Parliament. Speaking to PTI, she said, “We are here to hold a peaceful protest. This is a right guaranteed by our Constitution. Mahatma Gandhi taught us the path of non-violence. We have no intention of resorting to violence.” VIDEO | Delhi: Ahead of the Cockroach Janata Party’s proposed protest march, veteran actress Shabana Azmi joined the protesters and says, “All of us who are here, have come for a peaceful protest, to exercise the right granted to us by our country’s constitution. Mahatma Gandhi... pic.twitter.com/q1mx2cL7gN

She also urged the media not to shift the focus from the movement by focussing on Bollywood celebrities instead of the protesters’ demands. “You are only worried about the fact that Bollywood celebrities are not present at the March. You don’t worry about the absence of industrialist, all the businessmen. When you ask these question, you sidelining the cause and creating unnecessary controversy. You should support those who are marching for this cause, rather than diluting the matter,” she told media.

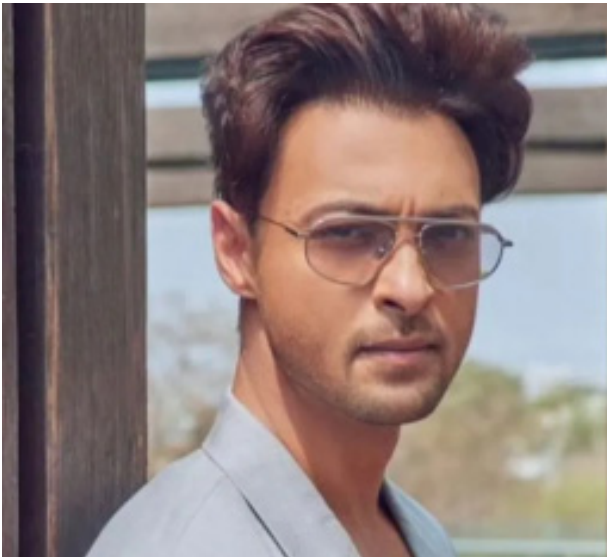
She also told Red Mike that she, and husband and

lyricist Javed Akhtar has written to Prime Minister Narendra Modi to resolve the issue with a dialogue. “Maine jo hai, Pradhan Mantri ko khat likha. Javed saab ne khat likha ki dekhiye aap sirf ek dialogue initiate kariye, press ke paas hum nahi ja rahe. Hum isko ek public matter nahi banayenge, hum sirf Rajya Sabha ke ex-sansad hain, toh hum uss lihaaz se keh rahe hain, baat toh suniye. Pehle toh hume acknowledgement aaya ki 2 din main aapko jawab milega, 2 din main nahi aaya, 3 din main nahi aaya, 4 din main nahi aaya toh phir paanchwe din hum yahan aa gaye (I wrote a letter to the Prime Minister. Javed saab also wrote a letter saying, ‘Please just initiate a dialogue. We are not going to the press. We won’t turn this into a public issue. As a former member of the Rajya Sabha, I’m making this request in that capacity. At least hear us out.’ At first, we received an acknowledgment saying that we would get a response within two days. But there was no reply in two days, nor in three, nor in four. So, on the fifth day, we came here ourselves).”

Meanwhile, FIR actor Kavita Kaushik, popularly known for playing Chandramukhi Chautala and Chak De! India actor Vidya Malavade have requested the authorities to let the students protest in peace. Taking to Instagram, Kavita shared a video with a message for Delhi Police. She said, “Delhi Police, I want to make a request to you. You all have families too—parents, children, siblings and relatives. God forbid, if they ever face a medical emergency, you would want them to be treated by a genuine, competent doctor and not a fake one. That is exactly why these students are protesting. So, whatever happens, please do not raise your hand against the children or the citizens of my country. Do not hurt them. That is all I have to say. Do not display your might before them.”

Chak De! India actor Vidya Malavade also expressed her support through an Instagram post. “It is heart-breaking to see what is happening in our country right now. The way Sonam Wangchuk ji has been treated is not just frustrating but also very scary. But the dignity and grace that Gitanjali ma’am is showing is the very foundation on which this great country is built,” she wrote. She further added, “Isn’t it every citizen’s birthright to protest peacefully against being wronged? It is unfathomable to understand how these young students have been driven to take their own lives. These students deserve dialogue and justice, and I stand by them. Chak De India!” Sonam Wangchuk began his hunger strike on June 28 as part of a protest organised by the Cockroach Janta Party, demanding accountability from Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan over the alleged NEET paper leak. Wangchuk has sought Pradhan’s resignation and has called for greater transparency in the examination system and broader educational reforms, saying the issue deserves an open dialogue with the government.

Aayush Sharma says he still can’t call father-in-law Salim Khan ‘Dad’: ‘Don’t have the courage’



Some celebrity couples often become the subject of public scrutiny because of how “unlikely” they appear. One such couple is Arpita Khan and Aayush Sharma. When they tied the knot in 2014, Aayush was just 24, and many assumed he had married Salman Khan’s sister to secure a launch in Bollywood. However, the two have been happily married for over 11 years and have two children together. But, the perception, he says, has hardly changed. In a recent interview, Aayush opened up about the trolling he continues to face over his marriage and how he has learned to laugh it off. “Initially, people’s comments about my intention behind marrying Arpita used to hurt me. But over the years, it has stopped bothering me. Arpita and I have completed 11 years of marriage. Our son is 10 and our daughter is six. In these 11 years, I have made only three films, none of which were blockbuster hits. There is no real connection between my career and my family,” he told Lallantop.

He added, “Sometimes people create a perception based on what they see, and that very easily turns into a narrative. I don’t pay attention to these things anymore. If I start reacting to these accusations, it would be like disre-

specting my marriage. I don’t have to justify my relationship to anyone.” Aayush Sharma says Arpita might divorce him for one reason. Recalling one of the memes that made him laugh, Aayush said, “I recently saw a meme about Arpita and me. It read, ‘Things people do to get a PlayStation.’ Instead of getting irritated, I laughed. I wanted to post a picture and write, ‘I have a PlayStation Pro.’ But then I let it go. We can’t shut people’s mouths. I am not the only one they troll. They talk about everyone.” He also shared another joke directed at him. “Someone once said that Arpita and I would soon get divorced because my films weren’t working. I replied, ‘The divorce won’t happen because my films didn’t work. It might happen because of my PJs.’” “I am a huge cartoon. Maybe that’s why I openly joke about the fact that none of my films have worked. I love cracking jokes and laughing. I have very few friends, and I enjoy spending time with them and my family. I am the comedian of my group,” he said.

‘Still can’t address Salim Khan as papa’ During the same conversation, Aayush also spoke about his equation with Arpita’s family. While he addresses Salman Khan as “Bhai” like everyone else, he admitted he has never been able to call veteran screenwriter Salim Khan “Dad.” “My relationship with him is different. Till date, I haven’t gathered the courage to call him Dad. I admire him so much as a screenplay writer that my heart only wants to address him as ‘Salim Sahab.’ He is a legendary man. Most of the time, he speaks and I just reply. I feel very strange calling him Dad or Papa. I am a huge fan of Deewar, Sholay and Zanjeer. My head is always bowed in front of him. I have never initiated a conversation with him. I see him in a different zone,” he said.

Who is Arpita Khan?

Arpita Khan is the adopted daughter of Salim Khan and Helen. She was adopted after her biological mother passed away and grew up with her siblings Salman Khan, Arbaaz Khan, Sohail Khan and Alvira Agnihotri. Arpita and Aayush got married on November 18, 2014, in a grand ceremony at Hyderabad’s Falaknuma Palace. Aayush is the grandson of former Himachal Pradesh Chief Minister Virbhadr Singh’s political rival and former Union Minister Sukh Ram. The couple has two children—a son, Ahil, and a daughter, Ayat.

AR Rahman’s son Ameen escapes with minor injuries in Chennai car accident

Chennai: World-renowned music composer A.R. Rahman’s son A.R. Ameen escaped with minor injuries after the luxury car in which he was travelling collided with a cab near Olympia Tech Park in Chennai in the early hours of Monday.

According to police, the accident occurred around 3.30 a.m. when Ameen and a friend were travelling towards Guindy along Jawaharlal Nehru Road. As their vehicle approached the Olympia Tech Park area, a cab reportedly entered the main road from a side road, resulting in a collision between the two vehicles. The impact left Ameen and his friend with minor injuries. They were taken to a private hospital, where they underwent medical examination and received treatment. Both were subsequently discharged and returned home. Police said their injuries were not serious. A passenger travelling in the cab was also injured in the accident. The passenger was taken to the Kalaignar Centenary Super Speciality Hospital for treatment. After receiving medical attention, the injured passenger was also discharged. There were no reports of any life-threatening injuries among

those involved in the accident. The vehicles, however, are understood to have suffered damage in the collision. Personnel from the Adyar Traffic Investigation Wing (TIW) took up an investigation into the circumstances that led to the accident. Police are examining how the cab entered Jawaharlal Nehru Road and whether either vehicle was travelling at excessive speed at the time of the collision. Investigators are also expected to examine CCTV footage from cameras installed in and around the accident spot to reconstruct the sequence of events. Statements from the drivers and occupants of both vehicles will form part of the investigation. The accident occurred during the early morning hours when traffic along the arterial road was relatively light. Jawaharlal Nehru Road, popularly known as the Inner Ring Road, is one of Chennai’s major traffic corridors and connects several important neighbourhoods and commercial areas. Ameen, the son of Oscar-winning composer AR Rahman, is a singer and performer who has worked on several musical projects. He has also performed alongside his father at concerts and other musical events.

Salman spends most of his time at Panvel farmhouse: ‘You go there, leave only when Bhai wants’



Actor Aayush Sharma recently gave fans a glimpse into Salman Khan’s life off-screen, sharing one of the funniest inside jokes about the superstar. When asked if the Khan family has any recurring jokes about Salman, Aayush admitted there are plenty, but chose to reveal the “safest” one. According to Aayush, whenever Salman invites someone to his Panvel farmhouse, the family has a standard response. During an interview with Lallantop Cinema, recalling the joke, Aayush shared, “Bhai ne farm pe bulaya hai... toh sabka ek takiya kalaam hai, ‘Chalo farm chalte hain.’ Lekin wahan sirf wahi jaata hai jisko bulawa aata hai (Whenever Bhai invites someone to the farmhouse, everyone says, ‘Let’s go to the farm.’ But only those who receive an

invitation get to go).”

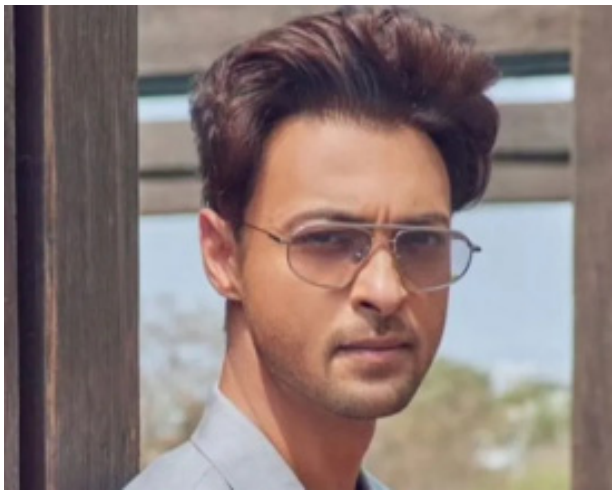
He then laughed and explained that the real joke begins once someone receives the invitation. Aayush revealed that Salman spends most of his time at the farmhouse, adding with a laugh that people know they’ll return only when Salman decides it’s time. “Wahan Bhai zyada time rehte hain. Toh jab farm pe bulate hain... apni marzi se jaoge, lekin wapass tab aao jab woh bolenge (Bhai spends most of his time at the farmhouse because Salim saab isn’t there. You can go there on your own, but you’ll come back only when Bhai says you can),” he shared. The light-hearted anecdote left everyone in splits, offering a rare glimpse into the playful banter shared within the Khan family. While Aayush refrained from sharing more personal jokes, he hinted that there are many more stories that are best kept within the family. Aayush Sharma recently recalled his first meeting with Salman Khan, revealing that the superstar was brutally honest yet incredibly encouraging. Speaking on Cyrus Broacha’s podcast, Aayush shared that after Salman caught him with Arpita Khan and later invited him for a conversation, he candidly admitted he was a struggling actor with no real achievements. Salman looked at him and said, “You can become an actor,” giving him a confidence boost unlike anything he had experienced before. However, the compliment came with tough love. The actor bluntly told Aayush, “You’re in a bad state. You look like sh*t, you’re not trained enough. Just going to acting school won’t help. You need to work on multiple things.” Salman also jokingly turned to his sister Arpita and quipped, “Kahan se leke aayi hai tu isko?” Aayush said it was Salman’s honesty, belief in his potential, and willingness to guide him that motivated him to pursue acting seriously. Aayush Sharma made his acting debut with Loveyatri in 2018, a romantic drama backed by Salman Khan Films. He was most recently seen in the action entertainer Ruslaan, which hit theatres in 2024. On the personal front, Aayush tied the knot with Arpita Khan in a lavish wedding ceremony at Hyderabad’s Falaknuma Palace in November 2014. The couple are proud parents to two children, son Ahil, born in 2016, and daughter Ayat, who was born in 2019.

Aayush Sharma says he still can’t call father-in-law Salim Khan ‘Dad’: ‘Don’t have the courage’

Some celebrity couples often become the subject of public scrutiny because of how “unlikely” they appear. One such couple is Arpita Khan and Aayush Sharma. When they tied the knot in 2014, Aayush was just 24, and many assumed he had married Salman Khan’s sister to secure a launch in Bollywood. However, the two have been happily married for over 11 years and have two children together. But, the perception, he says, has hardly changed. In a recent interview, Aayush opened up about the trolling he continues to face over his marriage and how he has learned to laugh it off. “Initially, people’s comments about my intention behind marrying Arpita used to hurt me. But over the years, it has stopped bothering me. Arpita and I have completed 11 years of marriage. Our son is 10 and our daughter is six. In these 11 years, I have made only three films, none of which were blockbuster hits. There is no real connection between my career and my family,” he told Lallantop.

He added, “Sometimes people create a perception based on what they see, and that very easily turns into a narrative. I don’t pay attention to these things anymore. If I start reacting to these accusations, it would be like disrespecting my marriage. I don’t have to justify my relationship to anyone.”

Aayush Sharma says Arpita might divorce him for one reason. Recalling one of the memes that made him laugh, Aayush said, “I recently saw a meme about Arpita and me. It read, ‘Things people do to get a PlayStation.’ Instead of getting irritated, I laughed. I wanted to post a picture and write, ‘I have a PlayStation Pro.’ But then I let it go. We can’t shut people’s mouths. I am not the only one they troll. They talk about everyone.” He also shared another joke directed at him. “Someone once said that Arpita and I would soon get divorced because my films weren’t working. I replied, ‘The divorce won’t happen because my films didn’t work. It might happen because of my PJs.’” Describing himself, Aayush said he has never taken himself too seriously. “I am a huge cartoon. Maybe that’s why I openly joke about the fact that none of my films have worked. I love cracking jokes and laughing. I have very few friends, and I enjoy spending time with them and my family. I am the comedian of my



group,” he said. During the same conversation, Aayush also spoke about his equation with Arpita’s family. While he addresses Salman Khan as “Bhai” like everyone else, he admitted he has never been able to call veteran screenwriter Salim Khan “Dad.” “My relationship with him is different. Till date, I haven’t gathered the courage to call him Dad. I admire him so much as a screenplay writer that my heart only wants to address him as ‘Salim Sahab.’ He is a legendary man. Most of the time, he speaks and I just reply. I feel very strange calling him Dad or Papa. I am a huge fan of Deewar, Sholay and Zanjeer. My head is always bowed in front of him. I have never initiated a conversation with him. I see him in a different zone,” he said. Who is Arpita Khan? Arpita Khan is the adopted daughter of Salim Khan and Helen. She was adopted after her biological mother passed away and grew up with her siblings Salman Khan, Arbaaz Khan, Sohail Khan and Alvira Agnihotri. Arpita and Aayush got married on November 18, 2014, in a grand ceremony at Hyderabad’s Falaknuma Palace. Aayush is the grandson of former Himachal Pradesh Chief Minister Virbhadr Singh’s political rival and former Union Minister Sukh Ram. The couple has two children—a son, Ahil, and a daughter, Ayat.

Priyanka Chopra hides face as Nick Jonas shares rare photo of wedding proposal

priyanka nick Nick Jonas also shared an unseen photo with his ‘love’ Priyanka Chopra from 8 years ago when she said ‘yes’. Actor Priyanka Chopra’s singer-husband Nick Jonas never fails to drop some major couple goals on special occasions. As our ‘desi girl’ turned 44, Nick took to Instagram to share a romantic video from what appeared to be the couple’s recent vacation in Spain, giving fans a glimpse into their private getaway. Accompanying the clip was a sweet birthday note dedicated to his wife, which instantly won hearts across social media. The video begins with picturesque views from a luxury yacht before shifting focus to Priyanka, who is seen soaking the sun, smiling at the camera, and blowing a flying kiss towards Nick. Dressed in a stylish bikini paired with a cover-up, sunglasses, and a bandana, the actor looked relaxed as the couple enjoyed their holiday together. Nick shared the clip with the caption in Spanish, “¡Feliz cumpleaños! Mi amor ?? (Happy Birthday! My love).” “See Nick Jonas’ birthday post for Priyanka Chopra. Priyanka Chopra’s 44th birthday turned into a double celebration as Nick also shared a rare photo of the two from his personal album. Priyanka and Nick also marked a major milestone in their relationship. Taking to Instagram, Nick posted an unseen picture from their proposal and wrote, “8 years ago she said yes. ??” Priyanka quickly reshared the post on her Instagram Stories, replying, “So Grateful, you asked.”

Earlier, Nick Jonas’s parents, Denise Jonas and Papa Kevin Jonas, too shared warm birthday wishes for the actor. Mama D Jonas wrote, “Birthday queen in our midst! Glory to God for gifting her to all of us. Life is changed when she touches it. Love you ??,” while Papa Jonas wrote along



with an old photo, “Dear Priyanka, we are so thankful to have you in our family and in our heart. You bring joy and life to everyone. We love you. Happy Birthday!” See the birthday posts for Priyanka Chopra by her in-laws:

The birthday celebration coincided with another major milestone for Priyanka, who unveiled some stills from her highly anticipated film Varanasi, directed by SS Rajamouli. The project has already generated significant buzz, making the actor’s birthday even more special for her fans. Priyanka and Nick, who tied the knot in December 2018, continue to be among the entertainment industry’s most-loved celebrity couples. They are parents to their four-year-old daughter, Malti Marie, and often share glimpses of their family life and travels with fans.