

Telangana Assembly security tightened over student protest plans

Hyderabad: Security was beefed up around the Telangana Legislative Assembly on Friday following inputs that student groups were planning to stage a protest over the pending fee reimbursement and scholarship issue.

Police personnel were deployed at key points, including Basheerbagh Crossroads, the Old Police Control Room and Nizam College, to prevent any untoward incident and regulate the movement of protesters. City & Local GuidesAdditional police teams were positioned at strategic locations around the Assembly premises and on nearby roads. Police officials were monitoring the situation and keeping a close watch on the movement of student leaders and groups.

Modi presses Putin for Ukraine peace, safety of Indian seafarers in Black Sea

New Delhi, Sept 11

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday told Russian President Vladimir Putin that India was ready to assist in peace efforts, reiterating that dialogue and diplomacy were the way forward to resolve conflicts, as the two leaders discussed the wars in West Asia and the Black Sea region, including concerns over maritime trade and the safety of Indian seafarers.

The message came during Modi's bilateral meeting with Putin on the sidelines of the 18th BRICS Summit in

Modi's meeting with Putin at the SCO Summit, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar travelled to Kyiv for talks with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy and Foreign Minister Andrii Sybiha, where he reiterated India's willingness to support efforts for a peaceful resolution of the conflict.

Ahead of Putin's visit, Kremlin spokesperson Dmitry Peskov had also welcomed India's readiness to contribute to peace initiatives, saying Russia remained open to efforts aimed at finding a negotiated settlement to the Ukraine crisis.

The two sides are also engaged in efforts to increase indigenous content in the BrahMos supersonic cruise missile programme. The Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) is in discussions with Russia's NPO Mashinostroyenia to reduce dependence on imported components, including the liquid ramjet engine and fuel inlet systems that currently come from Russia. Officials are additionally exploring upgrades aimed at enhancing the missile's capabilities.

Another important project under discussion is the upgrade of the Indian Air Force's Sukhoi-30 MKI fleet. India is looking at integrating Russia's long-range RVV-BD air-to-air missile, capable of engaging targets at distances of around 300 km and travelling at speeds exceeding Mach 5. The integration would significantly enhance the combat capabilities of the Sukhoi fleet, particularly against enemy aircraft and long-range unmanned aerial vehicles.

The proposed acquisition of the Sukhoi-57 has gained importance as India looks for an interim fifth-generation fighter capability before its indigenous Advanced Medium Combat Aircraft (AMCA) becomes operational. However, any decision will have to factor in geopolitical considerations, including Western sanctions targeting countries purchasing Russian military equipment. India, nevertheless, has historically maintained that its defence partnerships are guided by national security requirements and strategic priorities.

On the economic front, Modi and Putin reviewed trade and investment ties and reaffirmed their commitment to achieving bilateral trade of \$100 billion by 2030 from the current level of around \$65 billion. The leaders discussed cooperation in infrastructure, energy, technology, critical minerals, civil nuclear energy, fertiliser supplies and connectivity. India is also understood to have sought greater market access for its exporters to help address the widening trade imbalance in Russia's favour.

The two leaders welcomed the first-ever holding of Russia's International Industrial Exhibition, INNOPROM India, in New Delhi and later visited the exhibition together, interacting with participants. They also exchanged views on BRICS cooperation under India's chairship in 2026 and agreed to remain closely engaged to further deepen ties across sectors.

As a gesture reflecting India's cultural heritage, Modi presented Putin with a Russian translation of the Thirukkural, the classic Tamil text by poet and philosopher Thiruvalluvar. Written in 1,330 couplets, the work deals with ethics, morality and various aspects of human life.

Telangana Bans Artificial, Non-Dairy Paneer for One Year

Hyderabad:., Sept 11: Telangana has imposed a one-year ban on the manufacture, processing, packing, storage, distribution and sale of non-dairy, artificial or ana-

instead of real milk fats and solids.

The commissioner of food safety, Telangana, issued the order under Section 30(2)(a) of the Food Safety and Standards Act, 2006, citing public health concerns. The notification was published in the Telangana Gazette on September 10.

The ban covers analogue paneer in any form and takes effect immediately. Anyone violating the order will be liable for action under the Food Safety and Standards Act and the rules and regulations made under it.

The move comes amid increased scrutiny of analogue dairy products, which are made using non-dairy ingredients but can resemble conventional dairy products. FSSAI has separately directed food businesses to ensure that cheese analogues are not sold or described as paneer, with accurate labelling required to prevent consumers from being misled.

The order, issued by the commissioner of food safety, Telangana, however, specifies that the order does not prohibit food products that are specifically standardised under FSSAI regulations and are lawfully manufactured and marketed under their prescribed names and conditions.

BTPS chief engineer gheraoed by TGPE JAC leaders over YTPS privatisation move

Kothagudem: Telangana Power Employees JAC leaders gheraoed the BTPS chief engineer in protest against the privatisation of coal and ash handling plants at Yadadri Thermal Power Station (YTPS) in Nalgonda district.

In response to a call from the TGPE JAC central committee, Bhadradri Thermal Power Station (BTPS) chief engineer B Bichanna was gheraoed at his office chambers at Manuguru in Kothagudem on Friday by the JAC leaders holding placards and raising slogans.

State to Target Gen Alpha, Gen Beta in New Edu Policy: Revanth

Hyderabad, Sept 11

Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy on Friday said Telangana government would soon roll out a new education policy on par with the National Education Policy (NEP), with a focus on providing quality education and skills to make students job-ready and promote entrepreneurship.

The policy, he said, would cater not only to Gen Z but also to the emerging Gen Alpha and Gen Beta generations. It will focus on education, language and communication skills from nursery to Class 12, skill development for graduates, and employment, innovation and entrepreneurship for those pursuing higher education.

Replying to a debate in the Legislative Assembly on the government's initiatives, Revanth Reddy said a recent caste survey conducted by the state had established that the key reason for social backwardness was lack of access to education rather than possession of assets or property. "If we have to compete with the world, there is a need to discuss what needs to be incorporated into the education system," he said.

He said the government had constituted an Education Commission to formulate a new education policy for Telangana and appointed a committee headed by K. Keshava Rao to examine its report. The government was willing to consider suggestions and advice from legislators and the public, if submitted to Keshava Rao, he said.

Increasing the education sector's share in the state budget to 15 per cent was one of the government's goals, he added.

Responding to BJP MLA Aleti Maheshwar Reddy's criticism over the absence of a full-time education minister, Revanth Reddy said the fact that the Chief Minister himself was handling the portfolio showed the importance attached to education. "When I review the education department as Chief Minister, the entire system comes under review," he said, adding that he had a passion for the education sector and had retained the portfolio with the objective of transforming it.

Revanth Reddy said the education budget had been substantially increased under the Congress government. Against the `19,093 crore allocated by the previous BRS government in 2023-24, the Congress government allocated `21,292 crore in 2024-25, `23,108 crore in 2025-26 and `26,647 crore in 2026-27. "In just three years, we have increased the Education

Department's budget by `7,554 crore," he said.

The Chief Minister said his government had filled 10,006 teacher posts within 55 days of assuming office in its first year, without any allegations of irregularities in the recruitment process. In contrast, the previous government had appointed only 7,857 teachers in 10 years, he said.

He said the government was adopting the best practices from across the world while framing the new education policy, keeping future generations in mind. He said the future of the country was shaped in classrooms, and education had the power to change the destiny of indi-



viduals, which was why he had retained the Education portfolio.

Referring to the increase in student enrolment in government schools, he said the number of students had risen by 86,000 after he took charge of the education department. He described the increase as an indication of the performance of the government's education initiatives.

He said parents were increasingly opting for private schools because children were being admitted at around two-and-a-half years of age, whereas government schools traditionally admitted children at around five years. The availability of nursery and LKG education and greater emphasis on English in private schools were also influencing parental choices, he said.

To address this gap, the government had introduced pre-primary education in government schools for the first time, with 64,000 children receiving pre-primary education this year, Mr Revanth said. The government was also providing mid-day meals to students and teachers from nursery to Class 12 and had designed centralised kitchens to provide quality, hygienic breakfast and meals.

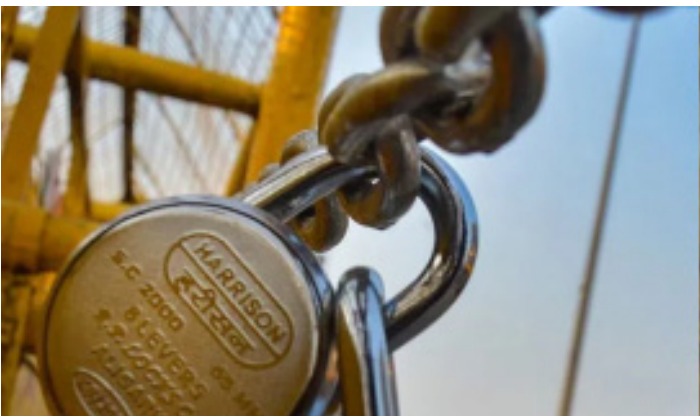
He said the government was focusing on providing nutritious food to students and had increased diet and cosmetic charges soon after assuming office, accusing the previous BRS government of failing to address these issues for a decade.

Bank strike hits public sector banks across India

New Delhi, sept 11

Banking services, especially at public sector banks across the country, were impacted on Friday after the United Forum of Bank Unions (UFBU) called a nationwide strike to press for the immediate implementation of

ernment did not agree to our demand, this strike is forced on us. Bank employees and officers are highly aggrieved that they alone are being discriminated against," All India Bank Employees Association (AIBE) general secretary C H Venkatachalam, a constituent of UFBU, told PTI.



a five-day workweek and resolution of pending wage-related issues.

The strike call by the UFBU, an umbrella body of seven unions representing 90 per cent of officers and employees, did not impact the functioning of private sector banks.

Most branches of public sector banks across the country were either completely or partially closed as employees and officers observed the strike.

Services such as cash deposits and withdrawals, cheque clearances and administrative work were hit at branches of most public sector banks (PSBs) and some old-generation private sector banks.

However, digital banking services, including UPI and internet banking, remained functional.

"Since there was no positive outcome and the gov-

Meanwhile, most public sector banks informed their customers of the likely impact of the strike on operations.

In an advisory to customers, SBI had said, "We advise that while the bank has made all necessary arrangements to ensure normal functioning of the branches and offices on the days of strike, it is likely that work in banks may be impacted by the strike."

The unions are demanding that all Saturdays be declared holidays, a key point that was reportedly agreed upon during the 12th Bipartite Settlement signed with the Indian Banks' Association (IBA)

in March 2024 but is awaiting government notification.

Currently, banks remain open on the first, third and fifth Saturdays of the month.

Other residual demands, including the updation and improvement of pensions, a uniform dearness allowance formula for all pensioners, and an option for employees covered under the National Pension System (NPS) to switch to the Old Pension Scheme (OPS), also remain unresolved.

CHANGE OF NAME

I, SHAIK AHMED S/O NAZEER AHMED (Old Name) born on 04-09-1962 at Adilabad earlier was holding passport no. A3972308 DT: 03-11-1997 hereby changing my name and henceforth in future I would be known as SHAIK AHMAD S/O NAZEER AHMED (New name) HNo. 4-5-13/2/401 Khursheed nagar, Adilabad 504001 Telangana.

Place: Adilabad
Date: 12-09-2026

DECLARANT
SHAIK AHMAD
S/O NAZEER AHMED



logue paneer across the state, with immediate effect from September 10.

Analogue paneer is fake paneer, which is made in a factory using cheap vegetable oils and industrial starches

Indian Chronicle

English Daily

18th BRICS summit—diplomatic challenges ahead for India

India is hosting the 18th BRICS summit in New Delhi over the weekend at a time when the global geopolitical environment is turbulent and unpredictable. A set of competing objectives will test the country's diplomatic skills amid the extraordinary buzz surrounding the potential bilateral meetings that Prime Minister Narendra Modi is scheduled to have with Chinese President Xi Jinping and Russian President Vladimir Putin on the sidelines of the two-day Summit. This will be Xi's first trip to India in seven years and comes against the backdrop of a gradual thaw in ties between the two countries after tensions along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) erupted in 2020. India and China have recently tried to stabilise their relationship, as military tensions eased following the 2024 patrolling agreement and economic contacts began to recover. Yet mutual distrust remains substantial. Investment curbs, technology restrictions and customs frictions still shadow the relationship. For Beijing, BRICS is an important vehicle for increasing the influence of the Global South and challenging what it sees as excessive Western dominance. For India, the grouping is useful because it lets New Delhi maintain strategic autonomy without joining a China-led bloc. These two objectives overlap. Another important task before India is to keep the Ukraine peace process moving. Modi is expected to reiterate his by-now-familiar peace message during his meeting with Putin. India has been pushing for a negotiated settlement to end the war.

When Modi met Putin in Bishkek on the sidelines of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) summit recently, he publicly repeated the counsel he has long offered Russia's leader. Presiding over the 18th summit, India faces a diplomatic paradox:

Padma Vibhushan Life Achievement Award to " Pandit Hari Prasad Chowrasia"



“Hyderabad: Prakhya Arts Sangeet Sudha Vedic Secretary Shrimati Jayashree Prakhya Garu was organized at Ravindra Bharathi in Hyderabad. ““ On this occasion, the chief guests spoke about the importance of Indian classical music across the world. Pandit Hari Prasad Chowrasia's efforts in the introduction have been acknowledged as extraordinary. ““ In his Venu argument, the Indian musical tradition includes emotion, melody, along with scientificity. Creativity will remain intact, he said. ““ Pandit Hari Prasad Chaurasiya has been providing services to the art of Indian music for decades. An inspiration to future generations, making the country famous internationally with its artistic talent. Chief guests were mentioned at Chatchapparaani. To increase interest in Indian classical music especially among the youth. He said that the programs are very necessary. ““ Music is not limited to just entertainment, it is part of our culture, traditions, values. He called it a powerful medium to provide future readers. The society gives respect to the art theater and artists by honoring such illustrious artists. Said to become stronger. ““ We are extremely proud to present the Life Achievement Award to Pandit Hari Prasad Chowrasia Gari. This award is not just a small token of respect for his outstanding services to Indian music. Mrs. Jayashree Prakhya Garu said. Development of music and art fields by encouraging talented artists in future also. She said that her platform will work continuously. ““ This program was attended by music fans, artists, cultural personalities, people from various fields. The eminent participants congratulated Pandit Hari Prasad Chowrasia Gari.

Toyota Hilux Boot Camp Held in Hyd



Hyderabad, September 11 (Indian Chronicle): Toyota conducted the 'All-New Toyota Hilux Boot Camp' at Moinsabad, providing automobile enthusiasts an opportunity to experience the Hilux's power, stability and off-road capabilities, company representatives said in a statement on Friday. Toyota dealerships from Telangana, including Harsha Toyota, Modi Toyota, Fortune Toyota and Headway Toyota, participated in the event. Automobile enthusiasts from Hyderabad and surrounding areas tested the Hilux's performance, handling and stability on a specially designed off-road track, the representatives said. The boot camp will be open to customers until September 12, they added.

Speedy Justice for Victims Through Lok Adalat



“Compromise is the Best Way” – District SP Nithika Pant, IPS Urges Public to Utilize Mega Lok Adalat““Kumrambheem, Asifabad, District. Reporter “Indian Chronicle” September. 12. ““Asifabad: District Superintendent of Police Nithika Pant, IPS, urged the public to make effective use of the National Mega Lok Adalat scheduled to be held today, Saturday, the 12th. She said the Lok Adalat provides an effective platform for the speedy settlement of

various compoundable cases through mutual consent and agreement between the parties. “Speaking on the occasion, the SP stated that criminal compoundable cases, civil disputes, property partition disputes, family and matrimonial issues, bank recovery cases, electricity theft cases, cheque bounce cases, and other matters that can be settled through compromise can be resolved through the Lok Adalat. She advised people not to allow minor disputes to turn into prolonged conflicts and cautioned against wasting valuable time and money by repeatedly visiting courts. She appealed to the public to utilize the opportunity provided by the legal system with the spirit of “Compromise is the Best Way” and seek a permanent solution to their disputes. The SP further stated that police officers in the district and police personnel performing court duties would identify cases that are suitable for settlement and conduct counselling with both parties to create awareness about the benefits of resolving disputes through mutual agreement. Those who wish to settle their cases through compromise have been advised to approach the concerned police officials. District SP Nithika Pant said the Lok Adalat would help provide speedy justice to victims and urged the public to utilize the opportunity to bring their disputes to an amicable conclusion in a friendly environment.”

Legal Action Sought Against Hamara Prasad Over Alleged Remarks on Ambedkar



“Buddhist, Ambedkar and Mali community leaders submit complaint at Wankidi Police Station““Kumrambheem, Asifabad, District. Reporter “Indian Chronicle” September. 12. ““Wankidi: Demanding immediate legal action against Hamara Prasad over his alleged objectionable remarks against Dr. B. R. Ambedkar, leaders of the Bharatiya Bauddha Mahasabha, Ambedkar Association and Mali community submitted a complaint to Wankidi Sub-Inspector Mahender on Thursday. Speaking on the occasion, Mali Association State Vice-President Gurnule Narayana

and Bharatiya Bauddha Mahasabha District President Dr. Ashok Mahulkar alleged that the remarks made by Hamara Prasad against Dr. B. R. Ambedkar were derogatory and had hurt the sentiments of SC, ST, BC and minority communities. They urged the police to conduct an inquiry and initiate strict legal action against him. The leaders said Dr. B. R. Ambedkar, the architect of the Indian Constitution, played a crucial role in establishing the principles of liberty, equality and fraternity and worked throughout his life for the welfare and rights of the oppressed sections. They said any attempt to insult or demean Ambedkar would not be tolerated. “They also expressed concern over the proposed release of a book allegedly containing objectionable remarks about Ambedkar by Hamara Prasad on September 18. They urged the government to intervene immediately and take necessary steps to prevent the release of the book in order to avoid any untoward incidents and maintain peace and harmony. They appealed to the authorities to address the issue through legal means and ensure that law and order is maintained. RPI District President Durgam Shyam Rao, Samaj President Rajeshwar, Buddhist followers Arun Mahulkar, Nagasen Uppe, Ramesh Dongre, Maruti Jade, Suresh Kobragade, Shekhar and others were present.

MLA BANDARI LAKSHMA REDDY Performs Special Pujas at Kalabhairava Temple

“UPPAL, SEPTEMBER 11 (INDIAN CHRONICLE): Uppal MLA Bandari Laxma Reddy performed special pujas at the Kalabhairava Swamy Temple in Uppal Bhagya Nagar on Friday on the occasion of Amavasya. Speaking on the occasion, MLA Bandari Laxma Reddy expressed his wishes that everyone should live happily with the blessings of Lord Kalabhairava. He said that devotees who worship Lord Kalabhairava would receive His blessings. The temple committee representatives felicitated MLA Bandari Laxma Reddy on the occasion. Temple committee representatives, TRS party leaders and activists, and others participated in the programme. “A large number of devotees visited the Kalabhairava Swamy Temple on the occasion of Amavasya.



SENIOR CONGRESS LEADER JANUMPALLY VENKATESWAR REDDY Participates in Annadanam at Ram Mandir

HABSIGUDA, SEPTEMBER 11 (INDIAN CHRONICLE): An Annadanam programme was organised on Friday at Sri Mahakali Ram Mandir Temple, Street No. 1, Habsiguda, on the occasion of Amavasya. Senior Congress leader of Uppal Constituency, Janumpally Venkateswar Reddy, participated in the programme. The event was organised under the leadership of former temple chairman Gayam Sridhar Reddy. Baddam Madhusudhan Reddy and temple chairman Baburao also participated and distributed Annadanam to devotees. “Temple organisers, devotees and a large number of local residents attended the programme.



Retired Army havildar held for stealing rifles, pistols, ammunition from Madras Regiment in Hyd

Hyderabad: An aggrieved retired Army havildar was arrested on Friday for allegedly stealing firearms and ammunition from the Kote and Magazine rooms of the 20 Battalion, Madras Regiment, at Bolarum. The suspect was identified as Upputholla Mallesh (37), a resident of Jangam Reddy Pally in Amrabad, Nagarkurnool. He had joined the Indian Army in 2010 and served for 16 years before being dismissed from service on June 30 on health and disciplinary grounds. According to Telangana DGP CV Anand, Mallesh on the night of August 30, entered the Army pre-

mises through the Kargil Gate on his motorcycle. He reached the room where the firearms were kept, broke open the lock, and removed the weapons one by one. He spent nearly an hour breaking open the ammunition booth lock. “Raju collected ammunition boxes corresponding to the AK-series weapons and pistols. He loaded the ammunition boxes on his vehicle and carried the weapons to a temple about 2-km away, where he temporarily concealed them. He later returned to the Army premises after realising that magazine covers had been left behind.

Former President Gurnule Narayana Visits Youth Congress President Krishna



“Kumrambheem, Asifabad, District. Reporter “Indian Chronicle” September. 12. ““Wankidi: Former Wankidi Mandal Congress President Gurnule Narayana visited a private hospital in Wankidi on Friday and inquired about the health condition of Wankidi Mandal Youth Congress President Uppala Krishna, who is undergoing treatment. Gurnule Narayana spoke with the doctors and enquired about the treatment being provided to Krishna. He also met Krishna, offered him moral support and wished him a speedy recovery and a return to public service in good health. “Narayana assured that the Congress party leaders and workers would stand by Krishna and extend their support during his recovery. Congress leader Pentaiah and others were present during the visit.

Vijay Deverakonda Launches 'Unhype' Skincare Brand



“Hyderabad, September 11 (Indian Chronicle) : Actor Vijay Deverakonda has co-founded 'Unhype', a skincare brand developed with a focus on Indian weather conditions, including heat, humidity, pollution, sweat and hard water, the company representatives said in a statement released in the city on Friday. They said the brand aims to offer science-backed and transparent skincare products for young consumers under the tagline, 'No BS, Only What Works.' According to the representatives, Vijay Deverakonda was personally involved in the product development process for nine months and tested various formulations. Launched with an online-first approach, Unhype opened pre-bookings for its products on September 11, while shipments are scheduled to begin from September 21, they said.

ABVP Holds Dharna Demanding Hostel Facilities for Technology College Students



“Tarnaka, September 11: (INDIAN CHRONICLE) “The Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad (ABVP), Osmania University unit, organised a peaceful dharna in front of the university's Vice-Chancellor's office, demanding the immediate provision of hostel facilities for students of the Technology College. “The protest was held against the backdrop of the serious difficulties being faced by Technology College students due to the absence of adequate hostel accommodation. Many students are reportedly struggling to find affordable and convenient lodging, which is affecting their academic routine, daily travel and overall well-being. Highlighting these concerns, ABVP representatives urged the university administration to take immediate and concrete steps to resolve the issue. “The protesters stated that access to safe and affordable hostel accommodation is an essential requirement for students, particularly those coming from distant districts and economically disadvantaged backgrounds. They appealed to the university authorities to treat the matter as a priority and ensure that the students are not forced to face further inconvenience. “Following the protest and the students' representation, the university authorities responded positively and assured the protesters that necessary measures would be initiated to provide hostel facilities to Technology College students. The ABVP leaders welcomed the response and urged the administration to implement the assurance at the earliest. “The organisation also called upon the university authorities to maintain transparency in the allocation process and ensure that eligible students receive accommodation without delay. The protesters emphasised that resolving the hostel issue would provide significant relief to the students and help them concentrate better on their studies. “State Technical Cell Pramukh Suman Shankar, City Secretary Prithvi Teja, Osmania University President Gellu Shekhar, Secretary Mokshith, City Joint Secretary Dinesh, along with Nithin, Vivek, Bhanu and several students participated in the programme.

Five-Day Banking Week Delay Triggers Statewide Strike



“Hyderabad Correspondent, September 11 (Indian Chronicle): Delay in implementing the five-day banking week has prompted bank employees across Telangana to launch a statewide strike, with unions warning of further action if the issue remains unresolved. Around 3,500 employees participated in the protest organised by the United Forum of Bank Unions (UFBU) on Friday. Addressing the gathering at the State Bank of India head office in Hyderabad, UFBU Telangana convenor K. Anjaneya Prasad said the government and bank managements should immediately act on the demand for a five-day banking system and address the shortage of staff and other employee-related issues. He said vacancies in the banking sector were adding to the workload



of existing employees and affecting the delivery of services to customers. The unions also demanded that public sector banks be strengthened and opposed any move towards privatisation. The unions raised objections to the proposed performance-linked incentive (PLI) system, contending that it could create divisions among employees. They sought a mechanism to resolve the genuine demands of officers and employees through negotiations. UFBU said nationwide meetings would be held on September 28, 29 and 30 to discuss various issues concerning the banking sector. It warned that further agitation would follow if the demands were not addressed. Representatives of AIBEA, NCBE and other bank unions participated in the protest.

BRS Leaders Urge Immediate Payment of Pending Salaries to BLOs

“UPPAL, SEPTEMBER 11 (INDIAN CHRONICLE): BRS leaders in Uppal expressed concern over the non-payment of salaries to Booth Level Officers (BLOs) performing election duties in the Uppal Assembly constituency for the past three months. They submitted a representation to Uppal Zonal Commissioner and Electoral Registration Officer (ERO) Radhika Gupta at her office on Friday, urging her to take immediate steps to release the pending salaries. “The leaders stated that the Central Government’s prestigious Special Intensive Revision (SIR) programme was being conducted across Telangana. As part of the programme, BLOs were responsibly carrying out various election-related duties, including voter list revision, registration of new voters, deletion of names of deceased voters and door-to-door surveys. They said it was unfortunate that the staff performing these duties had not received their salaries for three months. They appealed to Radhika Gupta to ensure the early payment of pending salaries and allowances, keeping in view the financial difficulties faced by the employees. BRS leaders Mekala Madhusudhan Reddy,



Mushyam Srinivas, Anya Balakrishna, Pooduru Jitender Reddy, Anreddy Kalpana Reddy, Naveen Chari, Chintala Narasimha Reddy, Roshan, Srikanth, Madhu, Mallesha and others participated in the programme.

Say No to POP Idols, Embrace Clay Idols

JDC Uppal Eco Club “Eco-Friendly Ganesh Idol Exhibition Held at Government Degree College, Uppal”



“UPPAL, SEPTEMBER 11 (INDIAN CHRONICLE): An exhibition and preparation programme of eco-friendly clay Ganesh idols was organised at Government Degree College, Uppal, under the aegis of the college and its Eco Club, with the aim of creating awareness about environmental protection among the public, particularly students. Students enthusiastically participated in the programme, making and displaying idols in various shapes using clay. They also displayed posters carrying messages on environmental conservation. “Speaking on the occasion, college Principal Dr. K. Vijay Kumar said that idols made of Plaster of Paris (POP) cause serious damage to the environment. He explained that POP idols do not dissolve easily in water, while the chemical colours used on them pollute water bodies and harm aquatic life. Water pollution also affects ecological balance and can have adverse effects on public health, he added. “He called upon everyone to use eco-friendly clay idols made from natural materials that can return to the soil after immersion. Protecting the environment is the social responsibility of every individual, he said,



urging students to take the message to their families and society. “Eco Club Convenor Dr. Geetha said the students had responded enthusiastically to the preparation of eco-friendly idols. Students not only made clay idols themselves but also prepared and displayed several posters on environmental protection. Such programmes help bring out students’ creativity and promote responsible thinking towards the environment, she said. She explained that nature can be protected by making eco-friendly idols using clay, vegetables and other natural materials. She urged students to spread the message among their family members and people in surrounding areas and encourage eco-friendly Ganesh Chaturthi celebrations. Dr. G. Tirupathayya, Dr. Yamunarani and Mrs. Aruna participated as judges. They examined the clay idols and environmental awareness posters and awarded marks to the students. Prizes were later presented to students who demonstrated outstanding talent. College Vice-Principal Dr. C. S. Satyanarayana, faculty members, Eco Club members and students participated in the programme.

CM Revanth Reddy to Attend Arya Vysya Atmagaurava Bhavan Bhoomi Pooja on September 13

MLA Bandari Lakshma Reddy, Uppal Zonal Commissioner Radhika Gupta Inspect Arrangements “UPPAL, SEPTEMBER 11 (INDIAN CHRONICLE): Telangana Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy will attend the bhoomi pooja ceremony for the construction of the Arya Vysya Atmagaurava Bhavan at Uppal Bhagayath on September 13 as the chief guest. Uppal MLA Bandari Lakshma Reddy and Uppal Zonal Commissioner Radhika Gupta inspected the arrangements at the venue on Friday. “The MLA and the Zonal Commissioner interacted with Arya Vysya representatives and enquired about the facilities being arranged for the event. They instructed the organisers to ensure that all necessary arrangements are made so that visitors do not face any inconvenience. “The Telangana government has allotted five acres of land at Uppal Bhagayath for the welfare of the Arya Vysya community. Under the leadership of State Arya Vysya Mahasabha president Amaravathi Lakshminarayana, plans have been prepared for the construction of the Atmagaurava Bhavan at an estimated cost of ₹30 crore. “During a district meeting held last week under the leadership of Medchal-Malkajgiri District Arya Vysya Mahasabha president Belide Ramesh Gupta and secretary Bachu Nagesh Gupta, State president Amaravathi Lakshminarayana called upon Arya Vysyas from across Telangana to attend the bhoomi pooja in large numbers and make the event a success. “Belide Ramesh Gupta and Bachu Nagesh Gupta expressed their happiness that the



State Arya Vysya Mahasabha’s Atmagaurava Bhavan is being constructed in Medchal-Malkajgiri district, describing it as a matter of pride for the district. They appealed to around 5,000 Arya Vysyas from Medchal district to participate in the programme. “The organisers also announced that Srinivasa Kalyanam will be conducted at the bhoomi pooja venue at 8 a.m. on September 13. Interested couples may participate in the ceremony, they said. “As the Chief Minister is scheduled to attend the bhoomi pooja, MLA Bandari Lakshma Reddy and MMC Uppal Zonal Commissioner Radhika Gupta inspected the arrangements at Uppal Bhagayath on Friday morning and issued several instructions to the organisers. The organisers appealed to Arya Vysyas from all districts of Telangana to participate in large numbers, make the event a success and demonstrate the unity of the Arya Vysya community.

A massive protest rally in Khammam strongly condemning inappropriate remarks made by Tatha Madhu against the Speaker.

Khammam, Sep 11, Indian Chronicle. “Today, under the leadership of the Khammam District Congress Party, a massive protest rally was held from Sanjeeva Reddy Bhavan to Ambedkar Center in protest against the inappropriate remarks made by Legislative Council member MLC Tatha Madhu against the Speaker of the Telangana Legislative Assembly. A large number of Congress Party leaders, activists, youth leaders, representatives of workers’ unions, and leaders of various wings participated in the massive rally held under the leadership of Khammam District Congress President Nuthi Satyanarayana Goud and expressed their protest. On this occasion, the leaders said that the post of Speaker of the Telangana Legislative Assembly is not merely a position related to one individual, but a highly respected constitutional position related to the entire Legislative Assembly and the democratic system. They stated that making inappropriate remarks against the Speaker holding such a position by an MLC at the level of a public representative is a matter that must be strongly condemned. Congress leaders made it clear that while differences of opinion are natural in a democracy and everyone has the right to criticize politically, making personal remarks in a manner that undermines the dignity of the office of the Legislative Assembly Speaker cannot be justified. They said that every public representative has a responsibility to respect the office of the Speaker, who provides equal opportunity to all elected members representing the people in the Legislative Assembly and conducts the proceedings of the House constitutionally. They stated that it is the responsibility of every political leader to protect the dignity of democratic institutions such as the Legislative Assembly and Legislative Council. On this occasion, Congress leaders demanded that MLC Tatha Madhu immediately withdraw his remarks and publicly apologize to the Speaker. They advised that leaders holding high positions in the democratic system should exercise restraint in their words and should not take political differences to the level of personal criticism. “Massive participation by KKC leaders. “A large number of leaders and activists of the All India Unorganized Workers Employees Congress (KKC) participated in this protest rally and expressed their solidarity with the Congress Party. KKC leaders said that their organization, which is fighting for the rights of workers in the unorganized sector, will also always remain at the forefront in protecting democratic values, the Constitution, and the dignity of public representatives. They said that every citizen and every political leader needs to act responsibly in protecting the



dignity of democratic institutions. They expressed strong protest, stating that the remarks made against the Legislative Assembly Speaker were insulting to democratic values. “During this massive rally, a large number of Congress Party leaders, KKC leaders, and activists participated, raised slogans, and expressed their protest. They demanded that the democratic system and constitutional institutions be respected and that such inappropriate remarks not be repeated in the future. Through this program, the leaders made it clear that the Congress Party and KKC will always remain at the forefront in protecting democratic values. In this program, SUDA Chairman Puvvala Durgaprasad, Warehousing Corporation Chairman Rayala Nageswara Rao, Congress Party leaders, KKC Khammam District President CH Viplava Kumar Patel, Joint District President Bollini Nagaraju Yadav, District Vice President Jangipalli Prasad, Auto Union Parliament President Merugu Venkat Naidu, District General Secretary Medagani Venu Goud, MD Gayaz Pasha, Three Town President Raju, Mehraj, Chari Srinu, Balakrishna, Narasimha Rao, Ramesh, leaders, workers’ union leaders, youth leaders, activists, supporters, and people participated in large numbers.

“We Will Not Remain Silent Against False Propaganda”: Chandrupatla Sunil Reddy

“Manthani Peddapalli District, Sep 11 (Indian Chronicle): Manthani Market Should Be Completed on a War Footing and Made Available to Farmers and the Public Immediately “Manthani: BJP State Executive Committee Member and former Peddapalli District BJP President Chandrupatla Sunil Reddy said that the Manthani market building should be completed on a war footing and made available to farmers and the public at the earliest. “Speaking at a media conference held on Friday, Sunil Reddy said the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) stands first among the political parties committed to the development of Manthani. He said the party would always support development works being carried out with the crores of rupees being sanctioned by the Central Government to gram panchayats and the Manthani Municipal Council. “He warned that the BJP would not tolerate anyone obstructing development works. He strongly criticised those allegedly spreading false propaganda that his family was responsible for the delay in the construction of the Manthani municipal market building. “Sunil Reddy recalled that the foundation for the Manthani market was laid during the tenure of Chandrupatla Ram Reddy. He said his family had continuously offered suggestions and advice regarding the development of the market. He stated that the BJP had repeatedly advised municipal officials and the Congress government not to rush into construction without proper planning, but instead to develop the market with all necessary facilities keeping future requirements in mind. “He said those attempting to create political controversy out of development issues due to jealousy and hatred should remember that the people of Manthani would reject such politics. “Sunil Reddy further alleged that some leaders were resorting to low-level politics by spreading



false information against others for their own political interests. He stressed that character and integrity are of utmost importance in politics. “He also highlighted his family’s long history of public service, stating that they had a distinguished record of contributing to the welfare of the people. He said that for the past 15 years, their family had been continuously working for the people with a spirit of public service. “He reiterated that the BJP would continue to extend its support to development works in Manthani and would oppose any attempts to obstruct the town’s progress. “BJP Manthani Town President Sabbani Santosh, former Town President Boodida Tirupati, Assembly Constituency Social Media In-charge Vojjala Murali Krishna, Town General Secretary Samala Ashok, Edla Sagar, Vice-Presidents Bollampalli Lakshman and Aanti Mallesh, Secretary Parvathi Vishnu, OBC Morcha President Gudla Guravesh, Mandal Vice-President Yella Veni Sammaiah, and leaders Chandu, Sai and Srikanth, among others, participated in the meeting.

Forest Martyrs’ Sacrifices Are Beyond Measure: Sub-Collector Harsh

“Indian Chronicle, Kagaznagar, September 11: “The sacrifices of forest department personnel who laid down their lives in the line of duty while protecting forests are immeasurable, Kagaznagar Sub-Collector Harsh Chowdary, IAS, said. “The Telangana Forest Martyrs’ Memorial Day was observed on Friday at the Kagaznagar Forest Division Office under the aegis of the Forest Department. Harsh Chowdary attended the programme as the chief guest. “The Sub-Collector, along with Kagaznagar Forest Division Officer “T. Bhargav Kumar, IFS”, paid floral tributes to the portraits of the forest martyrs and honoured their memoirs. “Addressing the gathering, Harsh Chowdary said the dedicated efforts of forest officials and personnel in protecting forests and conserving natural resources were highly commendable. He stressed the importance of continuing their commitment to safeguarding the forests. “As part of the programme, a blood donation camp was organised at



the Forest Division Office. Sub-Collector Harsh Chowdary, FDO T. Bhargav Kumar and several forest department officials and staff members voluntarily donated blood. “The programme highlighted the department’s commitment to remembering the sacrifices of its personnel while continuing efforts towards forest protection and conservation.

Gayathri College Students Secure ICICI Bank Placements with Packages Up to 3.8 LPA

“PEDDAPALLI September 11, 2026 (Indian Chronicle): In a major boost to local campus placements, students from Gayathri Degree and PG College bagged prestigious roles at ICICI Bank during a placement drive organized by the Telangana Academy for Skill and Knowledge (TASK). “Final-year students Pegada Anjali (BBA) and Kasarla Sreeja (B.Sc MSTDS) were selected for the position of Operational Executive. The candidates secured an attractive salary package ranging between ₹3.12 Lakhs and ₹3.80 Lakhs per annum. “District Development Manager Ganga Prasad, TASK Regional Central Manager Kausalya, and ICICI Bank Managing Director Kandunuri Sathesh, along with his recruitment team, spearheaded the selection

process and formally welcomed the selected candidates to the organization. “Gayathri College Chairman Allenki Srinivas commended the students for their outstanding performance, emphasizing the institution’s commitment to bridging academic learning with industry readiness. “College Principal J. Ravinder, TASK Placement Officer K. Kumar, NSS Coordinator Samad and members of the faculty extended their heartfelt congratulations to the students for bringing laurels to the institution.



Drug tests ordered for pilots across all airlines



GNS News Agency, Sept 11

New Delhi: Aviation watchdog DGCA has ordered drug tests for pilots across all airlines, with the exercise to be completed by July 2027, according to sources. Separately, Civil Aviation Minister K Rammohan Naidu on Thursday said the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) is expected to finalise the draft of new norms for drug testing of pilots by the end of this month.

The moves come against the backdrop of the pilot-in-command of an Air India Phuket-Delhi flight, which suddenly lost nearly 300 feet in altitude, testing positive for drug use after the aircraft incident on August 4 left many passengers injured. On September 4, Air India terminated the services of the pilot-in-command, hours after the Aircraft Accident Investigation Bureau (AAIB)'s preliminary report into the Phuket flight incident said the pilot's drug use was a serious concern and asked the regulator DGCA to take appropriate action. The sources on Thursday said the DGCA had ordered drug testing for pilots across all airlines last month and that the carriers had been asked to complete

the exercise by July next year.

Naidu, on the sidelines of a conference in the national capital on Thursday, said the draft of the revised Civil Aviation Requirements (CAR) regarding testing of pilots for psychoactive substances is expected to be finalised by the end of this month after discussions with stakeholders. Currently, drug tests for pilots are conducted on a random basis. Under the DGCA's present Civil Aviation Requirements (CAR), random tests for psychoactive substances have to be conducted on 10 per cent of pilots and air traffic controllers, among others, annually. There are more than 12,000 pilots with various commercial airlines. Following the Phuket flight incident and the pilot-in-command testing positive for drug use, Air India Group in August decided to conduct drug tests for all pilots across Air India and Air India Express.

In the preliminary report on the Phuket flight incident released on September 4, the AAIB said the plane, carrying 145 people, suffered a near-simultaneous loss of all three hydraulic systems while cruising at 36,000 feet, triggering an autopilot disconnect, a brief stall warning and an altitude upset that injured 24 people. The report disclosed that the pilot-in-command tested non-negative for a psychoactive substance in a confirmatory test conducted after the flight. The AAIB recommended that the aviation regulator take appropriate action to prevent the abuse of psychoactive substances. "The confirmation of use of psycho-active substance is a serious concern and AAIB recommends appropriate actions by DGCA on priority," it had said. Hours later, on September 4, Air India said the pilot-in-command of the Phuket-Delhi flight had tested positive for a psychoactive substance. "In line with Air India's zero-tolerance approach to violation of safety, fitness or regulatory requirements, the pilot's employment has been terminated with immediate effect," the airline had said in a statement.

SC seeks Centre's response on private school teachers' welfare plea

New Delhi: The Supreme Court on Thursday agreed to hear a petition seeking a direction to the Centre to formulate a comprehensive national policy and appropriate statutory framework to ensure the welfare, social security and post-retirement protection of private school teachers in the country. A bench of Justices Vikram Nath and Sandeep Mehta issued notices to the Centre, all States and Union Territories and others, including the National Council for Teacher Education (NCTE), seeking their responses to the plea.

The bench posted the petition, filed by Kerala-based petitioner Ligmol George, for hearing after four weeks. The plea, filed through advocate Deepak Prakash, also sought a direction to the Centre to consider establishing a national private school teachers' welfare board or other appropriate institutional mechanism to coordinate, implement and monitor uniform welfare measures, including pensionary benefits, provident fund and gratuity compliance, and an effective grievance redressal mechanism for private school teachers.

The petitioner said the plea raises an issue of national importance concerning the absence of a comprehensive national framework for the welfare, social security and post-retirement protection of teachers serving in recognised private educational institutions across India. The plea referred to data published by the Ministry of Education under the Unified District Information System for Education Plus (UDISE+). It said the UDISE+ 2023-24 report records that India has approximately 14.72 lakh schools, more than 98 lakh teachers and nearly 24.8 crore students.

"Significantly, 37,30,047 teachers are employed in recognised private unaided schools alone, constituting a substantial segment of the national teaching workforce," the plea said. It said despite their indispensable contribution to implementing the constitutional mandate under Article 21A, there was no dedicated national statutory welfare mechanism or comprehensive institutional framework exclusively addressing their welfare and post-retirement social security. "The continuing legislative and policy vacuum has resulted in arbitrary disparities between teachers performing substantially identical educational functions across different States and institutions," it said. The plea said that despite discharging the vital public function of imparting education and contributing to the realisation of the constitutional mandate under Article 21A of the Constitution, these teachers continue to remain "deprived of a comprehensive, uniform and effective statutory welfare framework". "Although education has consistently been recognised as a matter of



paramount national importance and forms an integral part of the welfare obligations of the State, there exists no comprehensive central legislation or uniform national policy specifically providing for the long-term welfare, social security and post-retirement protection of private school teachers throughout the country," the plea said. It said the existing legal framework remains fragmented and inconsistent and is largely dependent on varying State laws, institutional practices and contractual arrangements, resulting in substantial disparities in service conditions and welfare benefits among similarly situated teachers across different States and educational institutions. The plea said that despite rendering essential educational services over several decades, a large number of private school teachers retire without adequate pensionary benefits, comprehensive medical assistance or any effective social security mechanism capable of ensuring a life of dignity after retirement. "The absence of a uniform statutory welfare mechanism has also resulted in considerable inequalities in service benefits and social security protections available to private school teachers across different States, institutions and managements," it said. The plea said the constitutional guarantee under Article 21 cannot be rendered illusory by permitting an essential class of educational professionals to remain without adequate institutional protection after rendering decades of public service. It said the petition does not seek interference with the service administration or management of private educational institutions, nor does it seek adjudication of individual service disputes. "Rather, it seeks formulation of an appropriate national policy and institutional framework to address a long-standing legislative and administrative vacuum concerning the welfare and social security of private school teachers across India, consistent with constitutional principles..." it said.

Delhi court orders money laundering charges against Lalu, Tejashwi



GNS News Agency, Sept 11

New Delhi: A Delhi court on Thursday ordered framing of money laundering charges against former railway minister Lalu Prasad Yadav, his wife Rabri Devi, son Tejashwi Prasad Yadav and six others in the Enforcement Directorate's case related to the alleged IRCTC scam. The court had already framed corruption charges against the RJD patriarch and 11 others last October in the CBI case related to the alleged scam.

On Thursday, Special Judge Vishal Gogne said there was a "strong suspicion" against seven persons for the offence of money laundering. He also said the nature, timing and course of the investigation did not appear to be inspired by political vendetta, as argued by counsel for the accused. The judge discharged seven accused in the case.

The CBI FIR alleged that Lalu Prasad, during his tenure as railway minister in UPA-I, handed over the maintenance of two IRCTC hotels to a company in 2004 after receiving a bribe in the form of prime land in Patna through a 'benami' company owned by Sarla Gupta, wife of Prem Chand Gupta, a former Union minister. The ED registered the criminal case against Prasad's family members and

others under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA), based on the CBI FIR. The ED had probed the alleged "proceeds of crime" generated by the accused, purportedly through shell companies, according to officials. Others named in the CBI FIR include Vijay Kochhar and Vinay Kochhar, both directors of Sujata Hotels, Delight Marketing company, now known as Lara Projects, and then IRCTC managing director P K Goel. The CBI FIR was registered on July 5, 2018, in connection with alleged favours extended to Sujata Hotels in awarding a contract for the upkeep of hotels in Ranchi and Puri and receiving premium land as "quid pro quo".

Eagle Force busts interstate Alprazolam trafficking network, three arrested

Hyderabad: The Eagle Force, along with Nizamabad Rural Police, has busted an interstate Alprazolam trafficking network operating across Telangana, Rajasthan and Maharashtra and seized 1.087 kg of Alprazolam worth Rs 10.87 lakh. Officials also seized Rs 3.5 lakh cash, two cars and five mobile phones.

In a case registered at Nizamabad Rural Police Station, Gandham Srinivas Goud, Botlakunta Katamaiah Goud and M Anil Goud were among those arrested. A financial probe traced assets allegedly acquired from drug proceeds, including 4.20 acres of agricultural land, residence plots and vehicles.

Though valued at Rs 52 lakh as per government rates, their market value is estimated at Rs 3.02 crore.

SC notice to Centre on plea seeking social media safeguards for minors



New Delhi: The Supreme Court on Thursday sought responses from the Union ministries of electronics and information technology and law and justice on a plea seeking safeguards for minors accessing social media and to ensure that no such platform enters into a contract with a child below 18 years of age. A bench of Chief Justice of India Surya Kant and Justices Joymalya Bagchi and V Mohana issued notices to the two ministries on the plea filed by NGO Just Rights for Children Alliance. "We need some safeguards in India," the bench said after taking note of brief submissions by senior advocate HS Phoolka, who appeared for the NGO.

The plea sought directions to the Centre to take appropriate steps to inform "the digital platforms including social media intermediaries that any contract entered into by them with any child below the age of eighteen years is void ab initio (invalid from the moment of creation) and that any steps taken in furtherance thereof shall be immediately suspended". The plea sought enforcement and protection of the fundamental rights of children below 18, who, despite their statutory incapacity to contract under Section 11 of the Indian Contract Act, are currently permitted to independently create and maintain accounts and access social media and other digital platforms without an effective, uniform and enforceable mechanism to safeguard their legal incapacity and constitutional rights in the digital environment. The plea said it is a settled principle of law that

GNS News Agency, Sept 11

New Delhi: In a strategic balancing act triggered by escalating global trade tensions, India is leveraging the two-day BRICS summit starting Saturday to position the grouping as a complementary engine for economic growth while championing the Global South's core developmental priorities — most notably safeguarding food, energy and supply chain security. With New Delhi putting the finishing touches to the summit, China has confirmed President Xi Jinping's attendance, marking his first trip to India after a seven-year gap. Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian, Russian President Vladimir Putin, South African President Cyril Ramaphosa and his Indonesian counterpart Prabowo Subianto are among the top leaders attending the crucial meet in the national capital. India is steering the BRICS grouping as a vital complementary platform to champion the Global South's core developmental priorities, top Indian officials said on Thursday.

As global trade disputes and geopolitical realignments create economic headwinds, India is looking at addressing critical vulnerabilities in food security, energy stability and resilient supply chains, they said. The summit in New Delhi is taking place against the backdrop of a global economy facing the adverse impacts of the Russia-Ukraine war, the West Asia crisis, especially the blockade of the Strait of Hormuz, and the Trump administration's trade and tariff policies.

With just two days left before the summit, it remains unclear whether the member nations of the grouping have reached a consensus on a joint statement, as differences between Iran and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) over the West Asia crisis persist. The grouping operates under a framework of consensus. BRICS, originally comprising Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa, expanded in 2024 to include Egypt, Ethiopia, Iran, the United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia, with Indonesia joining in 2025. Belarus, Bolivia, Kazakhstan, Cuba, Malaysia, Nigeria, Thailand, Uganda, Uzbekistan and Vietnam became BRICS partner countries last year. BRICS has emerged as an influential grouping as it brings together 11 major emerging economies of the world, representing around 49.5 per cent of the global population, around 40 per cent of the global GDP and around 26 per cent of global trade.

India's chairship of the grouping is centred on four pillars: resilience, innovation, cooperation and sustainability. Under the resilience pillar, India has been focusing on strengthening collective cooperation in areas such as health, agriculture, food, energy, disaster risk reduction and supply chains, officials said. Enhancing cooperation in trade, investment, connectivity and high technology will also be high on the agenda of the summit, they said. India's BRICS chairship is guided by the theme: 'Building for Re-

Supreme Court refuses to reconstitute NEET protests panel

New Delhi: The Supreme Court on Thursday made it clear that it would not agree to any changes in the reconstitution of the five-member high-powered committee headed by former top court judge R Subhash Reddy to examine allegations of police excesses against student protesters in Delhi recently and violence against police personnel. A bench comprising Chief Justice of India Surya Kant and Justices Joymalya Bagchi and V Mohana said it would not proceed on the presumption that a committee constituted by it was biased.

"Committee is our extended hand. We will not agree to any changes. The committee will be working under the supervision of the Supreme Court. We will not reconstitute. Let this committee function, we will see. We are not running away. If anyone feels the committee has gone wrong somewhere, you tell us. We will give open hearing," the CJI observed. During the hearing, advocate Prashant Bhushan, appearing for one of the petitioners seeking reconstitution, submitted that one of the members of the panel, who was a former DGP of a north-eastern State, was under a "conflict of interest" as he was a close friend of a high functionary who was likely to be under investigation. Senior advocate Gopal Sankaranarayanan echoed Bhushan's views. "Our

a minor lacks contractual capacity and that a contract entered into by a minor is invalid at the outset.

The continued exposure of children to contractual and data-driven digital ecosystems without meaningful age-assurance and parental safeguards is not a mere regulatory deficiency, but raises grave constitutional concerns, exposing a particularly vulnerable class to foreseeable and serious harms, including online grooming, sexual exploitation, trafficking, behavioural manipulation and profiling, misuse of personal data, cyberbullying and exposure to age-inappropriate content, it said. Such unregulated exposure threatens children's right to life, dignity, privacy, safety, healthy development and overall well-being, and consequently calls for urgent judicial intervention to ensure that the digital environment does not become a domain where the statutory and constitutional protection accorded to children is rendered illusory, it said. The petition contended that despite strict penal provisions prohibiting the dissemination and storage of Child Sexual Exploitative and Abuse Material, internet platforms have failed to deploy automated content-filtering tools and age-verification mechanisms. The plea contended that platforms such as Facebook and Snapchat (India) permit users to create accounts from the age of 13, while Indian law treats persons below 18 as minors.

The PIL, filed through advocate-on-record Sakthom Meheshwari, sought directions to amend the Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules, 2021, or frame specific guidelines to ensure that no digital platform enters into a contract with a child below 18 without the consent of the parent or lawful guardian, subject to identity verification/e-KYC of the parent or guardian. "Issue a writ, order or direction, directing respondent to issue guideline/advisories to digital platform(s) including social media intermediaries mandating that, wherever a minor is permitted to access or use any digital platform(s), such access or use shall be subject to a legally recognised mechanism of parental or lawful guardian involvement, including verification/e-KYC of the identity and authority of the parent or guardian, commensurate with the nature and risk of the service," it said.

India pushes Global South priorities amid trade tensions



silience, Innovation, Cooperation and Sustainability', reflecting its vision of a people-centric approach rooted in the spirit of "humanity first".

In addition to these areas, the leaders will exchange views on strengthening intra-BRICS cooperation on common priorities and share perspectives on global and regional matters of mutual importance, according to the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA). Under India's chairship this year, over 350 meetings and high-level engagements have been held in more than 25 cities across the country to further strengthen the BRICS strategic partnership across three fundamental pillars: political and security, economic and financial, and cultural and people-to-people exchanges. India is a founding member of BRICS and has previously held its chairship in 2012, 2016 and 2021. India assumed its fourth BRICS chairship on January 1, 2026. According to the MEA, the summit will begin at 2:35 pm on Saturday with a closed-door session for BRICS member countries themed 'Inclusive Global Governance and Strengthening Multilateralism'. Following the session, leaders will tour the 'Bharat Innovates Exhibition', scheduled to open at 4:25 pm. At 5:05 pm, the leaders will assemble on the lawns of Bharat Mandapam — the summit venue — for a family photo, followed by a joint tree-planting ceremony. The first day's engagements will conclude with a gala dinner hosted by Prime Minister Narendra Modi at 7:30 pm. On Sunday, leaders from BRICS member states, partner nations and outreach invitees will arrive starting at 9:55 am, followed by an official group photo at 10:35 am. The opening session, titled 'Resilience, Innovation, Cooperation and Sustainability: Shaping the Future for Inclusive Global Growth', is scheduled to begin at 10:50 am, according to the schedule released by the MEA. The summit will culminate with the release of the New Delhi Declaration. Formalised at the 2006 UN General Assembly, BRIC held its first summit in Yekaterinburg, Russia, in 2009. The group expanded to BRICS after agreeing to admit South Africa during the 2010 UNGA Foreign Ministers' meeting, with South Africa joining its first summit in Sanya in 2011.

Rescue satellite closes in on NASA's doomed telescope Swift



GNS News Agency, Sept 11

Cape Canaveral (US): A private spacecraft that was supposed to supply a lifeline to NASA's Swift Observatory managed to get close to the sinking telescope and even snap photos more than a week after the rescue was abandoned. But the three-armed robotic salvager had to turn away because of low fuel, according to Katalyst Space Technologies, which attempted the daring operation. "We got so close, but so far," Katalyst CEO Ghonhee Lee told The Associated Press this week. Telescopes

Katalyst's Link spacecraft got within 15 kilometres (nine miles) of Swift last weekend, using its own sensors to gather data on the doomed telescope for NASA. The rescue effort had already been called off in August because of Link's own troubles in orbit, but the company wanted the practice for future satellite service calls. Link went into an uncontrollable spin soon after rocketing to Swift's rescue in July. Flight controllers managed to reduce the tumble and stabilise the spacecraft, using up precious fuel. In the end, there wasn't enough fuel remaining to boost the ageing Swift to a higher, longer-lasting orbit so it could continue observing the cosmos. Access Satellite Data Lee blamed Link's problems on the rush to get it flying. The mission was thrown together in just nine months, and engineers often had to

grab whatever was available instead of waiting for the preferred parts, he said. NASA paid the company USD 30 million to carry out the attempt, which was always going to be rushed. Both sides viewed it as an experiment with little to lose, although no one wanted a wreck that would unleash clouds of space debris. "Unfortunately, it wasn't the outcome that we were expecting," NASA Administrator Jared Isaacman said following Sunday's launch of the Roman Space Telescope. "But that's exactly the type of missions that we should be flying at NASA. We will learn from that." Explore Stargazing Apps

Isaacman said it makes sense to extend the life of a valuable spacecraft, especially if the cost to salvage it is less than to replace it. That's why the Roman telescope was designed to be refuelable even though it's headed toward an observation point 1 million miles (1.6 million kilometres) away. It's unlikely that Link has enough fuel left to attempt another close approach to Swift, according to Lee. But it can keep exercising its 3-foot (1-metre) arms and provide important data before it reenters and burns up in the atmosphere sometime in the next month, he said. Telescopes Launched in 2004, Swift has a little more time remaining in orbit, depending on how active the sun is. Intense solar storms of recent years are responsible for bringing the telescope down much sooner than expected. NASA anticipates Swift will plunge through the atmosphere sometime between October and year's end. The space agency resumed observations with the telescope last week after halting them early this year to save precious power. Like Swift, the Hubble Space Telescope's orbit also has been shortened by solar activity. Katalyst is developing a next-generation spacecraft that could boost the 36-year-old Hubble to a longer-lasting orbit. "Hubble does still have a few years of life yet, right? So the good news is this isn't imminent," Lee said. Servicing old telescopes and other satellites used to be "a very, very niche concept," he added, "and we believe it's going to become more and more commonplace."

Meta launches 'Muse Voice Transcribe' with native support for five Indian languages

GNS News Agency, Sept 11 New Delhi: US-based technology giant Meta has introduced its first real-time audio-perception model — Muse Voice Transcribe — which offers native support for five major Indian languages and advanced streaming features. Muse Voice Transcribe — developed by Meta Superintelligence Labs — delivers streaming transcription, speaker separation across over 20 voices in hour-plus recordings, native code-switching and diarisation from a single model with no post-processing step, the company said in a statement. Get Language Courses

Muse Voice Transcribe is trained across over 70 languages spoken in multiple countries with 25 validated at launch. "It ranks first on the Artificial Analysis streaming speech-to-text leaderboard as of September 1, 2026," the statement added. Available via the Meta Model API and already running dictation in Meta AI for Mac and Muse Code, Muse Voice Transcribe delivers real-time automatic speech recognition, diarisation with over 20 speakers and endpointing. Take Sociology Courses It is multilingual with seamless code-switching and improves accuracy with language, keyword, and context biasing. "The longer the model waits to predict, the more accurate the transcript, but the higher the latency. Muse Voice Transcribe has "adaptive delay," dynamically changing delay for each word based on difficulty," the statement noted. This is enabled with rein-



forcement learning (RL), where word error rate (WER) reward and a delay reward are combined multiplicatively. "Muse Voice Transcribe is an autoregressive multimodal model from the Muse Spark family," Meta said. It explained that the audio is processed in 80 ms chunks (12.5 Hz), each of which is transformed into a single soft token. At each audio chunk, the model decides to either continue listening to the next audio chunk or emit a text token. With adaptive delay, Muse Voice Transcribe achieves the Pareto front on speed-accuracy trade-off measured by time to final transcription, the company said.

IISc students sound alarm over workload, financial stress after 2 campus deaths

A survey conducted by the Indian Institute of Science (IISc) Students' Council following two student deaths, allegedly by suicide, in August has found widespread concern among students over academic pressure, financial stress and campus wellbeing, with a majority seeking more mental health support. The Indian Express emailed IISc for a response. They have yet to respond. One of the strongest findings related to governance: 88 per cent of the 1,035 respondents said students should have representation on the Wellness Committee, the body that oversees campus mental health support, signalling a strong desire among students to have a direct voice in shaping policies that affect them. Meanwhile, 69 per cent said a proposed weekly Students' Council initiative — informal gatherings dubbed 'Mondays for Mental Health' — would be helpful.

While 81 per cent of the respondents said making attendance and leave policies more student-friendly would help mental health outcomes, 80 per cent said they believed their financial situation was contributing to mental distress and more aid would be helpful. Improve environment, increase financial aid While 50 per cent of the respondents said that mandatory academic workload was causing "significant mental distress", 46 per cent pointed to disruptions in basic campus amenities as a significant contributing factor.

Asked to rank the most urgent needs for improving mental health on campus, students placed improving the work environment for students at the top, with 74 per cent support, followed by greater financial assistance and lower financial load (68 per cent), student-friendly attendance policy and academic workload (64 per cent), greater student participation in decision-making (54 per cent), and greater awareness, accessibility and transparency in mental health support (50 per cent). The survey showed that while 47 per cent of students said the psychiatric support available on campus is inadequate, an overwhelming 84 per cent said there should be more awareness and accessibility of the mental health support already on offer. Eighty-five per cent also favoured increasing reimbursement for students who seek mental health support from providers outside the campus. The survey was conducted after the deaths of 19-year-old BTech student Rakshan and 22-year-old second-year MTech student Gopal, on August 9 and 20, respectively.

'Fees hiked, students discouraged to meet' A researcher alleged that the IISc environment is one where the administration cracks down on students for speaking against policies. "Any student meeting or gathering requires permission from the Registrar, which just discourages students from meeting and discussing the issues we face freely... which is why we continue to suffer from academic workload, financial distress, toxic work environment and many such problems all alone in silence," the researcher said. "In such a setting, it's only inevitable that some of us



will eventually give up. And IISc administration fully understands that. Ceiling fans are removed, terraces are locked, and new hostel buildings are engineered with a conscious design of being suicide proof. "IISc has allegedly barred its students from speaking to the media without permission. "The IISc is not like how it used to be...

a vibrant campus which valued discussions and dissent. Given the packed schedule, these are very crucial to reduce the stress," a student who did not wish to be named said. Financial problems are also a major concern, a student said, pointing out how undergraduate fees have increased. "A student was spending about Rs 90,000 to complete a four-year course. Now, it has increased to Rs 5 lakh. If government institutions don't encourage education, what is the point?" the student asked.

Manoj Jarange Amruta Fadnavis dinner invite, Manoj Jarange-Patil, Amruta Fadnavis, Maratha quota protest, Kunbi certificates, Maratha reservation, Manoj Jarange hunger strike, Devendra Fadnavis, Eknath Shinde, Bhaubeej, Maharashtra Maratha agitation, Maratha quota, Indian Express news Jarange Patil has accused the government of failing to implement the assurances given during last year's agitation. (File Photo) Maratha quota activist Manoj Jarange-Patil Thursday turned down a dinner invitation from Amruta Fadnavis, the wife of Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis, saying he would accept it only on Bhaubeej as he remains focused on his 13-day hunger strike demanding Kunbi certificates for the Maratha community.

On Wednesday, Amruta Fadnavis said Manoj Jarange "is like a brother to me" and invited him for dinner. "A sister has offered the invite, hasn't she? We will definitely go. But

Amritpal outfit names more candidates: Deep Sidhu's brother, gangster-turned activist Lakha Sidhana



GNS News Agency, Sept 11 The Akali Dal Waris Punjab De (WPD) on Wednesday named gangster-turned activist Lakhbir Singh Sidhana aka Lakha Sidhana as the party candidate from the Maur Assembly constituency for the 2027 state elections. It also fielded Mandeep Singh Sidhu, the brother of the late actor Deep Sidhu, from Talwandi Sabo. The names were announced by Tarsem Singh, the father of jailed Khadoor Sahib MP Amritpal Singh, who also heads the Akali Dal (WPD). The announcements had been stuck for a long time as both leaders wanted to contest from Maur constituency. While Sidhana had unsuccessfully contested from the constituency Maur in the 2022 Assembly elections as a Samyukta Samaj Morcha candidate, it will be the maiden outing for Sidhu.

On his part, Sidhu had been camping in Maur, and his posters have already come up across the constituency. Party sources claimed that Sidhu was eventually convinced to contest from Talwandi Sabo because Sidhana had been working in the Maur constituency for the last five years. Furthermore, Amritpal Singh's family had supported Sidhana's candidature during the 2024 parliamentary elections too. Sidhu's candidature from Talwandi Sabo has also put an end to speculation that Amritpal himself wanted to contest from the seat.

The Akali dal (WPD) had earlier named Papalpreet Singh, a close associate of Amritpal Singh, from Majitha and named Satwant Singh, son of Kehar Singh who was

executed for his role in the assassination of former Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, as its candidate from Bassi Pathana. Sidhana had earlier courted controversy after being blamed for instigating the protesters leading to violence on Republic Day near the Red Fort during the farmers' agitation against the now repealed central farm laws in 2021. A native of Sidhana village in Punjab's Bathinda, he had denied the allegations. As per police, he had more than 25 criminal cases registered against him in Punjab, including on charges of murder, attempt to murder, kidnapping, and under Arms Act. A humanities graduate from Punjabi University, Patiala, Sidhana claims to have quit the crime world for social work. He had joined the People's Party of Punjab in 2011 before quitting it in 2013, but not before it gave him political visibility. Since then he has remained actively involved in social work, including arranging mass marriages of poor girls.

In 2017, he had hit the headlines for allegedly defacing English signages demanding that they be written in Punjabi. He was arrested and sent to Faridkot Modern Jail from where he did a live session on Facebook appealing farmers not to burn paddy stubble. Sidhu, a practising lawyer who hails from Udaykaran village in Muktsar district, was earlier pitched as a candidate for bypolls to Gidderbaha Assembly constituency in 2024. His name was propped up by Faridkot MP Sarabjeet Singh Khalsa had announced candidature after the bypoll was necessitated following after sitting MLA Amarinder Singh Raja Warring won the Ludhiana Lok Sabha seat. Sidhu had started meeting people in the villages of the constituency before eventually backing out to avoid split in Panthic votes. His brother and actor Deep Sidhu had founded Waris Punjab De on September 30, 2021, which was later taken over by Amritpal Singh. At the time, Sidhu had said he and his group cannot align with Amritpal "at any cost". "My brother had launched Waris Punjab De with another ideology... not the one he (Amritpal) is now taking it to. Deep had clearly said that talks are the (only) way but Amritpal is clearly asking youths to pick up weapon. He is misusing Deep's name and portraying him as a separatist," Sidhu had said.

Who are the Sikh businessmen defending RSS chief's visit to London gurdwara

The visit of Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) chief Mohan Bhagwat to the Khalsa Jatha British Isles Gurdwara in central London on September 6 has sparked a debate among sections of the Sikh community, particularly over his presence at the shrine and the two Sikh businessmen who accompanied him. The two, UK-based businessman and philanthropist Peter Virdee and Rajya Sabha MP and entrepreneur Vikramjeet Singh Sahney, have since defended the visit, arguing that a gurdwara is open to everyone and that welcoming a visitor should not be interpreted as an endorsement of his organisation or ideology.

Who is Peter Virdee?

Born Hardip Singh Virdee on December 6, 1973, in Birmingham, Peter Virdee is a British-Sikh businessman, property developer and philanthropist. He built his business interests primarily through B&S Property, an asset management firm involved in high-value property developments. His interests have also extended to renewable energy through PV Energy Ltd, international minerals trading through 3VI Ltd and insurance brokerage. Virdee has also been a prominent political donor in Britain, contributing to both the Conservative and Labour parties. He was the first Sikh to serve on the board of the English National Opera and founded the Virdee Foundation, which supports initiatives involving vulnerable children, disaster relief and healthcare, including cancer-screening camps in Punjab.

His public profile, however, has also remained controversial too. Virdee was convicted in Germany in a €125-million carbon-credit VAT fraud case between 2008 and 2012. After being arrested in London in 2017 and extradited to Germany, he was sentenced by a Frankfurt court to 39 months in prison in 2021. In May 2024, Britain's National Crime Agency charged him in a separate foreign-bribery case.

Who is Vikramjeet Singh Sahney?

A Padma Shri awardee, Vikramjeet Singh Sahney is an Indian entrepreneur, educationist, philanthropist and politician. He is chairman of Sun International Limited, whose business interests span international trading in fertilisers, commodities and chemicals, with operations across regions including the Middle East, Africa and Europe. Sahney is also the International President of the World Punjabi Organisation, which works to strengthen social, economic and cultural ties among Punjabis across more than 20 countries. His philanthropic work has included efforts to evacuate and rehabilitate Afghan Hindus and Sikhs following the Taliban takeover. He organised three chartered flights that brought more than 500 people out of Afghanistan and helped provide education and rehabilitation support to their children. Through the Sun Foundation, he has also worked on skill development programmes for disabled and underprivileged youth. During the Covid-19 pandemic, his initiatives included mobile testing clinics, distribution of oxygen cylinders and large-scale langar services. His contributions have also been recognised by the Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak



Committee, which conferred on him the Anmol Sikh Rattan Award. Sahney is currently a Rajya Sabha member from Punjab. He was elected to the Upper House as an Aam Aadmi Party nominee but later joined the Bharatiya Janata Party along with other parliamentarians earlier this year.

What did they say about Bhagwat's visit?

Sahney defended Bhagwat's presence at the gurdwara, saying he was there "as a devotee". According to Sahney, Bhagwat offered a Rumala Sahib, prayed before Guru Granth Sahib and partook of Karah Prasad. He said he was "deeply anguished by the outrage expressed by a small section" over the visit. Sahney also drew a comparison with Congress leader Rahul Gandhi's visits to Sri Darbar Sahib, arguing that Sikh institutions have historically received politicians despite controversies surrounding their political organisations. He further said the RSS had recognised Sikhism as a distinct religion and pointed to a statement Bhagwat made in Ludhiana in February reiterating that position. Virdee, who accompanied Bhagwat to the London gurdwara, also defended the visit. "The Guru's door is open to all," he said, arguing that no social media group had the authority to decide who could enter a gurdwara. He described Bhagwat's visit as an act of paying respects before Guru Granth Sahib and stressed that "hospitality is not endorsement, and dialogue is not surrender". Virdee also criticised what he called "pop up organisations and self-appointed 'Sikh police'", accusing some critics of using personal abuse and confrontational tactics.

Why is the RSS's relationship with Sikh institutions contentious?

The controversy can be traced back to the tensions between sections of the Sikh religious leadership and the RSS and its Sikh wing — the Rashtriya Sikh Sangat. In July 2004, the Akal Takht issued a directive asking Sikhs to remain cautious about the activities of the RSS and Rashtriya Sikh Sangat. The directive came amid concerns over the organisations' involvement in programmes marking the 400th anniversary of the first installation of Guru Granth Sahib. The broader disagreement has centred on questions of Sikh identity and the RSS's understanding of the relationship between Sikhism and Hinduism — an issue that has remained politically and religiously sensitive.

On Amruta Fadnavis's dinner invite, Jarange Patil's 'battlefield' response

while a brother is out on the battlefield leading a protest, a sister shouldn't invite him for dinner," Jarange told reporters in Antarwali-Sarati. "One shouldn't get distracted during a hunt. A sister should think about this carefully. I will come over for dinner on Bhaubeej (a traditional festival celebrating the brother-sister bond). Sister should invite us for Bhaubeej, and we will visit bringing a traditional saree-choli gift," he said, referring to a festival celebrating the bond between a brother and sister. Her offer has come at a time when the activist has been attacking Fadnavis, Deputy Chief Minister Eknath Shinde, and ministers like Radhakrishna Vikhe-Patil, Sanjay Shirsat, and Uday Samant, holding them responsible for ruining the lives of the Maratha community members. "Earlier, I used respectful language. For three years, I spoke positively about Eknath Shinde. Now, people are speaking on behalf of their political parties rather than their caste and community. My relationship with Eknath

Shinde deteriorated because of Minister Sanjay Shirsat," he said. "Words are chosen based on a person's behaviour. Hence, such language is necessary. Both the chief minister and deputy chief minister have made a mistake. Therefore, I will speak out—I will stand with my community, not with any party." Jarange has already said that no government delegation will visit Antarwali-Sarati. Meanwhile, the Shiv Sena condemned Jarange over his criticism of Shinde. "Manoj Jarange using singular, informal language for Eknath Shinde has not gone down well with anyone in the Maratha community. As supporters of Shinde Sahab, we certainly do not appreciate it. Over the past two days, young Marathas have called and messaged, expressing that the political turn the Maratha agitation is taking due to direct personal attacks on Eknath Shinde is incorrect," Sena Minister Shambhuraj Desai said. "As part of the administration,

Gujarat collects DNA samples of relatives to trace missing persons



GNS News Agency, Sept 11

DNA testingFor relatives in Gujarat, DNA profiling is being undertaken through six designated laboratories in Gandhinagar, Ahmedabad, Surat, Vadodara, Junagadh and Rajkot. The search for people from Gujarat who remain missing after the devastating floods in Nepal has entered a forensic identification phase, with the state government initiating DNA profiling of relatives to establish whether recovered remains belong to those yet to be traced.

The Gujarat government said on Thursday that relatives of 29 of the 30 people from the state who are still missing have provided DNA samples to aid the identification process. For relatives in Gujarat, DNA profiling is being undertaken through six designated laboratories in Gandhinagar, Ahmedabad, Surat, Vadodara, Junagadh and Rajkot, where samples of first-degree relatives will be collected and profiled under the Central Government guidelines. The profiling is being undertaken free of cost in accordance with directions issued by Union Home Minister Amit Shah. Officials are now expected to compare DNA profiles provided by the relatives with samples obtained from remains recovered from the Nepal disaster zone. The process could help authorities establish the identities of those who remain unaccounted for. A list of missing and untraceable persons compiled by the state agencies has been shared with the Government of Nepal, while Gujarat is co-ordinating with the Centre and consular authorities in Nepal, the statement said. The 30 missing or uncontactable people include Non-Resident Gujaratis, with several of those having travelled to Nepal for the Kailash Mansarovar Yatra through different routes and travel agencies. People from Ahmedabad, Anand, Banaskantha, Kheda, Gandhinagar, Surat, Valsad, Rajkot and other parts of Gujarat are among those whose whereabouts remain unknown, the government stated. The DNA exercise is aimed at establishing the

identity of bodies recovered after the flash floods, particularly along the Nepal-Tibet border and the Bhote Koshi River corridor. Nepal has launched a DNA profiling exercise as conventional methods of identification become difficult when remains cannot be readily identified. With samples from 29 families now available, authorities will work to match the genetic profiles and determine whether any of the recovered remains belong to people from Gujarat who have been reported missing. The Gujarat government said, "Under the guidance and leadership of Chief Minister Bhupendra Patel, the State Government has ensured that all necessary assistance and support are extended to the families and kin of missing persons in Gujarat and abroad..." The Gujarat State Non-Resident Gujaratis' Foundation (NRGF), under the NRI Division of the General Administration Department, is coordinating the collection of DNA samples from the relatives of missing people and assisting families with the procedures required for identification.

The coordination has also extended beyond India's borders. NRGF has been in touch with relatives of missing persons living in New Zealand, the United States, Canada and African countries, seeking information about samples collected by authorities in those countries and the progress of identification. In several cases, relatives living abroad have already provided DNA samples to local authorities. NRGF is maintaining contact with the families and coordinating the information needed to link those samples with the identification exercise being carried out in Nepal, the release said.

The National Forensic Sciences University (NFSU), Gandhinagar, is coordinating with the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) on the profiling of samples collected in India and their linkage with the identification process in Nepal. The DNA profiling reports are being sent directly by the respective laboratories to the Government of Nepal through the official email addresses and contact numbers notified by the Nepalese government. Samples of relatives living abroad have been collected through the authorities in their respective countries. The exercise is part of a wider effort involving the State Emergency Operations Centre (SEOC), district administrations and NRGF. The flash flood that struck the Bhote Koshi River area on August 26 caused hundreds of deaths, displaced thousands and left extensive damage in its wake, according to the Gujarat government. The disaster has left families across several countries waiting for confirmation about relatives who remain unaccounted for. For Gujarat, the experience has brought back memories of the June 2025 Air India crash in Ahmedabad, in which DNA testing became central to identifying 260 victims when conventional methods provide insufficient.

Mumbai's monorail was ready to return. Why has its comeback been delayed?



GNS News Agency, Sept 11

Mumbai's long-awaited monorail comeback has hit another hurdle. Despite the new rakes securing the required safety clearances, the 17-km corridor may not reopen until December or even later. The Maha Mumbai Metro Operation Corporation Limited (MMMOCL), which operates the monorail, is now examining the installation of protective safety nets between the guideways and a fresh emergency evacuation plan before allowing the services to resume. The concern is the open-to-sky gap between the elevated guideways. Officials fear that even a small loose object or a part from a moving rake, as minor as a screw, could fall from the elevated structure and pose a risk to people, vehicles, or structures below. "The MMOCL is evaluating covering up the open-to-sky gap between the guideways, perhaps

with a safety net. This will take another three to four months," an official said. The move stems from an old railway safety principle that elevated railway tracks should be protected from below. The authority is now assessing whether such a covering can be installed without adding excessive load to the monorail's pillars. It is also examining whether the gaps need to be covered along the entire 17-km stretch or only at vulnerable locations.

The evacuation problemEvacuation of passengers if a monorail gets stranded between stations is also a concern, which gained urgency after the August 2025 incident when a rake stopped between stations due to overloading, trapping passengers for nearly two hours. They were finally evacuated by breaking the glass. Officials now want to ensure there is a workable evacuation mechanism if a similar incident occurs. They have sought recommendations from IIT-Bombay and Medha Servo Drives, which supplied the new rakes. IIT-B has advised against constructing a permanent walkway along the guideways, saying that additional structures could compromise the existing structure. The evacuation challenge is particularly complicated in congested areas and in areas over nallahs. In less complicated situations, stranded rakes are generally pulled towards a station using another rake. The safety reviews for now mean the monorail's much-awaited return is slipping further away, with the officials looking at Diwali or December-end as a possible window. The restart could be pushed beyond that if the safety measures take longer.

US Department of Homeland Security poster sparks racism row



An AI-generated poster shared by the US Department of Homeland Security (DHS) has drawn widespread criticism for using the phrase "Get off our roads; you don't know how to drive, Mr Singh," with critics accusing the agency of racial stereotyping against Indian and Sikh communities.

sikh posterThe US Department of Homeland Security poster also carried the campaign slogan "Self-deport or find out" and urged the public to report "illegal aliens on American roads." An AI-generated poster shared by the US Department of Homeland Security (DHS) has drawn widespread criticism for using the phrase "Get off our roads; you don't know how to drive, Mr Singh," with critics accusing the agency of racial stereotyping against Indian and Sikh communities. The graphic, posted on the official DHS X account on September 9, was styled as a parody of the Transformers movie franchise under the title 'Transformers: Age of Deportations'. It depicted Optimus Prime, bearing a DHS insignia, confronting a brown-skinned, bearded man wearing a head covering. The accompanying text read: "America for Americans. Get off our roads; you don't know how to drive, Mr Singh." It also carried the campaign slogan "Self-deport or find out" and urged the public to report "illegal aliens on American roads."

The poster forms part of the Trump administration's intensified immigration enforcement drive, which encourages undocumented immigrants to leave the country voluntarily. DHS has framed the messaging around concerns over commercial drivers, referencing recent fatal crashes in which some Indian-origin truck drivers were involved. The use of the surname "Singh" has triggered strong backlash as Sikh and Punjabi Americans form a substantial part of the US trucking industry. Advocacy groups argued that the poster unfairly targets an entire community rather than specific individuals involved in violations. The Hindu American Foundation condemned the post as "racist, un-American, anti-Indian profiling/trolling," stating: "Singhs are Hindu, they are Sikhs, they are American and they drive." The Sikh Coalition also criticised it, noting that millions of Sikhs in the United States carry the surname and have long contributed to the country. Michigan Democratic leader Ranjeev Puri and Fox 7 anchor Alec Nolan described the messaging as demeaning and highlighted personal and family histories of service and trucking work.

She raised her brother's children as her own. He killed her for Rs 50 lakh in Delhi's Burari



GNS News Agency, Sept 11

Anjani was at her sister-in-law Anita's house in a slum cluster in North Delhi's Burari, massaging her feet on a weathered bed that creaked as she moved. The two women never liked each other. Anjani, 44, was married to Anita's brother Kamal Kumar — a second marriage for both. Kamal, 51, would normally avoid visiting his sister with his wife. But that night, he had asked Anjani to come along. Anita's husband Girdhari Lal was also home.

"We made small talk, and Kamal asked his wife to massage Anita's feet. After some time, I went to our room upstairs and slept. They were still talking when I left," Girdhari Lal, Anita's husband, told the police. Around 5 am the next day, Girdhari Lal came downstairs to turn on the water motor and found the main gate open. He went into the ground-floor room to tell Anita off — and found her dead, her throat slit. He ran outside for help. Girdhari, however, found himself in police custody. A PCR call had been made saying that a man had killed his wife. But police found no murder weapon on him or around the house. During questioning, Girdhari told them that the last person he had seen with Anita was her brother.

Within hours, the investigation had taken a different turn: police were now looking at Kamal. They picked him for questioning and he admitted to the crime — he killed his sister for money and tried to make her husband look like the killer. Last month, nearly nine years later, police caught one of his accomplices in Bihar. A second marriage changes family dynamic. Anita, 45, worked as a house help. Girdhari was a mason. The couple had no children. But she was deeply attached to Kamal's two sons with his first wife, also named Anita, who died in 2015. "When Kamal's first wife fell sick, it was Anita who cared for them. The children treated her no less than their own mother," said an officer who investigated the case. Anita even willed her savings and assets on Kamal and his eldest son, Surya Kant. Her second house in the same locality was to go to Surya Kant after her death. Kamal was also the nominee on insurance policies taken by Anita and Girdhari around 2016, each worth Rs 50 lakh. However, things started to sour when Kamal married Anjani. "Anjani, who had three children — two girls and a boy in their teens — from her first marriage, was working as a house help to sustain herself when she met Kamal," said a senior police officer. Her arrival led to fights between the sisters-in-law. Anita kept asking Kamal to leave Anjani, but he could not do so. Police said Kamal eventually had enough.

He later told police: "My sister didn't like my wife. So I had to shift to a different house in the neighbourhood with Anjani and the children. Her two brothers, Chandan and Kundan (in their late 30s), also came to live with us." The move eased some of the tension. The women visited each

other when someone fell sick or on birthdays, maintaining what police described as a level of "decency". Kamal was increasingly surrounded by Anjani's family. She had brought her brothers to Delhi from their hometown in Bihar's Samastipur, where jobs were scarce, about two years earlier. Chandan became a chief mason, while Kundan worked at construction sites. Police said Anjani's father, who worked as a guard in South Delhi, also visited the family. Kamal had been running his 'clinic' near Azadpur Mandi for nearly two decades. Police described him as a "Jhola chap (fake)" doctor and said he had only studied till Class 10 in Patna. By 2017, the clinic was not doing well. He had five children to support and, according to his statement to police, around Rs 12 lakh in debt. "I didn't have any money to pay for it. I was taking more loans, and it was all just piling up," Kamal told the police. Then he began thinking about the Rs 50 lakh insurance cover on his sister.

Kamal told police he realised the money could solve his problems — but that he needed Anita dead, and he could not do it alone. Police said he told Chandan and Kundan about the insurance policies and promised them Rs 2 lakh each if they helped him. Kamal's alleged plan, police said, was to kill Anita and blame her husband as they fought a lot. This way, he would get the insurance money and their house. On August 20, police said Kamal heard Anita and Girdhari fighting and set his plan in motion. He went to Azadpur Mandi and bought an iron knife for Rs 100, according to his statement.

Burari murder case In August 2026, a Crime Branch team received a tip-off about a man accused in a murder case in Burari. He turned out to be Chandan. (Express photo) The next evening, Kamal went to Anita's house with his wife. After some time, he asked Anjani to leave, saying he wanted to speak to his sister about something personal. Later that night, Chandan and Kundan arrived. "The three then held Anita down and slit her throat," a police officer said. "During investigation, it was revealed that accused Kamal Kumar, in conspiracy with his two brothers-in-law, Chandan and Kundan, murdered his sister Anita," said DCP Sanjeev Yadav. While Kamal was arrested, Chandan and Kundan were long gone after the crime. Police, at that time, couldn't trace the duo. About a decade later, in August 2026, a Crime Branch team comprising Inspector Robin Tyagi and Head Constable Mintu Yadav received a tip-off about a man accused in a murder case in Burari. They were also told the man had almost been caught in Bihar last year but escaped while being brought to Delhi, despite having both hands cuffed.

Police dug further and realised the man was Chandan. They traced him to Lakhisrai, Bihar. "On the night of May 28, we reached his house," an officer said. The house had a boundary wall nearly 20 feet high, topped with four-foot slanting slopes. Chandan, wary after his earlier escape, had made the house difficult to enter. "We had to stand on top of each other, like you do during Dahi handi. Then one of us reached the top, climbed over the slope and entered the compound," said a police officer. The team covered the front and back entrances before barging into the house. Chandan was inside with his wife, two children and mother. He was arrested. "He hid in different places in Bihar and worked as a labourer to evade arrest. He said in 2018, Kundan was found dead near the railway station in their village," said DCP Yadav. "No one saw his body apart from Chandan. He couldn't even tell where he performed his last rites," said a police officer.

IISc students sound alarm over workload, financial stress after 2 campus deaths



IISc Students Council surveyWhile 50 per cent of the respondents to the survey said academic workload was causing mental distress, 46 per cent pointed to disruptions in basic amenities as a contributing factor. (Image generated using AI) A survey conducted by the Indian Institute of Science (IISc) Students' Council following two student deaths, allegedly by suicide, in August has found widespread concern among students over academic pressure, financial stress and campus wellbeing, with a majority seeking more mental health support. The Indian Express emailed IISc for a response. They have yet to respond. One of the strongest findings related to governance: 88 per cent of the 1,035 respondents said students should have representation on the Wellness Committee, the body that oversees campus mental health support, signalling a strong desire among students to have a direct voice in shaping policies that affect them. Meanwhile, 69 per cent said a proposed weekly Students' Council initiative—informal gatherings dubbed 'Mondays for Mental Health'—would be helpful. While 81 per cent of the respondents said making attendance and leave policies more student-friendly would help mental health outcomes, 80 per cent said they believed their financial situation was contributing to mental distress and more aid would be helpful.

Improve environment, increase financial aidWhile 50 per cent of the respondents said that mandatory academic workload was causing "significant mental distress", 46 per cent pointed to disruptions in basic campus amenities as a significant contributing factor. Asked to rank the most urgent needs for improving mental health on campus, students placed improving the work environment for students at the top, with 74 per cent support, followed by greater financial assistance and lower financial load (68 per cent), student-friendly attendance policy and academic workload (64 per cent), greater student participation in decision-making (54 per cent), and greater awareness, accessibility and transparency in mental health support (50 per cent). The survey showed that while 47 per cent of students said the psychiatric support available on campus is inadequate, an overwhelming 84 per cent said there should be more awareness and accessibility of the mental health support already on offer. Eighty-five per cent also favoured increasing reimbursement for students who seek mental health support from providers outside the campus. The survey was conducted after the deaths of 19-year-old BTech student Rakshan and 22-year-old second-year MTech student Gopal, on August 9 and 20, respectively. "Fees hiked, stu-

dents discouraged to meet" A researcher alleged that the IISc environment is one where the administration cracks down on students for speaking against policies. "Any student meeting or gathering requires permission from the Registrar, which just discourages students from meeting and discussing the issues we face freely... which is why we continue to suffer from academic workload, financial distress, toxic work environment and many such problems all alone in silence," the researcher said. "In such a setting, it's only inevitable that some of us will eventually give up. And IISc administration fully understands that. Ceiling fans are removed, terraces are locked, and new hostel buildings are engineered with a conscious design of being suicide proof." IISc has allegedly barred its students from speaking to the media without permission. "The IISc is not like how it used to be... a vibrant campus which valued discussions and dissent. Given the packed schedule, these are very crucial to reduce the stress," a student who did not wish to be named said. Financial problems are also a major concern, a student said, pointing out how undergraduate fees have increased. "A student was spending about Rs 90,000 to complete a four-year course. Now, it has increased to Rs 5 lakh. If government institutions don't encourage education, what is the point?" the student asked.

TGSRTC bus crashes into petrol bunk in Abdullapurmet, no casualties

Hyderabad: A TGSRTC bus created panic at Batasingaram in Abdullapurmet on the city outskirts after it veered off the road and crashed into a petrol bunk while reportedly trying to avoid an auto-rickshaw on Thursday. The bus, belonging to the Dilsukhnagar depot, was on its way to Choutuppal when the accident occurred around 11



am. According to preliminary information, the driver lost control of the bus, reportedly due to overspeeding, causing it to enter the petrol bunk. A car parked at the premises was completely damaged, while another vehicle was also hit. The bus further crashed into the diesel dispensing area, damaging equipment at the pump. Fortunately, no casualties were reported. However, petrol bunk staff and customers present at the spot panicked and ran for safety following the sudden crash. The CCTV cameras at the premises captured the incident. The Abdullapurmet Police are investigating the circumstances that led to the accident.

Trump says Iran war to end after US midterm vote, Houthis close in on key Strait, sources say



CAIRO/WASHINGTON/DUBAI,GNS News Agency, Sept 11 President Donald Trump said he expected the war with Iran to end after the November U.S. midterm elections and threatened again to attack a site ?associated with the Islamic Republic's nuclear programme after the two sides launched their biggest wave of attacks on shipping since the start of the six-month-old war.Tensions in the region were high, ?with Saudi civil defence authorities on Thursday issuing emergency alerts in the southwestern city of Khamis Mushait for the fourth time in 24 hours, as clashes flared with Yemen's Iran-backed Houthis.

The Reuters Iran Briefing newsletter keeps you informed with the latest developments and analysis of the Iran war. Sign up here.The Houthis were edging closer on Thursday to gaining more leverage over the Bab el-Mandeb Strait, the southern outlet of the Red Sea and one of the world's most important routes for shipping, four Yemeni government military sources said.Brent crude prices hovered above \$100 a barrel as supply routes through both the Strait of Hormuz ?and the Red Sea remained heavily disrupted.Iran said it had attacked 10 ships near the waterway on Wednesday after the U.S. sank five Iranian oil tankers, the latest in a series of ?tit-for-tat strikes that have signalled scant chance of an imminent end to hostilities.

DEADLINES TO END WARThe war and subsequent increase in fuel prices have helped drive Trump's ?popularity to record lows. The president said Tehran was trying to influence the November U.S. midterm elections, which will determine whether his Republican Party retains control of Congress."I think war is going to end immediately ?after the election because they can't hold out any longer. They're desperate to try and affect the election," Trump told reporters on Wednesday.Trump has previously set deadlines for the war to end.The Wall Street Journal reported ?later that top White House advisers, including Vice President JD Vance and Secretary of State Marco Rubio, have privately warned Trump that the conflict could extend through the remainder of his presidency, which ends in January 2029. Reuters could not immediately verify the report.Trump also

said the U.S. may hit Iran's Pickaxe Mountain, a heavily fortified site that hosts two deeply buried tunnel complexes near Iran's damaged Natanz uranium enrichment facility."We notice there's a little activity at Pickaxe. I would advise Iran not ?to get cute because we will have to hit them very hard," Trump said in a speech at the midterm Republican convention. Trump has been threatening strikes on Pickaxe Mountain since at least mid-July.The U.S. ?and Israel launched military strikes on Iran in February partly due to concerns over Tehran's nuclear programme.In recent weeks Washington had cited increasing success guiding tankers through the Strait of Hormuz, ?which carried ?about a fifth of global oil supplies before the war. But a resumption of fighting this month appears to have set back any such gradual reopening. Just seven vessels transited the strait on Wednesday, half the 10-day average, preliminary ship-tracking data showed on Thursday.RED SEA CLASHES

Fighting between Saudi Arabia and the Houthis in Yemen has also escalated in the past few days, a second theatre of war that threatens global energy supplies from the Middle East.Houthi militants have taken control of the Yemeni Red Sea city of Mocha and are launching attacks on the strategic Red Sea islands of Hanish, the Yemeni sources told Reuters on Thursday.Government forces and their ?allies are relocating south to Dhubab, which sits directly ?on the strait, across from the island of ?Perim. Control of Dhubab and the island is key to gaining hold of the strait, they said.Bab el-Mandeb, or the Gate of Tears, named for its perilous navigation conditions, lies between Yemen on the Arabian Peninsula and Djibouti and Eritrea on the African coast, making it a major prize for the Houthis, who control ?Yemen's most populous areas and much of the north.It is one of the world's most important routes for crude oil and fuel from the Gulf ?bound for the Mediterranean via ?the Suez Canal or the SUMED pipeline on Egypt's Red Sea coast, as well as commodities bound for Asia, including Russian oil.

Blocking the narrow passage would isolate Gulf oil-producing countries such as energy superpower Saudi Arabia from their main shipping routes after Iran effectively closed the Strait of Hormuz — the primary maritime energy artery between Asia and Europe.Earlier this week, at least 73 people were wounded in four southern Saudi cities, including Khamis Mushait, in recent ?Houthi strikes on ?the world's largest oil exporter.The militant group said it attacked an air base in the southwestern city of Khamis Mushait and ?oil infrastructure in nearby cities in one of the biggest attacks on Saudi Arabia since the start of the U.S.-Israeli war on Iran in February.Saudi civil defence authorities issued an all-clear on Thursday following another emergency alert declared in Khamis Mushait.

Pakistan warns Iran to rein in Houthis as Riyadh strikes back



ANKARA, GNS News Agency, Sept 11Pakistan has delivered a Saudi warning to Iran to rein in its Yemeni Houthi allies after they stepped up attacks on the kingdom, ?in a coordinated effort to prevent the crisis from spiralling, Saudi, Pakistani and Iranian sources said.The Houthis struck an airbase in Khamis Mushait and oil infrastructure in nearby cities ?on Tuesday, wounding 73 people, in one of the biggest attacks on Saudi Arabia since the start of the U.S.-Israeli war on Iran in February.Make sense of global markets with the Trading Day newsletter. Sign up here.Houthi military spokesman Yahya Saree said on Wednesday that Saudi warplanes carried out 54 airstrikes across various Yemeni provinces over the past 12 hours, adding that they would "not go unanswered and unpunished".

The escalating conflict, which represents a second theatre of war to threaten global energy supplies, comes as Iran and the United States wage their ?biggest declared wave of tit-for-tat attacks on shipping in the Gulf region since their war began.Pakistan's warning to Iran carries significant weight because of its defence pact with Saudi Arabia and ?Turkey.While officials in Islamabad stressed any military role would be confined to defending Saudi territory, Pakistani Defence Minister Khawaja Asif said attacks spilling into the ?kingdom could trigger a joint security arrangement involving Riyadh, Ankara and Islamabad."An aggression on one country will be considered an aggression on all three countries," Asif said on Pakistani TV."There is no ambiguity or ?doubt... Unprovoked aggression or spillover... into Saudi Arabia will definitely make this agreement operational."The Pakistani defence ministry, foreign ministry and the military did not respond to a Reuters request for comment.Pakistan's intervention, after years of balancing ties with Saudi Arabia and Iran, has underscored the seriousness of the Houthi attacks. The message to Tehran is clear: rein in the Houthis or risk turning a proxy conflict into a broader regional security crisis, the sources said.

A senior regional diplomat said Pakistan had conveyed the message to Iran over the past 24 hours, urging Tehran to use its influence to halt Houthi attacks on Saudi ?Arabia.A senior Iranian official confirmed that Pakistan conveyed the message to Tehran on Tuesday and Tehran's response was that "Iran does not control the Houthis".Item 1 of 5 Members of the Saudi-backed Yemeni government forces clash with Yemen's Iran-aligned Houthis, according to the Yemeni government forces, in a location given as near Al-Hazm, Yemen, in this screen grab obtained from a handout video released September 9, 2026. Media Centre Of The Yemeni Armed Forces/Handout via REUTERS

[1/5]Members of the Saudi-backed Yemeni government forces clash with Yemen's Iran-aligned Houthis, according to the Yemeni government forces, in a location given as near Al-Hazm, Yemen, in this screen grab obtained from a handout video released September 9, 2026. Media Centre Of The Yemeni Armed... Purchase Licensing Rights, opens new tab Read moreHowever, two Iranian sources said Tehran had told the Houthis last ?week to carry out attacks on Saudi Arabia. Tehran promised additional funding and weapons, they said, while several Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps commanders had travelled to Yemen to help coordinate the attacks.The regional diplomat said

Four killed as Pakistani forces shell Balochistan homes



Quetta: At least four people, including children, were killed and several others injured after Pakistan's Frontier Corps (FC) personnel shelled homes in Kardigap tehsil of Balochistan's Mastung district, local media reported.Citing sources, The Balochistan Post reported that FC personnel carried out heavy and indiscriminate shelling in Kardigap on Tuesday evening, with multiple shells hitting residential homes. The report suggests that several shells hit the residence of a civilian, Abdul Jaleel Sarparah, killing his mother and two girls at the scene and leaving several others injured.

One of the injured, the six-year-old girl, was rushed to Quetta in critical condition but later died of her injuries at a hospital, taking the death toll from the incident to four. The

India, France step up space cooperation with new private-sector deals

Paris: India and France are stepping up cooperation in the space sector, with companies from the two countries signing three new agreements covering satellite launches, space surveillance and microsatellite technology, according to an official announcement.The agreements, announced at the International Space Summit in Paris, include contracts worth more than 5 million euros between France's Safran Space and India's Dhruva Space for technologies to be used in India's planned 52-satellite space-surveillance constellation.The new agreements come against the backdrop of more than five decades of space cooperation between India and France, built around the partnership between the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) and France's space agency CNES.The first edition of the International Space Summit is being held from September 9-10, bringing together governments, companies, space agencies and scientists.The summit featured 51 announcements representing about 20 billion euros in contracts, investments and other commitments.Safran Space signed contracts worth more than 5 million euros with Indian space company Dhruva Space to supply communication systems, inertial navigation units, optical payloads and ground stations for India's planned SBS-III space-surveillance constellation.The constellation is envisaged to deploy 52 satellites between 2027 and 2030, according to the announcement.

The partnership is aimed at supporting India's sovereign space capabilities and marks a further expansion of cooperation between French industry and India's growing New Space sector.The deal also builds on Safran's longstanding involvement in India's space programme, including its contribution to the Chandrayaan-III lunar mission and the expansion of its industrial presence in the country.In another major deal, French launch-services provider RIDE! has signed an agreement to launch two satellites for TakeMeToSpace, an Indian company described as the country's first designer of orbital data centres.

The agreement builds on several years of cooperation between RIDE! and Indian space companies, including the recent integration, launch and return of a European atmospheric re-entry capsule aboard India's Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle (PSLV), according to the summit announcements.Separately, French space company U-Space and Indian firm AXISCADES have signed a com-

incident was followed by an indefinite protest sit-in, with residents placing the bodies of those killed on the Quetta-Nushki highway and bringing traffic to a standstill. This attack comes amid escalating military activity in Mastung and a series of aerial and drone strikes by Pakistani forces, resulting in civilian deaths and injuries.Earlier on Sunday, as many as three people, including a child, were injured in a drone strike carried out by Pakistani forces in the Khadkocha area of Mastung, local media reported, citing sources.

The strike hit the Garro area of Khadkocha, following which the injured were transferred to Nawab Ghaus Bakhsh Raisani Hospital for medical treatment. The intensifying "security measures" have sparked concern among local communities and rights organisations over their humanitarian consequences.Additionally, the recovery of at least six unidentified bodies from two locations in Mastung on Sunday raised fears that they may belong to Baloch youths who had earlier been forcibly disappeared by Pakistani forces, said a leading human rights organisation.Expressing grave concern over the incident, the BVJ said that "innocent civilians, particularly young people, are allegedly being forcibly disappeared from their homes, educational institutions, and public roads in Balochistan and taken to secret detention facilities, where they are subjected to severe torture."The rights body further alleged that many forcibly disappeared persons are killed in custody and that attempts are subsequently made to portray their deaths as the result of staged encounters.



mercial cooperation agreement to explore India's microsatellite market and address growing commercial and institutional demand.The partnership will follow a phased roadmap under India's "Make in India" policy, combining French space technology with India's industrial integration capabilities.Cooperation between India and France in the space sector has expanded over the years to areas including Earth observation, space geodesy, human spaceflight, next-generation launch-vehicle technologies and planetary exploration, according to the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA).

India and France have also established a Strategic Space Dialogue covering civil and defence space cooperation. The first such dialogue was held in Paris in June 2023, while the second was held in New Delhi in March 2024, according to the MEA.ISRO and CNES have concluded agreements covering future launch-vehicle technologies, the joint TRISHNA Earth-observation mission, maritime domain awareness and space situational awareness.Indian and French launch-service companies have also worked together for several years. India's PSLV has launched French satellites commercially, while France's Arianespace has provided launch services for Indian geostationary satellites.During French President Emmanuel Macron's visit to India in February, the two sides further backed cooperation in civil satellite development and human spaceflight programmes.The latest commercial agreements therefore add another layer to a long-running India-France space partnership that is increasingly extending from government-led programmes to private-sector technology, manufacturing and commercial space activities.

As Russians prepare to vote, anxiety over the war deepens

MOSCOW, Yuri decided to stick shatter-resistant film onto the windows of his Moscow home in August after a drone blast blew shards of glass into his friend's apartment, causing minor injuries to those inside."These are unsettled times for us ?right now and I decided to protect my family," he said, after watching workmen glue the transparent protective sheets to the window panes of his new high-rise apartment.Get a look at the day ahead in European and global markets with the Morning Bid Europe newsletter. Sign up here.The ?Russian authorities insist they are winning the war in Ukraine. But nearly five years into the conflict, many Russians appear increasingly concerned about its impact on everyday life, as Ukrainian drone attacks bring the war closer to home.As Russia prepares for its first parliamentary election since the launch of its full-scale war in February 2022, those concerns are becoming harder to ignore.Exactly how public unease might affect the September 18-20 vote is unclear, although in a tightly managed political system ?the ruling United Russia party, backed by President Vladimir Putin, is set to retain its dominance in parliament.But the Kremlin will be watching turnout and election results closely as a gauge ?of public anxiety and war fatigue as Putin presses ahead with his military objectives.THE WAR IS ESCALATINGOver the summer, Ukraine regularly launched hundreds of drones ?deep inside Russian territory to strike oil refineries, logistical warehouses and military facilities in the hope of forcing Moscow to back down and negotiate peace.Instead, Russia has escalated air attacks of its own ?on Kyiv and other Ukrainian cities, raising concerns on both sides that the conflict is entering a more dangerous phase.Weekly surveys by a Russian state pollster show anxiety levels are high. Some men have ?left the country temporarily amid fears that authorities could launch another mobilisation drive after the election, despite repeated Kremlin denials.Demand for protection against the effects of the war has risen sharply. Home insurance policies covering drone strikes are becoming more popular, while premiums have jumped.Russian firm Solartek, which produces sticky sheets designed to stop shards flying from a window in a blast, has seen demand rise 50% so far this year, said manager Pavel Levit.Standing in his St ?Petersburg workshop, Levit said customers ranged from private homeowners to companies and state institutions."Right now it has become so popular that there is even a shortage of protective film on the Rus-

sian market," ?he said.Both Russia and Ukraine deny deliberately targeting civilians. But apartment buildings, shops and transport infrastructure are frequently damaged by drones and missiles that are intercepted by air-defence systems.Thousands of civilians have been killed in the war ?so far, the ?vast majority of them Ukrainian, although deaths in Russia have risen sharply this year too.Item 1 of 5 Employees of Russian firm Solartek install shatter-resistant film on a window in an apartment, as demand for blast protection rises following Ukrainian drone strikes during the Russia-Ukraine conflict, in Moscow,[1/5]Employees of Russian firm Solartek install shatter-resistant film on a window in an apartment, as demand for blast protection rises following Ukrainian drone strikes during the Russia-Ukraine conflict, in Moscow, Russia, August 26, 2026. REUTERS/Ramil Sitdikov Purchase Licensing Rights, opens new tabMOBILISATION FEARSIn response to Ukraine's long-range drone campaign, Putin has accused Kyiv of trying to scare Russians and disrupt this month's parliamentary election.He said the campaign was doomed to fail, but polling by the state-run Public Opinion Foundation (FOM) suggests a summer of drone alerts and fuel shortages caused by Ukrainian strikes is weighing on national morale.Since late April, more than half of respondents have described the mood among people they know as "anxious" in all but one weekly FOM survey.The pollster's anxiety indicator has remained at its highest sustained level since ?a military mobilisation drive in late 2022, which prompted ?hundreds of thousands of fighting-age men to ?flee the country.Speculation has persisted this year that authorities could announce another call-up after the election to replenish battlefield losses, despite repeated assurances from Putin and other officials that Russia has sufficient manpower.Ivan, 26, an engineer at a Moscow truck repair workshop, and construction manager Roman, 34, told ?Reuters they had left the country with their families because they feared another call-up. Both gave only their first names to protect their identities.There are no official ?figures showing how many people may have left Russia because of renewed mobilisation concerns. Other indicators, however, point to growing demand for protection against the risks posed by the war.Requests for coverage linked to Ukrainian strikes have surged in the past year, said Oleg Khanin, head of insurance brokerage Soyuz, which offers drone strike packages "

The quiet foundations for India’s next growth phase



As 2025 draws to a close, the loud headlines are easy to spot, but what is easier to miss is the quieter work of governance, the steady, week after week clearing of bottlenecks — the cumulative push is what I mean by Reform Express 2025. India crossed about \$4.1 trillion in nominal GDP and overtook Japan as the world's fourth largest economy. Standard and Poor's upgraded India's sovereign rating to BBB after 18 years, signalling that the macro story has acquired durability, not just speed. In an uncertain world where political churn has become the norm, India's stable leadership makes reforms credible, and credible reforms convert private caution into private investment.

I have seen, across negotiating tables, from the GATT and WTO system to multilateral forums, that rules are only as good as the incentives they create. When procedures are opaque, discretion expands, and then even well-intentioned policy ends up discouraging enterprise. When procedures are clean and time-bound, competition thrives, investment plans get executed, and jobs follow. India's total exports hit \$825.25 billion during 2024-25, representing an annual growth of over 6%. To support this volume of trade, the government introduced several digital tools such as The Trade Connect ePlatform, a single digital window for exporters, and the Trade Intelligence and Analytics (TIA) portal for providing real-time market data.

The trade agreementsThe India-United Kingdom Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement signed in July 2025 created a stronger platform for Indian exporters, with wide duty-free access and clearer pathways for services and skilled mobility. In December 2025, India signed a Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement with Oman, strengthening a strategic economic corridor for goods, services, and investment. India also concluded negotiations for a free trade agreement with New Zealand, expanding India's reach into high value markets and setting a template for disciplined, commercially meaningful agreements. India's startup sector expanded to include over two lakh government-recognised startups, which helped create more than 21 lakh jobs. The Open Network for Digital Commerce (ONDC) processed over 326 million orders, averaging more than 5.9 lakh daily transactions. Additionally, the Government e-Marketplace (GeM) saw its cumulative transaction value cross ₹16.41 lakh crore, with 11 lakh micro and small enterprises receiving orders worth over ₹7.35 lakh crore. India also improved its position in the Global Innovation Index, rising to 38th place among 139 economies. Efforts to simplify business operations resulted in the reduction of over 47,000 compliances and the decriminalisation of 4,458 legal provisions. By late November, the National Single Window System processed more than 8.29 lakh approvals. Infrastructure planning also saw changes as the PM GatiShakti National Master Plan opened to the private sector, and the Project Monitoring Group portal has onboarded over 3,000 projects valued at more than ₹76 lakh crore.

Better legislationEmbracing trust-based governance, Parliament passed the Repealing and Amending Bill 2025, clearing out 71 obsolete Acts that had outlived their purpose. Ease of doing business also moved closer to the entrepreneur through district-level reform frameworks, including the District Business Reform Action Plan 2025, which seeks to make local administrations more responsive, predictable, and accountable. A modern labour regime matters

for scale, for manufacturing, and for a services economy that wants to formalise jobs while expanding social security coverage. With the four labour codes coming into effect from November 21, 2025, 29 central labour laws have been consolidated into a simpler framework covering wages, industrial relations, social security and workplace safety.

The Securities Markets Code Bill was introduced to modernise securities law and strengthen the Securities and Exchange Board of India's investigative and enforcement capacity, with proposals for specialised market courts, stronger information sharing with regulators, and time-bound grievance redress. At a moment when retail participation has expanded and India is drawing larger global portfolio interest, regulatory clarity becomes part of national competitiveness, helping savings flow into productive investment. Logistics is where reform becomes visible in costs, and 2025 saw a push to modernise the maritime backbone of trade. Nearly 95% of India's trade by volume and about 70% by value moves through maritime routes, so port and shipping efficiency is a competitiveness issue. The Indian Ports Act, 2025 replaced a colonial-era framework and introduced modern governance tools, including state-level dispute resolution, a statutory coordination council, and stronger norms on safety, disaster readiness and environmental preparedness. The Merchant Shipping Act, 2025 and the Carriage of Goods by Sea Act, 2025 further modernised shipping law, updating rules, liabilities and dispute frameworks to reflect contemporary commerce. The Cabinet approved a package of ₹69,725 crore to strengthen shipbuilding, including a Maritime Development Fund of ₹25,000 crore and components for financial assistance and development, points to a larger ambition: build industrial depth, reduce dependence, and keep freight value within India over time. This is industrial policy in the classic sense, creating an ecosystem where private capital can enter with a clearer risk framework, and where jobs are created not only in ports but across shipyards, components, engineering, and services.

A focus on energyEnergy reforms, too, were designed for long cycle investment. The Oilfields (Regulation and Development) Amendment Act, 2025 and the new Petroleum and Natural Gas Rules 2025 sought to reduce investor risk by emphasising stability of terms during the life of a lease, moving toward a single petroleum lease across the project life cycle, and putting clearer timelines on approvals. The Open Acreage Licensing Policy continued widening the exploration map, with Round X offering 25 blocks across about 0.2 million square kilometres, predominantly offshore, including deepwater and ultra deepwater opportunities. Alongside this, the National Deep Water Exploration Mission signalled a strategic focus on domestic resources, technology, and capability in complex exploration. Reform Express 2025 also carried a strategic energy and technology dimension. Budget 2025 set out a Nuclear Energy Mission with an outlay of ₹20,000 crore to accelerate small modular reactors and other advanced designs, aligned with the national objective of reaching 100 GW of nuclear capacity by 2047, and a target of five indigenously designed operational small modular reactors by 2033. The Sustainable Harnessing and Advancement of Nuclear Energy for Transforming India (SHANTI) Bill is a huge leap for modernising India's civil nuclear framework and opening a pathway for carefully regulated private participation. Nuclear energy adds firm, low carbon power to the grid, and strengthens India's ability to build advanced manufacturing, data infrastructure, and energy intensive industry with greater confidence. Put together, these reforms show a pattern: clean up the statute book, decriminalise the trivial, modernise labour compliance, strengthen market governance, digitise trade processes, fix logistics, and de-risk long cycle energy investment. Prime Minister Narendra Modi has consistently argued that the state's job is to reduce the burden on entrepreneurs so that productivity can compound. That is the strategic meaning of Reform Express 2025. The seeds of the next phase of double-digit growth are sown in this quiet, cumulative work, and India is doing it with a steadiness that many economies have lost.

SoftBank to buy DigitalBridge in \$4 billion deal to bolster AI infrastructure push

SoftBank Group will acquire digital infrastructure investor DigitalBridge Group in a deal valued at \$4 billion, the companies said on Monday, as the Japanese investment firm looks to deepen its AI-related portfolio. The acquisition would expand SoftBank's exposure to digital infrastructure as the Japanese conglomerate is positioning its portfolio to focus on artificial intelligence. DigitalBridge shares rose about 10% to \$15.27 in premarket trading, following a 45% rise earlier this month after Bloomberg News first reported the acquisition talks.

The \$16 per share offer represents a 15% premium over DigitalBridge's closing price on Friday and values the company at \$2.92 billion, with the deal expected to close in the second half of next year. SoftBank's billionaire founder Masayoshi Son is seeking to capitalize on surging demand for the computing capacity that underpins artificial intelligence applications. DigitalBridge invests in digital infrastructure sectors such as data centers, cell towers, fiber networks, small-cell systems and edge infrastructure, with a portfolio including companies such as Vantage Data Centers, Zayo, Switch and AtlasEdge. Founded in 1991 as real estate-focused Colony Capital, the firm pivoted under CEO Marc Ganzi into digital infrastructure and rebranded as DigitalBridge in 2021 after shedding most of its legacy property assets. Ganzi will continue leading DigitalBridge as a separately managed platform, the companies said. As of September 30, DigitalBridge managed around \$108 billion



in assets, making it one of the largest dedicated investors in the digital ecosystem. SoftBank has ramped up investment in AI as it seeks to position itself at the center of what Masayoshi Son has called a once-in-a-generation technological shift. The company, along with OpenAI, Oracle and Abu Dhabi-based tech investor MGX, is investing billions of dollars in the Stargate project, a large-scale computing and infrastructure initiative aimed at supporting advanced AI development. OpenAI, Oracle and SoftBank said in September they plan to build five new computing sites across Texas, New Mexico and Ohio, which are expected to have a combined power capacity of about seven gigawatts when in operation.

President undertakes dive sortie in submarine, calls it a very special experience

The President of India Droupadi Murmu on Sunday (December 28, 2025) undertook a dive sortie onboard the Indian Navy's submarine INS Vaghsheer on the western seaboard.

Ms. Murmu was accompanied by the Chief of the Naval Staff Admiral Dinesh K. Tripathi during the sortie, according to the President's Secretariat. She embarked on the indigenous Kalvari-class submarine at the Karwar Naval Harbour in Karnataka. During the sortie, which lasted over two hours, President Murmu interacted with officers and sailors of the submarine, and witnessed operational demonstrations, including complex manoeuvres and multiple successful firings. "This maiden embarkation onboard an indigenous Kalvari-class submarine reflects the continued

engagement of the Supreme Commander with the armed forces in operational settings," the President's Secretariat said. In this image posted on Dec. 28, 2025, President Droupadi Murmu with Chief of the Naval Staff Admiral Dinesh K. Tripathi during a sortie on the Navy's indigenous Kalvari class submarine INS Vaghsheer at Karwar Naval Base, Karnataka. Photo: X/@rashtrapatibhvn/via PTI In this image posted on Dec. 28, 2025, President Droupadi Murmu with Chief of the Naval Staff Admiral Dinesh K. Tripathi during a sortie on the Navy's indigenous Kalvari class submarine INS Vaghsheer at Karwar Naval Base, Karnataka. Photo: X/@rashtrapatibhvn/via PTI With this embarkation, President Murmu became only the second President of India to undertake a sortie onboard a submarine after the late former President A.P.J. Abdul Kalam.

What is the India-New Zealand Free Trade Agreement? | Explained



The recent India-New Zealand Free Trade Agreement (FTA) was concluded in December, under which New Zealand will levy zero duty on 100% of India's exports and bring in \$20 billion in Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) by 2030.

What are the key bargains?

India will receive zero-duty market access for all its exports to New Zealand. In return, India will relax tariffs on 95% of imports from New Zealand, with 57% of these products becoming duty-free from day one. New Zealand has committed to investing \$20 billion in India over the next 15 years, with firm clawback mechanisms in case the investment doesn't meet the stipulated timeline. The FDI is aimed at promoting skill mobility and services, creating employment and growth opportunities across 118 sectors. For the first time, New Zealand has agreed to facilitate trade in Ayurveda, yoga, and traditional medicine services with India. The deal also makes provisions for the support and mobility of Indian skilled workers. Youth, students, and professionals will find it easier to live and work in New Zealand.

The FTA creates opportunities for India to become a key supplier of skilled workforce in services such as IT professionals, Engineers, Yoga instructors, Indian chefs, Music teachers, as well as in sectors including healthcare, education, and construction. Student mobility, work permits of up to 20 hours per week while studying, and extended post-study work visas are some of the opportunities for Indian youth to get global exposure. The agreement also builds on MSMEs and employment opportunities through labour-intensive sectors, including textiles and apparel, leather and footwear, gems and jewellery, engineering goods, and processed food items.

Which sectors has India kept outside the agreement?

India has refused to give market access to major items crucial to New Zealand, such as dairy and agricultural products, including milk, cheese, cream, butter, yogurt, onions, sugar, edible oils, spices, and rubber, in order to protect Indian farmers and small and medium industries. New Zealand will develop focused action plans to develop and improve productivity, quality, and sectoral capabilities for fruit growers in India, particularly for exotic fruits like kiwi-fruit, apples, and honey. This cooperation will ensure the establishment of centres of excellence, improved planting material, capacity building for growers, technical support for orchard management, post-harvest practices, supply chains, and food safety.

Why is the FTA important?

More than a breakthrough, the India-New Zealand FTA is a framework for deeper cooperation in the future. It is India's conscious move to increase its global economic footprint. Trade diversification demands a deep and deliberate transformation of the country's productive sector and integration into global value chains. The India-New Zealand FTA is hailed for being the fastest concluded, completed in a record time of nine months after being announced in March 2025. It enhances market access and tariff preferences for Indian exports to New Zealand, while proving to be a gateway to Oceania and Pacific Island markets. Standing at \$49,380, New Zealand is among the higher-income economies in Oceania. The Indian diaspora in New Zealand constitutes 5% of its population, which amounts to 3,00,000 persons. This creates a promising exchange and opens opportunities for soft power politics between the two nations.

Currently, India's bilateral merchandise trade with New Zealand stands at \$1.3 billion. The deal aims to double this

figure over the next five years. India has instated strict safeguards to protect its sensitive sectors, like agriculture and dairy, from one of the world's largest dairy exporters. This is also one of the first FTAs negotiated and concluded entirely by a women-led and women-driven team, from the chief negotiating officer to the ambassador to New Zealand.

Why is India accelerating new FTAs?

By engaging with the Pacific, West Asia, and Africa as trade partners, India is leveraging its position and promoting realignments through bilateral engagements and FTAs. FTAs provide a platform to pursue unique and region-specific commitments, creating room for WTO-plus commitments, especially in areas like services, digital trade, and investment. Diversification of trade partners means that India doesn't have to be dependent on traditional markets such as the EU, the U.S., and China. FTAs are aligned with India's development goals and policies, such as Make in India, and securing India's sensitive sectors through technology transfers and production-induced incentive schemes that can help in aligning Indian manufacturing with the global value chains. India is currently determined to materialise FTAs with several countries, including Russia, Oman, the U.K., and New Zealand, in spite of its not-so-successful past FTA engagements. This points to India's attempt at securing strategic and geopolitical alliances via economic and trade liberalisation. This is India's third FTA this year, after agreements with the U.K. and Oman. It is a part of a broad strategy that India is determined to take forward after the U.S. imposed steep tariffs. A large chunk of India's trade is U.S.-dependent. The bilateral trade between India and the U.S. stands at \$132 billion, and changes in the tariffs by the U.S. really hurt India's trade. India's exports to the U.S. declined sharply in September and October, dropping to 12% and 8.5%, respectively. The Indo-U.S. free trade deal is in slow progress, and 50% of the tariffs still remain unchanged. This has resulted in a departure from the U.S. and into an urgent need for diversification of India's trade policies and strategic alliances in order to attract greener trade pastures.

One of the main reasons for the stalling of the Indo-U.S. bilateral talks is India's steadfast policy of not opening up its farming and dairy sector to concessions in the FTA. India is thus making a substantial move from short-term economic partnerships to long-term trade alliances. The India-New Zealand deal builds a structure that is more investor-friendly. India is willing to let go of its protectionist image by lowering trade barriers, promoting ease of business, and opening its markets. India's FTAs today go well beyond tariff reduction; they are more of a framework for future cooperation and economic alignment.

What criticisms does the agreement face?

This is New Zealand's first FTA that excludes dairy and agriculture from its purview, due to which it is heavily criticised in New Zealand by coalition partners of the current government. The Foreign Minister of New Zealand said that the deal is 'neither free nor fair' as it bypasses the dairy and agriculture sector, the country's largest industry, and added that they will vote against the bill when it comes to the floor in the New Zealand Parliament in 2026. India, on the other hand, assumes an easy passage to legislation. In India, FTAs are criticised for widening trade deficits and generating asymmetric gains, as it has led to imports from partner countries growing faster than our exports. Although the safeguards established by the current India-New Zealand FTA claim to cover these risks and protect and promote India's sensitive sectors through manufacturing collaboration. The success of which will have to be determined as the implementation unfolds over the years.

What is the way forward?

Even though the India-New Zealand FTA is considered historic, it is important to learn from the trade agreements in the past, as many resulted in low yields. India needs to invest in domestic competitiveness, meet global market standards and quality requirements, ensure strong rules of origin, define anti-dumping provisions, strengthen its sensitive sector and MSMEs and formulate them in line with global markets. India also needs to invest in research and development for increasing quality and competitiveness of its products if it has to thrive in the global market

What hinders Indian pharma companies from making drugs for rare diseases

Modern healthcare is fundamentally dependent on a constant supply of known and new drugs, making their discovery and manufacture a profitable business. The Indian pharmaceutical industry plays a key role in making drugs available globally at low prices, reflected in its projected revenue of about \$130 billion by 2030. However, it largely manufactures generics that target diseases with sizable patient populations. Generics are 'copies' of drugs that were under patent protection, but are no longer so. The manufacturer does not have to develop the drug from scratch, although some studies are required. The industry is reluctant to invest in new molecules, particularly for rare diseases, due to the prohibitively high cost of R&D, which can vary from \$100 million to a billion dollars, and the limited potential of profit from small patient cohorts. It is, therefore, essential to reduce the cost of drug development in order to lower the price of drugs and encourage the manufacture of new drugs. The government can play a key role here in several ways.

In India, drugs cannot be manufactured or distributed unless approved by the Central Drugs Standards Control Organisation (CDSCO). Several steps must be followed for approval, including preclinical studies, multiple phases of clinical trials, and post-approval clinical studies. For each stage, specific requirements are laid out by CDSCO and these are governed by the New Drug & Clinical Trial (NDCT) Rules, 2019. Drug sponsors must comply with these requirements, and the paperwork can be overwhelming. Limited preclinical and clinical studies are required even to obtain approval for manufacturing generics. Simplifying the drug approval process, coupled with cost reduction, is essential to encourage companies to engage in more new drug discovery in India.

Preclinical studies contribute to a substantial portion of the time and cost of drug development. There are three significant steps in preclinical development. Efficacy studies are typically conducted using animal models intended to mimic human diseases. These studies are costly and time-consuming, and suitable animal models are often unavailable for many diseases (particularly rare genetic disorders). Globally, including in India, there is now an emphasis on the use of cellular (stem cells, organoids) and computational models. It is possible to create banks of stem cell lines from patients for an array of diseases. These cell lines can then be transformed into tissues and organoids suitable for efficacy studies. Additionally, animals are routinely used in toxicity studies, and NDCT-2019 recommends

using two different animals to determine toxicity. Standard laboratory animals, such as rodents, do not always replicate the effect of the drug seen in humans. Recent advances in artificial intelligence (AI) have enabled the development of virtual methods for toxicity assessment, accelerating pre-clinical development. Non-animal approaches for Pharmacokinetic (PK) and Pharmacodynamic (PD) studies are increasingly replacing traditional in vivo (animal) models. These methods focus on human-relevant systems (such as cell lines and organoids) and computational modelling, but need a leg up in India to be able to bring down costs.

The total cost of clinical trials for a given candidate drug can range from a few million dollars to hundreds of millions, depending on the drug type, targeted disease, number of participants, and potential complications. These costs can be broadly categorised into the design, and the execution costs. The most significant individual cost components are typically site management and investigator fees, and patient recruitment and retention expenses. Generally, standard trials require recruiting large numbers of patients across multiple sites to achieve high statistical power. Also, they often involve costly investigations. For rare diseases (including some cancers), patient cohorts are likely to be small, making it difficult to recruit sufficient patients, but reducing the cost as well as discriminatory power. Recent innovations in clinical trial design are helping to reduce the cost of trials as well as assisting in conducting meaningful trials. These include: Patient-centric trial designs: These focus on patients' responses and their well-being rather than just traditional endpoints such as overall survival or progression-free survival in the case of cancer patients. Importance is given to the quality of life as perceived by the patient. Considerable clinical data can be collected through patient-reported outcomes (PROs) at a much-reduced cost. Many regulatory bodies, such as those of the U.S. and Europe, are encouraging the inclusion of PROs in trial designs. Adaptive trial designs: These are flexible trial protocols that allow modifications during the course of the trial based on interim results, without undermining the study's validity. This approach is highly beneficial in rare disease trials, as it reduces the number of patients required, shortens trial timelines, and increases data-generation efficiency. Master protocols such as basket and umbrella trials allow the evaluation of multiple treatments within a single trial, reducing costs and effort. Since many rare diseases display patient-specific symptoms, "

Why IBBI is on alert after NCLT order in Subhash Chandra case



IBBI has asked insolvency professionals to flag possible misuse of the bankruptcy process, including suspicious related-party transactions and very low creditor recoveries. The Insolvency and Bankruptcy Board of India (IBBI) on Wednesday issued a circular asking insolvency professionals to stay vigilant to signs that the bankruptcy law is being misused for purposes other than resolution or liquidation of the companies under financial stress.

The IBBI said that it has received information from law enforcement and regulatory agencies that the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code, 2016 is also being used to dodge taxes, escape investigations, closure or merger of companies without regulatory scrutiny, or monetising and ring-fencing assets. The board listed six indicators to be alert for: very low recoveries for creditors without proper valuation, a single non-bank creditor dominating the committee of creditors (CoC), a cluster of related companies with common promoters, addresses, directors, or inter-lending taken into bankruptcy process; a common resolution applicant recurring across connected corporate debtors, linkage of corporate debtor or its group to fraud probes by another regulator, and suspicious loans between group companies.

The circular has come on the heels of a National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT) order on August 25 involving Essel Group founder Subhash Chandra, which approved a repayment plan providing for just Rs 6.25 crore to the creditors against their admitted claims of Rs 22,006.57 crore. Later, a five-member special bench of NCLT stayed the August 25 order, which was passed by a single-member bench of the tribunal. In this case, the five entities — Veena Investments, Direct Media Distribution Ventures, World

Crest Advisors, Lemonade Capital Advisors, and Corpcall Capital Advisors — collectively held nearly 62% of the total voting share and pushed the repayment plan, while banks like LIC Housing, HDFC, RBL, Axis, and Canara Bank voted against it. The public banks alleged that the non-bank entities were associates or related parties of debtors and acted under Chandra's influence. However, the IBBI also said that some of these indicators may arise in cases involving genuine financial distress. "They are intended to flag circumstances that warrant closer examination, and no indicator, by itself, should be treated as conclusive of misuse of the insolvency process," said the bankruptcy law regulator.

Time-bound mechanism, the issue of "haircuts" The board further said that if the insolvency professional (IP), who conducts the corporate insolvency resolution process (CIRP), forms a view that the process may be serving a fraudulent or malicious purpose other than the resolution of insolvency or liquidation of the corporate debtor, then the person shall file an application before the NCLT with fact for the appropriate direction under the code. "The application should identify the indicators noticed, the material relied upon by the IP, and the reasons for forming such a view," said the IBBI. The IBC created a time-bound mechanism to deal with companies that fail to repay their loans — by either reviving such firms through a resolution process or liquidating them if resolution is not possible. If a company fails to pay its debt, its creditor then can approach the NCLT to initiate the "insolvency process" under the law. However, the August 25 order of NCLT yet again raised the question of "haircuts", a highly debated issue under the IBC framework.

According to data available with the Ministry of Corporate Affairs, between the financial years FY22 and FY26, a total of 1,077 cases were resolved under the IBC, with creditors recovering Rs 2.47 lakh crore. The average recovery was close to 29%. In FY26, the recovery against the admitted claims was 20%, the lowest in last five years. This means that a bank may have claims running into thousands of crores rupees, but what they receive after the resolution process could be a small part of what it is owed. Now, the IBBI circular says that resolution professionals should be alert in cases where realisation to creditors is grossly disproportionate to admitted claims. Dheeraj Mishra, Dheeraj Mishra is a Principal Correspondent with the Business Bureau of The Indian Express. He plays a critical role in covering India's massive infrastructure sectors, providing in-depth reporting on the connectivity lifelines of the nation. Expertise & Focus Areas:

Semaglutide helps 4 in 10 children with obesity lose weight, move below limit in new trial



About four in 10 children with obesity, who received once-weekly semaglutide, were no longer classified as having obesity after 68 weeks, according to topline results from a phase 3 trial released by drugmaker Novo Nordisk. The STEP Young trial, which involved 165 children aged 6 to under 12 years, found that 40.4% of children treated with semaglutide moved below the obesity threshold, compared with none in the placebo group. The trial met its primary endpoint, showing a greater reduction in body mass index (BMI) among children receiving semaglutide.

Importantly, the drug was studied alongside lifestyle modification. Both the semaglutide and placebo groups followed a reduced-calorie diet and increased physical activity throughout the 68-week trial. More than 85% of the children enrolled had class II or class III severe obesity at the start of the study. In children, obesity is assessed using age- and sex-specific BMI percentiles rather than adult BMI cut-offs because children are still growing. Obesity is defined as a BMI at or above the 95th percentile for age and sex.

Ania M. Jastreboff, MD, PhD, a Yale University obesity researcher and paediatric endocrinologist and director

of the Yale Obesity Research Center, said childhood obesity is concerning because of its immediate and long-term effects, including the risk of obesity-related complications emerging earlier in life. "Most of the children in the STEP Young trial were classified as having severe (class II or III) obesity at baseline," Jastreboff said, adding that treatment with semaglutide resulted in about 40% moving below the obesity threshold within roughly a year. Jastreboff is an adult and paediatric endocrinologist whose work focuses on obesity medicine and weight management. She is the founding director of the Yale Obesity Research Center and a professor of medicine and paediatrics at Yale School of Medicine.

Childhood obesity can be associated with cardiovascular risk factors as well as depression, eating disorders and bullying. It also tends to persist into adulthood, when obesity-related complications can emerge earlier and more severely, according to the company's release. "For children living with obesity and their families, health challenges can begin early and affect wellbeing throughout life," said Martin Holst Lange, executive vice president, chief scientific officer and head of research and development at Novo Nordisk. He said the company was encouraged by the results and the potential of semaglutide, alongside lifestyle changes, to help children who require medical treatment to manage obesity. The company said the overall safety and tolerability of semaglutide in the trial were consistent with findings from previous paediatric and adult studies. No new safety concerns were identified, including concerns related to growth or pubertal development. The STEP Young trial was a randomised, double-blind, placebo-controlled, multinational study. Children received a maximum semaglutide dose of either 1.7 mg or 2.4 mg, depending on their weight at the start of the trial. The primary endpoint was the change in BMI from baseline to week 68, while a key secondary endpoint assessed improvement in BMI classification.

Stroke rehab must start earlier, say revised US guidelines: Why physio can begin in hospital

A stroke patient's rehabilitation — a process of helping the person recover as much movement, independence, communication, thinking ability, and everyday function as possible — should not wait until the patient is discharged, physically stronger or ready for intensive physiotherapy. That is one of the important messages emerging from the 2026 American Heart Association/American Stroke Association Guidelines for Adult Stroke Rehabilitation and Recovery, which were published on August 27.

But the new approach comes with an important distinction: early rehabilitation does not mean aggressive mobilisation. "Stroke rehabilitation can start as soon as the patient is medically stable, including soon after an emergency clot-dissolving procedure by drugs or a removal procedure via catheter to restore blood flow to the brain," Dr Vinit Suri, senior consultant, Neurology, Indraprastha Apollo Hospital, Delhi, told *India Today*. It is about carefully introducing movement and functional activity according to the patient's condition. Excerpts:

Early does not mean aggressive The first hours and days after a stroke require careful monitoring. Neurological status, blood pressure, consciousness and overall medical stability all influence what a patient can safely do. Early rehabilitation does not mean aggressive mobilisation. In practical terms, rehabilitation may begin with positioning, sitting with support, assessing swallowing, maintaining movement and gradually introducing simple functional activities before progressing to standing and walking. The approach is to introduce movement and functional activity in a controlled manner. That could mean changing position, sitting with support, working on balance or practising simple movements before progressing to standing and walking. The first few days can set the direction

There is a delicate balance to maintain. Prolonged immobility can contribute to stiffness, weakness, blood clots, pressure injuries and loss of functional ability. But pushing activity too quickly can also be counterproductive. The pace depends on the type and severity of stroke, the patient's level of consciousness, blood pressure and other medical factors. There is no single rehabilitation schedule that fits every stroke survivor. One of the most important misconceptions about stroke recovery is that walking equals recovery. It does not. A stroke survivor may walk independently but still struggle to find words, remember instructions, concentrate during a conversation or swallow safely. Some of the most disabling consequences of stroke may therefore be invisible. Rehabilitation needs to address movement alongside speech, swallowing, cognition and everyday functioning. The goal is not simply a better gait or a stronger limb. It is whether the person can eat safely, communicate, dress, work and participate in family life.

Fatigue can be part of the disability Another frequently underestimated problem is fatigue. Even routine activities can require considerably more effort after a stroke. A patient who appears physically capable may become exhausted by activities that were previously effortless. Expecting an immediate return to the old level of activity can, therefore, lead to frustration for both the patient and family. Recovery has to be paced around the individual's abilities



rather than judged against a fixed timetable.

Mental health can influence physical recovery Stroke recovery is not only a physical process. Depression and anxiety can develop after a stroke and may sometimes be mistaken for a lack of motivation. Persistent low mood, disturbed sleep, withdrawal or loss of interest can affect participation in rehabilitation. Identifying these problems early can make it easier for a patient to engage with the rest of the recovery process. That is why mental health support should not be treated as an optional addition to physical rehabilitation. The wider message is straightforward: a patient who is psychologically struggling may also find it harder to participate in physical recovery. Rehabilitation does not end at discharge. For many families, leaving the hospital feels like the finish line. Clinically, it can be the beginning of a difficult new phase. The transition from hospital to home can be one of the most difficult stages. Families may suddenly have to manage medication, feeding, mobility and exercises without knowing exactly what the patient can safely do. Caregiver education, therefore, becomes an important part of rehabilitation. Families need to understand how to assist without making the patient unnecessarily dependent, and when a change in symptoms requires medical attention.

Recovery does not follow a straight line Stroke recovery can continue for months, and progress is rarely linear. A patient may improve rapidly at first, then appear to plateau, only to make further gains when rehabilitation goals are modified or new challenges are introduced. As new abilities emerge, the goals of rehabilitation may need to change. Returning to work, driving, travelling or resuming household responsibilities can reveal problems that were not obvious during the initial rehabilitation period. The larger shift, therefore, is away from viewing rehabilitation as a short course of physiotherapy. The new AHA/ASA guidance places rehabilitation firmly within the continuum of stroke care. For patients, that means rehabilitation can begin early when medically appropriate. It may start gently, with positioning, supported sitting, swallowing assessment and simple functional activities, and become more intensive as the patient becomes ready. For families, it means looking beyond the ability to walk. And for clinicians, it means recognising that recovery involves far more than motor function. Rehabilitation should be seen as an ongoing process that addresses how a person moves, thinks, communicates and lives after the stroke. Discharge is just the first milestone, not a finish line.

When swine flu unmasks diabetes: How an undetected condition pushed patient into ICU

Megha Garg, 41, a homemaker from Delhi, had no idea she was living with type 2 diabetes when she contracted H1N1 influenza this month. What began as an ordinary fever on August 12 quickly became a fight for breath. The fever kept rising, followed by a cough, cold and intense body pain. By the fourth day, Megha's oxygen saturation had fallen to 80 per cent. She developed persistent chills despite taking paracetamol and antibiotics prescribed by a local pharmacist. Then blood began appearing when she coughed — haemoptysis, a potentially serious sign that prompted further evaluation of her lungs. She was admitted to Apollo Hospital on August 15, where she was diagnosed with H1N1 influenza. With her oxygen level at 80 per cent, she required oxygen therapy and non-invasive ventilation and was kept in isolation. Her condition was severe enough that doctors closely monitored her for further deterioration and the possible need for invasive ventilation. It was during this evaluation that doctors found another problem — one Megha had not known existed. Her HbA1c, a blood test that reflects average blood glucose levels over roughly the previous two to three months, was above the diabetic range. "She had undetected diabetes. She came to us with influenza, but during the evaluation, we found that her HbA1c

was very high," said Dr Nikhil Modi, Senior Consultant, Respiratory Medicine, Indraprastha Apollo Hospitals, New Delhi. The finding mattered. Diabetes can impair several aspects of the body's immune response and is associated with a greater risk of complications from influenza and other infections. When a person is simultaneously battling a severe viral infection and uncontrolled blood sugar, doctors may have to manage two problems at once. "Patients with comorbidities such as diabetes, hypertension and cancer can take more time and effort to stabilise and have a higher risk of deterioration," Dr Modi said. "White blood cells may not respond as effectively to pathogens, while chronic metabolic stress can trigger abnormal inflammation. The result is a paradox: the immune system may be less efficient at clearing the virus, yet inflammation can still become excessive," said Dr Modi. The problem isn't simply "weak immunity." It is poorly coordinated immunity. If early antiviral defences are delayed or weakened, H1N1 can potentially persist for longer. Experimental evidence suggests that elevated glucose can increase influenza infection and replication in respiratory epithelial cells, although the exact contribution of hyperglycaemia in humans remains an area of ongoing research.

K-nest Construction Tech Expands into DeepTech with Indigenous Construction Automation Technologies

K-nest Construction Tech has expanded into DeepTech construction technology, strengthening its portfolio with indigenous solutions across construction robotics, 3D printing, human augmentation, precision sensing and automated high-rise construction systems. The expansion marks K-nest's evolution from a construction systems manufacturer into a construction technology company focused on automation, mechanisation and human-machine collaboration on the physical job site. A DeepTech Portfolio for the Construction Site 3D Concrete & Construction Printing Systems

Site-scale, digitally controlled additive manufacturing systems that bring automated construction directly into the building process. Autonomous Quality & Inspection Robotics Autonomous mobile robots that scan built environments and compare real-time site installations against BIM design models, automatically identifying execution discrepancies. Industrial & Construction Exoskeletons Human-augmentation wearables designed to improve worker safety, reduce fatigue and enhance physical capability during construction activities. Precision Digital Sensors Specialised digital alignment sensors that monitor formwork plumb and alignment in real time, alongside integrated anemometers that monitor wind speeds and support safe operating limits for high-rise screens. Self-Climbing Safety Screens & Jump Form Systems Mechanised construction platforms that bring greater automation, intelligence and safety to conventional formwork and high-rise construction operations. The move comes as India enters a major infrastructure and construction cycle. India's real GDP grew 7.7% in FY2025-26, while construction accounted for approximately 8% of nominal GVA. The Union Government has budgeted ₹12.22 lakh crore in capital expenditure for FY2026-27. "India should not have to import the future of construction. We should be able to engineer it here. India



has demonstrated an extraordinary ability to build at scale. Our ambition now is to invest in the engineering depth, R&D, and indigenous intellectual property required to help build the next generation of construction technology here in India, and ultimately take it to the world." "DeepTech is not a label we want to put on conventional equipment. The engineering has to earn it. We are working on complex physical-world problems that demand seamless integration across mechanical engineering, robotics, hydraulics, electronics, software, and field expertise. The goal is technology that is advanced, but equally practical, reliable, and deployable on live construction sites." "K-nest's expansion strengthens its focus on developing indigenous construction technologies and positioning India as a developer and global exporter of advanced construction solutions" This content is sponsored and does not reflect the views or opinions of IE Online Media Services Pvt Ltd. No journalist is involved in creating sponsored material and it does not imply any endorsement whatsoever by the editorial team. IE Online Media Services takes no responsibility for the content that appears in sponsored articles and the consequences thereof, directly, indirectly or in any manner. Viewer discretion is advised.

Tata Trusts get until Oct 15 to respond to Mehli Mistry's objections

The Charity Commissioner of Maharashtra has given Tata Trusts time until October 15 to present their arguments on objections raised by former trustee Mehli Mistry concerning change reports recording his exit from three Tata trusts, alleged governance lapses and the eligibility of certain trustees of the Bai Hirabai Trust.

The matter was listed for hearing on Tuesday and has now been deferred to next month as the Sir Ratan Tata Trust (SRTT) sought more time citing the exit of trustee Vijay Singh. Mistry resigned as a trustee of three trusts last October after their boards voted not to renew his appointments. In a separate matter, Mistry has challenged the eligibility of certain trustees of the Bai Hirabai Trust. The trusts' lawyers, however, maintained that Vijay Singh is no longer a trustee, as he chose not to seek another term when his tenure expired on August 14.

The dispute traces back to Mistry's departure from the trusteeship after his term was not renewed. A long-time Tata Group insider and close associate of the late Ratan Tata, Mistry's exit has since evolved into a wider controversy, with allegations touching on the governance of certain Tata trusts, potential conflicts of interest and the manner in which trustees are appointed. Mistry has raised a series of questions before the Maharashtra Charity Commissioner, ranging from compensation and commissions received by certain trustees from Tata Group companies to potential conflicts of interest arising from trustees simultaneously holding positions on the boards of group entities. Apart from questioning his own removal from the SRTT, Mistry raised issues of governance and decision-making within the philanthropic institution.

In filings submitted to the regulator in June, Mistry has questioned trustee appointments, board-level decisions, remuneration arrangements, and governance practices across the Tata Trusts ecosystem. A key theme of Mistry's argument relates to the fiduciary responsibilities of trustees



overseeing charitable institutions. He has sought an examination of whether remuneration and other benefits received by trustees from Tata group companies are consistent with those obligations. The filings further contend that compensation earned by trustees in their capacity as nominees of charitable trusts should accrue to the trusts themselves rather than be retained by individual trustees. Mistry argued that the trustees of the SRTT and the Sir Dorabji Tata Trust had unanimously passed a resolution on October 17, 2024, to renew the tenure of existing trustees in order to ensure continuity following the death of Ratan Tata. However, he alleged that despite this consensus, certain trustees later voted against the renewal of his term. Mistry had also challenged the appointment of two trustees of Bai Hirabai Trust — Venu Srinivasan and Vijay Singh — before the Maharashtra Charity Commissioner as they are non-Zoroastrians. However, Srinivasan and Singh are no longer trustees of this trust. Tata Trusts had earlier deferred indefinitely its much-awaited board meeting scheduled for Saturday following an order from the Charity Commissioner of Maharashtra. An inquiry into complaints — pertaining to the number of perpetual trustees — has already been ordered and a report of the inquiry is awaited, the Charity Commissioner said in the order.

‘My job is to put in the hard work’: Shami says after Duleep conquest



As East Zone wrapped up the formalities in the Duleep Trophy final at tea on Day 5 afternoon against South Zone, Mohammed Shami broke away from the celebrations. The national selectors might see him as a surplus, but over the five days, the fans at the stadium reserved their biggest cheers for Shami, making him feel wanted. It didn't matter whether he fielded or bowled, they were behind Shami. He obliged them every day, spending nearly 10 minutes obliging for autographs and selfies. In the middle, he delivered the Duleep Trophy to the East Zone for the first time since 2012. The national selectors, including chairman Ajit Agarkar, watched him from the stands, conjuring magic with the new and old ball, seamlessly transferring from conventional swing to reverse swing in the most testing conditions. As he lined up to face the media, he put in a polite request: not to put forward any questions about getting a call up to the Indian team. "My job is simply to put in the hard work—the rest is in the hands of Allah," he said, pointing his hands upwards. It looks as if only a divine intervention would put him back into the Indian dressing room.

For, on the field Shami has ticked all the boxes. From bowling long spells to getting wickets on unresponsive pitches to making the ball talk in seamer friendly conditions, he has done it all. At a time when all the doors to a national recall are shutting down, he bowled his heart out in the heat and humidity of Chennai. A call-up is nowhere in sight, but the 36-year-old isn't giving up. "There are plenty of reasons to stay motivated if you look for them. You can draw positivity from this ground or any ground you step onto. At this level, if you aren't self-motivated, your approach is wrong. No matter what stage you're playing at, your eyes must always be set on the next level," he said.

East Zone's Mohammed Shami takes a selfie with teammates after winning the Duleep Trophy 2026-27, in Chennai, Tamil Nadu, Thursday, Sept. 10, 2026. East Zone's Mohammed Shami takes a selfie with teammates after winning the Duleep Trophy 2026-27, in Chennai, Tamil Nadu, Thursday, Sept. 10, 2026. (PTI) Maybe here, Shami had the drive to deliver East Zone a title that has eluded them for long. The Duleep Trophy's relevance has been in question for long, but even with regards to it, Shami sent a message across. "I always say this: 'You play for the badge'. When you wear that crest on your chest, the level of cricket doesn't matter. If you play for the badge, that hunger will naturally show. Your willingness to fight only grows when you play

with that pride. My mindset is simple: whichever level I get an opportunity to play, I want to make it count and fulfil my responsibility toward the team," he added, pointing to the crest.

Always a learner Thanks to the splendid job of their batting unit, Shami had the chance to bowl only once here, and even there, he made it count. After troubling the South with the new-ball, with the old ball he relied on reverse-swing. While other pacers from both the sides struggled to hit the right lengths, Shami was an exception. "I'm always learning. In conditions like these, you can't expect much conventional swing, and the bounce was quite low. In Bengaluru, conditions favoured the bowlers far more, so coming here was a stark contrast. But that doesn't mean you stray from your basics. I trust my line and length completely, and that's where I try to create wickets from. Honestly, if you can't exploit reverse swing in this kind of heat, what's the point?" he said, matter of factly. Perhaps it comes naturally to Shami—what doesn't come for others. Maybe for someone in the November of his career, the pitch offered him a challenge to rise to the occasion. "It turns into a completely different tactical battle. When conditions are in your favour, executing plans is straightforward. The real test is when conditions don't suit you — that's when delivering for your team matters most. That's when your skill is tested in its purest form. Whenever challenging situations arise, I want to put my hand up and deliver for the side," he added. East Zone's captain Ishan Kishan, right, and Mohammed Shami pose with the trophy after winning the Duleep Trophy 2026-27, in Chennai, Tamil Nadu, Thursday, Sept. 10, 2026. East Zone's captain Ishan Kishan, right, and Mohammed Shami pose with the trophy after winning the Duleep Trophy 2026-27, in Chennai, Tamil Nadu, Thursday, Sept. 10, 2026. (PTI) Shami had only two wickets to show in the final, but both were made by the seamer by relying on his exceptional skillset. Bowling with a semi-old ball on Day Three afternoon, he generated reverse-swing that left South batsmen clueless. The wicket of Shaik Rasheed was a classic example of how to lay a trap. "Test cricket is entirely a game of setups. If top-order batters are set, you cannot get them out without a plan. Wickets don't just happen out of nowhere, especially on tracks like this. The plan was to keep taking the ball away from him, build that expectation, and then bring one back in sharply to trap him. That's precisely how it unfolded," he said. Along the way Shami appeared to have fun as well. At one stage with Ishan Kishan taking a break, it was the 15-year-old Vaibhav Sooryavanshi who captained him. When he dismissed Rasheed, he even had to piggy-back the teenager. "He loves pulling my leg! I usually tease him back by saying he isn't even as old as my cricket career. But he constantly banters with me, and that's great to see. Most of these youngsters are already quite mature. With the level of cricket they play today — featuring in the IPL and other high-pressure tournaments—maturity comes early, so you don't need to over-coach them. But yes, when the game gets tight and challenging, that's when you step in with tactical inputs and remind them to keep fighting," he added.

‘October 2027 is far away’: Rohit on his participation in next ODI World Cup

With speculations abound about his participation in the 2027 World Cup next year, former India skipper Rohit Sharma said that the tournament is still far away and if he features or not, that'll be a question when the event comes closer. "October 2027 is far away, we will see about it then," Rohit said when asked about his participation at the Global Fintech Fest by a member of the audience. After retiring from both Tests and T20Is in the last two years, Rohit only plays the ODI format now and will likely want to be a part of the squad for the 2027 ODI World Cup, co-hosted by South Africa, Zimbabwe and Namibia.

Sharma has already retired from T20Is, stepping away on June 29, 2024, hours after leading India to the World Cup title, and from Test cricket on May 7, 2025, a decision announced on Instagram ahead of India's tour of England that summer. The selection committee removed Sharma as ODI captain last year, replacing him with Shubman Gill. The panel, in consultation with the team management, is learnt to be keen on giving younger players a chance, keeping the future of Indian cricket in mind. Sharma's ODI captaincy record includes leading India to the 2023 World Cup final, where the team's all-out attacking approach from the top of the order redefined how India batted in the format. The following year, that same bold, aggressive template was car-



ried over to India's triumphant 2024 T20 World Cup campaign, also under his leadership. Meanwhile, BCCI secretary Devajit Saikia had made it clear that there is no room for speculation around the batting great as he batting well. Rohit had scored a century in his last outing for India in ODIs. "He is playing superbly in all matches. So what more do you want? In the last match (against England), he scored 138 runs, so why is there speculation? I do not want to give some fodder for the speculators," Saikia told reporters after the BCCI's review meeting at its headquarters a few days ago.

Harshit Rana ruled out of India's Asian Games squad; Bumrah declared fit

India pacer Harshit Rana received a fresh injury blow while bidding for a comeback into the T20I squad, ruling him out of the three-match series against Afghanistan and the subsequent Asian Games in Japan later this month. The Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) have also confirmed that pace spearhead Jasprit Bumrah and all-rounders Washington Sundar and Nitish Kumar Reddy have received their fitness clearance for a return to the T20I squad. Vidarbha pacer Yash Thakur has been named Rana's replacement for both series. Rana was ruled out of India's T20 World Cup campaign in February with a hamstring tear during the warm-up match before the tournament. He subsequently missed the entirety of the IPL 2026 season before making a comeback into the squad during the tour to Ireland and England.

Rana, however, suffered a fresh hamstring injury, ruling him out of the Zimbabwe tour. Thakur, who replaced Rana on the tour, made his T20I debut and picked up four wickets in two matches. The selection committee last week named Rana in the squad, subject to a fitness clearance. According to a BCCI statement, the Delhi pacer suffered another injury while undergoing mandatory fitness clearance tests at the BCCI's Centre of Excellence.

India play Afghanistan in the first of three matches in Delhi on Saturday. The team will then take on Japan in a one-off T20I before gearing up for their Asian Games gold medal defence in the quarter-final on September 28. India's updated squad for Afghanistan T20Is: Shreyas Iyer [C], Abhishek Sharma, Vaibhav Sooryavanshi, Sanju Samson [WK], Ishan Kishan [WK], Tilak Varma [VC], Shivam Dube, Nitish Kumar Reddy, Axar Patel, Washington Sundar, Varun Chakaravathy, Ravi Bishnoi, Jasprit Bumrah, Arshdeep Singh, Yash Thakur India squad for the 2026 Asian Games: Shreyas Iyer (C), Abhishek Sharma, Sanju Samson (WK), Ishan Kishan (WK), Shivam Dube, Tilak Varma (VC), Nitish



Kumar Reddy, Axar Patel, Washington Sundar, Varun Chakaravathy, Ravi Bishnoi, Jasprit Bumrah, Arshdeep Singh, Vaibhav Sooryavanshi, Yash Thakur.

Yash Thakur replaces Harshit Rana in India squads

Hyderabad: The Men's Selection Committee has named Yash Thakur as a replacement for Harshit Rana in India's squads for the three-match T20I series against Afghanistan and the 2026 Asian Games. The fast bowler was progressing well during his rehab at the BCCI Centre of Excellence (CoE). He sustained a rectus femoris strain while bowling during a match simulation on September 7 and has subsequently been ruled out. Yash, the 27-year-old fast bowler from Vidarbha, recently made his T20I debut during India's tour of Zimbabwe in July. He played two matches and took four wickets. He has featured in 50 Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy matches, picking up 81 wickets at an impressive economy rate of 7.04.

‘Carlsen likes to take ground, I don't want to give any’: Anish Giri on fiery rivalry



"It's a disgrace," shot back a prompt Anish Giri when asked about Magnus Carlsen's peculiar move, 3.f6, against Javokhir Sindarov at the 2026 Global Chess League. Carlsen didn't see it that way. To him, it was just a move. He later explained that it stemmed from a misclick by his coach during training, and they worked on it to come up with an interesting idea against the Uzbek.

This exchange was classic Giri and Carlsen. The two have contrasting personalities, and the Dutch Grandmaster never misses a chance to take a dig at the Norwegian, even though they are on the same team at GCL this season. The playful war of words between them is nothing new. They have been taking shots at each other for years. Carlsen once mocked Giri for teaming up with Vladimir Kramnik for the 2018 Berlin Candidates. Giri hit back by calling Carlsen "more nervous than all eight Candidates put together." That prompted Carlsen's retort: "Win a tournament for the first time in your life, and maybe people will start taking you seriously." This meant chess fans in Bengaluru were even more excited to see how these two carry themselves around each other. Giri seemed excited about the prospect of having Carlsen in the team, which makes Alpine APL Pipers strong candidates to defend their title. Whenever asked about sharing a team with Carlsen, Giri simply appreciated the fact. Fake relationship But Frenchman Alireza Firouzja was quick to call it a fake relationship. During the opening ceremony, he took a playful jibe at Giri and Carlsen, saying, "We don't have fake relationships with each other... fake appreciations," before bursting into laughter.

Giri (far left) seemed excited about the prospect of having Carlsen in the team, which makes Alpine APL Pipers strong candidates to defend their title. (GCL) Giri (far left) seemed excited about the prospect of having Carlsen in the team, which makes Alpine APL Pipers strong candidates to defend their title. (GCL) Giri has his reasons for the way he carries himself around Carlsen. It's about standing your ground against someone who likes to take ground, he believes. "I think he's very competitive, and we have a bit of a personality clash. In the sense that I'm not a very aggressive person as such, but I don't want to give any ground, and he likes to take ground. If you let him take the ground,

he will welcome you to his circle of friends, but I always wanted to stand my ground. In some sense there was this clash," Giri told Giri feels his relationship with Carlsen also has to do with the fact that for most of his life, the Norwegian was his main opponent. The constant need to beat the other also has a significant impact. "But essentially, if you have two people that compete with each other regularly, even if they would be great friends, there would always be some massive tension underneath. It is very hard, especially in a game like chess. You're trying to outsmart each other, outwit each other, look for each other's weaknesses. It's very hard to maintain genuine friendship and compete," he said. But unlike Carlsen, Giri is very good friends with the Indian Grandmasters. He has worked with Viswanathan Anand, and both Adhiban Baskaran and Vidit Gujrathi have been part of his team. He shares a particularly close bond with Vidit, both on and off the board. "The good relations I have with Vidit are also largely because we don't compete that much. We never played so many games against each other. Had we played more, probably our friendship would have suffered bigger tests. It's just very difficult," Giri said. But keeping the playful banter and competitive ego aside, Giri has genuine respect for Carlsen, calling him one of the greatest players of all time. "I feel, honestly, I have tremendous respect for him, for his chess. He's undoubtedly either the greatest player of all time or one of the couple of great players of all time. My top chess career started with beating him in Wijk aan Zee, and since that moment, whenever I played professional chess, he was always World No. 1. So I've always seen him as sort of a main enemy in a sense, the main target. I tried to learn from him and learn how to deal with him. A lot of time I spent, of course, preparing against him, because he was basically my most dangerous opponent throughout my entire chess career," Giri said. Indian Grandmaster R Praggnanandhaa recently said the will to win breeds a certain ego, in response to Hikaru Nakamura's claim that every elite player is arrogant. While Pragg believes a competitive ego is natural among top chess players, it doesn't necessarily make them arrogant. To this, Giri offered his take: "He has a point. It's very apparent that you are a very adamant and unpleasant person, or it is somewhat hidden. In order to play a game as competitive as chess and to constantly win, it is ingrained... the whole fighting mindset, trying to outsmart your opponent. It inevitably does something to your personality. People who are not into conflicts wouldn't want to play a competitive game peacefully. Then you don't become a chess player. You're constantly battling other people and yourself. So every top player has some fighting instinct in him, and these personalities would always clash," Giri said. "Even with Vidit, we have a good friendship, but it's not like we give each other roses every time. It's a tough friendship where we both try to learn from each other, test each other, challenge each other. It works for now, but these things also change. I know some people who were great friends and turned into big enemies. So yeah, it's not easy," he said.

19-0: India hammer Pakistan to reach Women's Junior Hockey Asia Cup semi-finals

Defending champions India put on an emphatic display as they beat Pakistan by a 19-0 margin to reach the Women's Junior Asia Cup semi-finals in Moqi, China on Thursday. Having already topped their group with consecutive victories over Japan, Malaysia, and South Korea, the Indian side will meet the winner of the South Korea–Malaysia match for a berth in a third successive final since 2023. Coming off a goalless draw against China before the knockouts, the Indian women rendered the Pakistan side hapless during the contest. Pooja Sahu opened the scoring for India in the seventh minute, and the goals kept flowing as the defending champions overwhelmed Pakistan. Sanika Mane scored twice, and by half-time, India had raced to a 10-goal lead without reply. The onslaught continued after the break, with India adding nine more goals. Pooka Malik completed a hat-trick, while Supriya and Purnima Yadav scored



twice each as Pakistan struggled to cope with relentless attacks.

PAK pacer Razaullah had no passport during Test call-up, then dismissed Root on debut



It has been a whirlwind few weeks for Pakistan cricket and their young pacer Razaullah. The Test debacle in England, with two successive defeats, called for a major mid-series squad reshuffle late last month by the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB). Red-ball head coach Sarfaraz Ahmed and bowling coach Umar Gul, too, were on their way out. Seven players were shown the door following the Lord's Test defeat. Among the replacements was the 21-year-old Razaullah. He belonged to a rare club of seamers once commonplace in Pakistan cricket — a right-arm fast. Hailing from Mardan in Peshawar, Razaullah was nowhere near a selection call. His professional career in domestic cricket with Peshawar had begun only 10 months ago. But his blistering pace was not one to be missed at Edgbaston on Wednesday.

Having earned a debut just nine days after his maiden call-up, Razaullah was out in the middle after another disastrous Pakistan batting effort, bundled out for 133. Clocking over 140 kph straightaway in his opening over, it only took him three more deliveries to prise out a golden wicket. England skipper Joe Root was trapped in front after being rushed by another 143-kph scorching. Skiddy, straight and plumb on the knee-roll. Shortly before stumps on the opening day in Edgbaston, Razaullah speared another delivery through with his slinky arm action, breaching the defences of opener Emilio Gay. Fast bowler from Dir to lower-order hitter, an unexpected opener and now a Test cricketer—what a wild rise for Razaullah

According to reports on social media, Razaullah had no passport at the time of his selection. Back in his hometown, Razaullah reportedly also missed the selectors with his phone switched off, shortly before the process for a passport and his flight out to the UK was expedited. According to Dawn, PCB high-performance di-

rector Aaqib Javed was impressed by Razaullah after watching him train at the National Cricket Academy, pushing a call-up to a fast-bowling camp in late August. While Razaullah's two wickets may not have quelled the looming danger of another Test defeat, the pacer's sprightly start against England will hold among the few positives for Pakistan from an otherwise nightmarish tour.

Kishan, Quraishi lead East Zone to Duleep Trophy title after 13 years

Chennai: East Zone clinched the Duleep Trophy for the third time on Thursday after overcoming South Zone on the basis of their first-innings lead at the M.A. Chidambaram Stadium. The triumph also ended East Zone's 13-year wait for the prestigious title, with their last win coming in the 2012-13 season.

Resuming their second innings on the final day, East Zone rode on a maiden first-class century from Md Kounain Quraishi (116 not out off 190 balls) and a half-century from Anukul Roy (64) before declaring at 388/7 in 99.2 overs. Once the declaration was made, the Ishan Kishan-led East Zone immediately began celebrating their title triumph. The contest had tilted decisively in East Zone's favour after they posted a mammoth 708 in their first innings, built around captain Ishan Kishan's monumental 270 and Kumar Kushagra's 101. Kishan followed up his double century with 80 in the second innings and took his match tally to 350 runs. Jharkhand's emerging talents played a pivotal role in East Zone's triumphant run. Apart from Kushagra, Shikhar Mohan produced an impressive 85 on his Duleep Trophy debut and continued the strong form he had displayed in the last domestic season. The duo, along with Kishan, ensured that Jharkhand's influence remained central to East Zone's title victory. Earlier in the morning, Quraishi and Roy extended their seventh-wicket partnership to 150 runs and pushed East Zone's total beyond the 700-run mark. South Zone were penalised five runs in the 73rd over for an unacceptably slow over-rate, following a prolonged discussion between the match officials and South Zone captain Tilak Varma. Quraishi eventually brought up his maiden first-class century in the 96th over by driving pacer CV Milind towards extra cover for two runs to reach the three-figure mark.

Karthi's sequel is bigger, but never better



Sardar 2 movie review: Karthi in a dual role as Agent Sardar Chandra Bose and Agent Vijay Prakash in Sardar 2. Saradar 2 review: Karthi shines in a dual role as Agent Sardar Chandra Bose and Agent Vijay Prakash in Sardar 2. There is an unspoken rule for sequels that every filmmaker eventually learns: the audience forgives the first film for its rough edges because they did not know what to expect. The same mistakes don't go unpunished the second time round. Sardar, in 2022, was uneven and had patchy CGI, but the film was fast, fun and surprising enough that none of it mattered. Now, Sardar 2 does not have the same luxury. The audience came in today expecting everything the first film promised and more. What we got instead is a 179-minute film that has twice the mistakes of the first film and none of its pleasant surprises. The CGI is still patchy, only now it is so in bigger, more elaborate scenes. The social message is still delivered like a lecture, only now it's longer. Everything is bigger but nothing is better. That is the Sardar 2's problem. Sardar 2 picks up where the first film left off, with Karthi once again playing dual roles as Agent Sardar Chandra Bose, the veteran RAW operative, and his son Agent Vijay Prakash, an inspector who is now a RAW agent, still living under the shadow of his father's disgrace. When Agent Sardar's previous mission that failed miserably returns as a new global threat, it pulls Sardar back into what is billed as his most dangerous mission yet.

The film's biggest, and perhaps only asset is Karthi. In both the roles, he commits fully and his grit shows on the screen. As Sardar, the elder spy, he brings a quiet authority and physical gravitas that anchors the more serious sequences, and as Vijay Prakash, he is looser, more emotional and vulnerable. The father-son dynamic between the two characters, which was the emotional core of the first film, remains the sequel's strongest thread. When the film slows down to let these two characters interact, it works. S.J. Suryah enters as the primary antagonist, and for the first 30 minutes, his presence lifts the film. He brings the unhinged energy and theatrical menace that has become his signature in villain roles, from Mersal to Maanaadu to Mark Antony. But the character he has been given is ultimately

too thinly written to sustain the performance across a 179-minute runtime. By the second half, even Suryah seems to be running out of things to do as the character's motivations to wreak havoc remain surface-level. Malavika Mohanan, in her first collaboration with Karthi, makes an impression in a role that does not give her nearly enough to do. She brings a strong screen presence and handles her action sequences with conviction, but the writing treats her more as a functional addition to the plot than as a character with her own arc. Ashika Ranganath and Rajisha Vijayan, who reprises her role from the original, are similarly underserved. Rajisha, in particular, deserved more screen time given how well her character worked in the first film. Some of the action sequences, particularly a mid-film chase and a fight set inside a pharmaceutical facility, are well-choreographed and shot with clarity by cinematographer George C. Williams. The film looks expensive in individual frames. It is in the connecting tissue between those frames that the problems emerge. The antibiotic resistance message, when it lands, is informative and relevant. There are moments where the film functions almost like a public service announcement wrapped in a spy thriller, and those moments, however clunky and fear mongering, are at least doing something most commercial films do not bother attempting. The main problem with this sequel is that the film proceeds in a manner that is frequently childish and unbelievable, asking the audience to accept leaps in logic that even a generous viewer will struggle with. Plot points are introduced and resolved with a convenience that drains the tension out of every set piece. For a spy thriller, the one thing you cannot afford to lose is the sense that the hero might actually fail. Sardar 2 never creates that sense. Karthi's characters are always one step ahead, always right, always in control. There is no genuine danger, and without danger, there is no thriller.

Sam C.S.'s music and background score are disappointing. The original Sardar elevated the action and spy sequences. Sam C.S.'s work here feels generic and, in several scenes, actively works against the tension the director is trying to build. For a film that needs its background score to do heavy lifting during long stretches without dialogue, the music is too flat, too safe and too forgettable. The runtime of 179 minutes is punishing. The film is at least 30 minutes too long, with several sequences in the second half that repeat information the audience already has. The pacing, which was one of the first film's strengths, is sequel's biggest weaknesses. Sardar 2 is genuinely a hit and a miss. Karthi's dual performance, Malavika Mohanan's screen presence, and a handful of well-executed action sequences prevent it from collapsing entirely. But for a film that had four years to get its script right, and what arrives as the sequel to a Rs 100 crore hit, it is not good enough. Karthi deserves a franchise because he has the range, the commitment and the audience goodwill to sustain one. Whether this franchise, in PS Mithran's hands, can give him one that lasts beyond two films is now a genuine question. Sardar 2 movie cast: Karthi, SJ Suryah, Malavika Mohanan, Ashika Ranganath. Sardar 2 movie director: PS Mithran. Sardar 2 movie rating: 2.5 stars

Forget the 80s trend, this is what Bollywood stars actually looked like in that decade



Is your social media feed also flooded with 1980s-inspired photos? Everyone seems to be busy imagining what they would have looked like in the '80s. The decade was all about dramatic hairstyles and makeup, statement jewellery, bold silhouettes and unabashed glamour. Amid the ongoing trend, let's take a look at some Bollywood stars who truly aced the '80s aesthetic. Amitabh Bachchan ruled Bollywood in the 1980s. From Naseeb and Laawaris in 1981 to Satte Pe Satta and Namak Halaal in 1982, he continued his incredible run at the box office. Even after his near-fatal accident on the sets of Coolie in 1982, Bachchan returned to the big screen with films such as Sharaabi, Geraftaar and Mard, before making a major comeback with Shahenshah in 1988. But his dominance was not limited to his films.

Big B's fashion and screen persona became a defining part of 80s Bollywood, with his signature long, side-parted

hair, wide collars, flared trousers, oversized shirts, leather jackets, waistcoats and bold sunglasses adding to his larger-than-life image. Whether dressed as the angry young man, a romantic hero or an action star, Big B carried the decade's dramatic style with an effortless swagger, making his looks as memorable as his films.

Rekha and Kabir Bedi in Khoon Bhari Maang. Rekha and Kabir Bedi in Khoon Bhari Maang. (Express archive photo) Khoon Bhari Maang. Rekha in Khoon Bhari Maang. (Photo: Express Archive) Rekha Rekha in Umrao Jaan. (Photo: Express Archive) Rekha was one of the defining stars of 1980s Bollywood, delivering memorable performances in films such as Umrao Jaan (1981), Silsila (1981), Baseraa (1981), Jeevan Dhaara (1982), Utsav (1984), Khoon Bhari Maang (1988) and Biwi Ho To Aisi (1988). Rekha's influence in the decade went far beyond her films. She became synonymous with 80s glamour, often seen in rich silk sarees, metallic and heavily embellished outfits, dramatic blouses and statement jewellery. Whether she was posing for a magazine cover or appearing on screen, Rekha embraced the decade's larger-than-life aesthetic with confidence. Coming to looks, Sridevi experimented with everything from shimmering gowns and dramatic sarees to colourful outfits, statement jewellery, big hairstyles and bold makeup. Her Mr. India looks, particularly the iconic chiffon sarees, became hugely popular. Vinod Khanna remained one of the most charismatic leading men of 1980s Bollywood, balancing intense action roles with romantic characters. Films such as Qurbani (1980), The Burning Train (1980), Kudrat (1981), Rajput (1982), Dayavan (1988) and Chandni (1989) showcased his versatility and star appeal. His tall, well-built personality, sharp features and effortless screen presence made him stand out among the male stars of the decade.

Saif Ali Khan calls Kareena Kapoor 'hardcore' for not liking his script: 'Actors are sensitive'

Actor couple Kareena Kapoor Khan and Saif Ali Khan have different approaches of choosing film scripts. Despite having distinct opinions, they try to give space and be sensitive about each other's work. In a recent interview, Kareena, who will next be seen in Daayra, opened up about how her family gives feedback about work. The actor also revealed that she is careful with her husband Saif, because actors are 'sensitive people'.

During a chat with Brut India, the interviewer asked Kareena about who in her family gives her the most honest feedback, since there are several actors in their clan. The actor named her sister Karisma Kapoor and husband Saif, but revealed that they are both 'careful', because 'everybody is sensitive about their work and their films'. Kareena then explained how she and Saif discuss work at home. "I think Saif and I are different kinds of actors. Sometimes I say, 'No, I don't like this script'. He will say I am too hardcore. Then I tell him, 'Go do it!' I mean, we are two different kinds of actors. So, we try not to get into each other's space because it is difficult. Coming from the same profession, you will have an opinion on certain things and the way you do them. But we have to tread carefully also because actors are pretty sensitive people," she shared. Saif Ali Khan also had an opinion about her upcoming film Daayra, with director Meghna Gulzar and co-star Prithviraj Sukumaran. However, she didn't pay attention to it. "Saif was giving his take



about the colour of the poster, and I said, 'Listen, keep quiet! You message Meghna,' the actor added. Saif and Kareena got married in 2012, and have two sons together – Taimur and Jeh. Kareena Kapoor Khan and Meghna Gulzar will be collaborating for the first time in a project, which also stars Prithviraj Sukumaran. Daayra is inspired by true events, and Meghna has co-written the film along with Yash Keswani and Sima Agarwal. Produced by Jungle Pictures and Dr Jayantilal Gada's Pen Studios, it features Prithviraj and Kareena as police officers.

Tigmanshu Dhulia recalls how Irrfan Khan saved his life three times

Director Tigmanshu Dhulia and late actor Irrfan Khan's friendship went far beyond their work in films and television. The two had known each other since their National School of Drama days and remained close through the years. After Irrfan's death on April 29, 2020, Tigmanshu has often spoken about the void left behind by his longtime friend. Tigmanshu recently revealed that the actor had saved his life many times. In an interview with NDTV, Tigmanshu revealed that Irrfan had actually saved his life on three separate occasions, each involving water.

"Irrfan saved my life many times. Twice... actually, three times. See, I don't know how to swim, but I'm attracted to water. I love water. I don't know what attraction is there, it kind of draws me. And I'm not a swimmer," Tigmanshu said.

How Irrfan saved Tigmanshu at Versova Beach. Tigmanshu then recalled the time his directorial debut Haasil was announced to the media. For the filmmaker, it was a major milestone, and the celebrations that followed eventually took an unexpected turn. "When Haasil was officially announced before journalists at a hotel, we had a celebration. I was so happy; it was my first film. Irrfan was in it too. We both got drunk and later went to Versova beach at night. Back then, the beach was open. I'm talking about 2001. 'The night could have ended in tragedy. Tigmanshu, under the influence of alcohol, walked into the sea without realising how far he had gone. Irrfan, who could swim, saved him.' After drinking, I started shouting and walked towards the sea. I went deep into the water. Irrfan was drunk too, but he was a swimmer and realised what I was doing. I had gone mad with excitement because my film was finally being made. Then I fell into the water."

Irrfan reacted quickly and pulled his friend back to safety. "He jumped in, pulled me out, and even slapped me twice. He said, 'What are you doing? You'll die. At least make the film first.' Irrfan came to Tigmanshu's rescue again. According to Tigmanshu, the Versova incident was not an isolated one. Years later, while working on Saheb, Biwi Aur Gangster Part 2, he once again found himself in trouble after entering a lake. "Something similar happened during Saheb, Biwi Aur Gangster Part 2. There was a lake, and I walked into the water. I got trapped because there were weeds underneath. My driver was saying, 'Sir's gone, he's gone.' I could hear him saying it. Irrfan jumped in and pulled me back to safety. 'There was a third incident, too, this time during a river-rafting trip. 'Something similar happened while we were river rafting. I jumped into the water from the raft. He pulled me out from there as well. So Irrfan saved my life many times.' Tigmanshu and Irrfan's friendship began at NSD. The friendship between the two went back to their National School of Drama days. Tigmanshu



joined NSD in 1986, when Irrfan was already in his third year. What began as a friendship during their formative years eventually became a lifelong personal and professional bond. The two worked together on the 1995 television serial Naya Daur. Irrfan later appeared in Tigmanshu's directorial debut Haasil, followed by Paan Singh Tomar and Saheb, Biwi Aur Gangster Returns. Their families also became closely connected over the years. In journalist-author Shubhra Gupta's book Irrfan: Life in Movies, Tigmanshu recalled how their children grew up together. "We used to go out, roam in the jungles. We had our kids around the same time. Our wives got pregnant around the same time, and all our kids were born within a gap of a month or two. First Babil, then my daughter. Our kids even grew up together. Tenth, twelfth tak toh the kids even studied together." "My growth has slowed down since Irrfan's death"

Irrfan died in April 2020 after battling cancer. For Tigmanshu, the loss was not only personal but also creative. He has previously spoken about how much he relied on Irrfan's perspective and friendship.

"I do not have any friends now. He was the one who knew all my shortcomings and weaknesses. He knew all my plus and minus points. In front of him, I could just be myself. Now, when he has left us, it's not an age when you make new friends," he told Hindustan Times. Tigmanshu also acknowledged the impact Irrfan had on him as an artist. In an interview with PTI, he said, "As an artist, he would push me to grow more. My growth has slowed down since he has left us. That's the biggest problem. He has left us, what can we do about it? But what do I do?" Meanwhile, Tigmanshu Dhulia's directorial film Ghamasaan is scheduled to premiere on ZEE5 on September 11. The film stars Arshad Warsi and Pratik Gandhi.

R Madhavan lived with families who 'slaughtered cows for a living': 'Adharma for me'



R Madhavan has been in the entertainment industry since the early 1990s, but before he started acting, Madhavan got a chance to live in Canada as an exchange student. In an earlier interview, Madhavan revealed that during his time in Canada, he got a major shock when he lived with families who "slaughtered cows for a living," and he was a hardcore vegetarian.

"Hardcore vegetarian lived with families that slaughtered cows for a living." In a chat shared on the YouTube channel of Indian School of Business in 2023, he called the experience "very important for my formative years" and recalled the time when he lived in Stettler, Canada. "I got an opportunity to be an exchange student on behalf of Rotary and I went to Canada as an exchange student. I went to a place called Stettler, which was the wild, wild west. It's cowboy country. I lived with cowboys. I am a hardcore vegetarian but I live with families that slaughtered cows for a living so all that was 'adharma' for me," he said.

Madhavan then went on to recall the "biggest adharma" that he experienced while being in the basketball team of his local school in Stettler. He recalled that being in the team was seen as a "huge achievement" for an Indian who wasn't as tall as the other boys and shared that his "ordeal" began when he had to go over to the next town for seven days to play a series of matches. "Like it happens over there, after the match, you come back to the boys locker room and you get into the shower. My ordeal started when I had to go into the shower because unlike what it is today, when you go to the men's shower, it is just one pillar with six shower heads around it and all the boys go there like god made them and they take a shower together. It's the most normal thing for them to do," Madhavan recalled and said that the "nervousness" of getting into that shower was bigger than playing the game. He shared that he came from a South Indian family where they never even moved around the house with a bare body, and thus, this was a challenge for him. "I didn't know how I was going to muster up walking there and so I decided to say, 'To hell with it. I am going to

wear my underwear and not take that off," he shared.

"Other boys wondered, what is he hiding?" Madhavan said that since he chose to wear his underwear in the shower, all the boys around him looked at him in surprise. "When I went into the shower just wearing my underwear and the rest of them were not wearing anything, I cannot tell you how naked I felt because no one was looking at each other. They were all like, 'What is he hiding?' and I had to do that repetitively for seven days because the tournament was for seven days," he said. Madhavan said that for the first few days, he tried to convince himself to follow the norm, but on the third day, he made a decision. "I realised, 'That's not me. I am never going to be comfortable so I kept myself covered for seven days'. It was during that time that I realised that if your instincts are telling you that if you are going to be uncomfortable doing something... And for you to have the guts to actually not go with what is considered a norm, then you will have the ability to be comfortable with yourself and that was a very essential quality to get into the film industry," he said.

Vijay Deverakonda urges clay idols for pollution-free Ganesh Chaturthi

Hyderabad: Tollywood actor Vijay Deverakonda on Thursday urged people to celebrate Ganesh Chaturthi with eco-friendly clay and seed idols to prevent pollution in cities and water bodies. Deverakonda received a Vittana Ganapati, or Seed Ganesha, from Green India Challenge. In a video released from his residence, he displayed the seed idol in a natural pot and said using safe Matti Ganapati and Vittana Ganapati idols would prevent pollution. A plant would grow from the idol after the festival, he said.

He thanked the organisers and wished people a happy Ganesh Chaturthi, which will be observed on September 14, 2026. Green India Challenge founder and former Rajya Sabha member J Santosh Kumar and the campaign's co-founders have distributed Seed Ganesha idols to film personalities, public representatives and families across Telangana.

"Green India Challenge promotes Seed Ganesha idols made from natural clay, cocopeat and coconut fibre, with seeds of native trees such as neem and tamarind embedded. After puja, the idol can be immersed in soil at home, where the clay dissolves and seeds germinate. The living plant can later be transplanted," the organisation said. Launched in 2018 and inspired by Telangana's Haritha Haram programme, the campaign encourages people to plant three saplings, nurture them for three years and nominate three others. The organisation has urged households, housing societies, temples and public pandal organisers to choose clay and seed idols, immerse them at home and nurture the saplings, reducing the use of Plaster of Paris and chemically painted idols that pollute lakes and rivers.