

Man attacks step mother, her daughter over sharing common properties in Zaheerabad

Sangareddy: In a shocking incident, a man allegedly attacked his stepmother and stepsister with a sickle over a dispute concerning the division of family property at Bharat Nagar in Zaheerabad town on Tuesday.

The accused, Imran, allegedly picked a quarrel with his stepmother, Shabana Begum (40), and her daughter, Arsha Begum (19), before attacking them indiscriminately with the sickle.



Three from Maharashtra arrested for stealing generator, vehicle in Adilabad

Adilabad: Three persons from Maharashtra were arrested on charges of stealing a generator, a pickup vehicle and two mobile phones from a National Highway worksite on the Bela-Kobbayi road on July 31 night. Another accused person was still absconding. Police seized the generator, vehicle and mobile phones from the three.

Briefing the media on the arrests in Jainath, Adilabad DSP L Jeevan Reddy said that Vishal Rathod and Rahul Rathod, both from Chandrapur district, and Devathke Pawan of Nanded district were arrested, while Rathod Parameshwar of Chandrapur was still at large.

Terror can't be strategic asset, must dismantle it: Modi at SCO

New Delhi, Sept 1

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday warned countries that use terrorism as an instrument of policy and provide safe haven to terrorists, saying "terrorism can never be a strategic asset for anyone". He called for the entire terror ecosystem to be dismantled.

Addressing the 26th Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) Summit in Bishkek, Modi said there could be no "double standards" in the fight against terrorism and urged member states to speak with one voice.

"Terrorism continues to pose a serious challenge to humanity as a whole. In the fight against terrorism, we cannot remain confined to an action-reaction approach," he said.

"We must dismantle the entire ecosystem of terrorist financing, recruitment, radicalisation and safe havens," Modi said. Linking regional security with Afghanistan, he said peace and stability in the country were essential for a secure Eurasia. India, he said, would continue its development and humanitarian assistance to the Afghan people

Modi also cited the West Asia crisis to underline the global consequences of regional conflicts, saying they affected energy security, maritime trade and supply chains, with the Global South bearing the greatest burden.

India, he said, had consistently called for conflicts to be resolved through "dialogue and diplomacy" rather than on the battlefield.

The Prime Minister also called for stronger SCO

cooperation against drug trafficking, organised crime and information-security threats, urging the grouping's mechanisms to focus on practical coordination and timely action.

He said India's vision for the SCO remained anchored in security, connectivity and opportunity, but the grouping must now translate these pillars into "concrete outcomes" as it entered its next 25 years.

On connectivity, Modi backed efforts to link markets and facilitate trade but stressed that such initiatives must respect the sovereignty and territorial integrity of all countries, in keeping with the SCO Charter. He also called for simpler customs procedures, digital documentation and more efficient logistics networks.

The Prime Minister said the benefits of SCO cooperation must ultimately reach people, particularly the young, entrepreneurs and farmers.

"The true measure of our success should be how many new opportunities our efforts create for young people, how many new markets open up for our entrepreneurs, how much our farmers benefit from technology and how much better the lives of our citizens become," he said.

Calling for greater people-to-people engagement, Modi highlighted India's SCO Start-up Forum, Young Authors' Conclave and the Young Scientists' Forum.

He also announced that the first session of the SCO Civilisational Dialogue Forum, an Indian initiative, would be held in India later this year.

SC Quashes All FIRs against CJP Protestors, Sept 5 March Called Off

New Delhi, SEpt 1

A three-judge bench of the Supreme Court led by Chief Justice of India Surya Kant invoked its extraordinary jurisdiction under Article 142 to quash all FIRs registered across states and Union territories between July 20 and 25 against students who participated in the Cockroach Janta Part-led protests against the NEET paper leak and other examination irregularities.

The bench also comprising Justice Joymalya Bagchi and Justice V. Mohana, directed the Centre to provide within three months compensation to families of students who ended their lives over the NEET paper leak. Closing the criminal proceedings against the protesters at the behest of the Centre, the top court said, "Keeping in view the future prospects of the young protesters, we invoke our powers under Article 142 of the Constitution to do complete justice."

The top court order came after Solicitor-General Tushar Mehta said that the Centre and the states of Maharashtra, Assam, Bihar and West Bengal sought quashing of the FIRs linked to the protests. Allowing the Centre's request, the apex court permitted the Delhi police to register fresh FIRs against 2,873 individuals with serious criminal antecedents who were present in the Jantar Mantar protest in July.

"Such an FIR can be registered without prejudice to the rights of the affected parties to seek remedies available to them in law, and strictly confined to the two categories of allegations referred to in paragraph 4, namely, bodily harm and destruction of property," the top court said.

Taking note of the submissions of S-G Mehta, the top court widened the scope of its order and said, "If there is any other FIR registered with regard to same protest between July 20 to July 25 in any of the states or Union territories, which are not before this court, they shall not be pursued and will be treated as closed."

"The Union of India shall formulate a policy with respect to payment of compensation on a pan-India basis. Such policy shall be circulated to all the state governments concerned and implementing authorities, so that it can be adopted as a regular mechanism for payment of compensation. As regards the students who committed suicide in connection with Neet 2026, compensation shall be paid to the affected families after formulation of the policy. The policy shall be formu-



'Women saved Rs 12,167 cr with free TGSRTC travel,' says Ponnam

Hyderabad, Sept 1

Telangana Transport Minister Ponnam Prabhakar on Tuesday, September 1, said that Telangana Road Transport Corporation's free bus services under the Mahalakshmi Scheme helped women in the state save Rs 12,167 crore.

Addressing a meeting at the Bus Bhavan in Hyderabad on the occasion of 1,000 days of the Congress government, the minister said women had made 347.36 crore free journeys so far under the scheme, which was launched within 48 hours of the government assuming office.

He added that the scheme has also pushed TGSRTC's occupancy rate from around 67 to 89 per cent.

The minister went on to outline the government's initiatives in public transport, women's empowerment, employee welfare, electric mobility and road safety.

2,200 electric buses to be added

Prabhakar said the government will introduce 2,200 electric buses in addition to the 1,024 already in the fleet. "Under the PM E-DRIVE programme, the government is operating electric buses in Hyderabad and

has initiated the retrofitting of 240 diesel buses," Prabhakar said.

The minister added that the Telangana government has also provided tax exemptions worth around Rs 1,400 crore as part of its efforts to promote electric mobility and reduce pollution.

He said that the government is also seeking to turn women into participants in the transport sector rather than merely beneficiaries of free travel.

"As many as 600 buses have been procured through SERP and women's self-help groups, with their operation entrusted to the groups," the minister said.

Prabhakar went on to say that the government has purchased 2,932 new buses since coming to power to improve public transport services.

TGSRTC has also expanded services to 370 new routes in Hyderabad, while efforts are under way to connect villages and other areas that previously lacked adequate bus services.

He added that the government plans to improve last-mile connectivity by coordinating RTC services with MMTS and Metro Rail.

Special Parliament session for women's Bill likely from Sept 18

NEW DELHI, SEPT 1

The government is exploring schedules for a special session of Parliament to take up the pending agenda of women's reservation, which is linked to the delimitation of Lok Sabha constituencies.

It is learnt that a tentative bracket of September 18 to 20 is being considered for the session.

"Dates can change but a discussion is underway," official sources said.

The government can reconvene the Lok Sabha and the Rajya Sabha anytime it wants because Parliament has not been prorogued after the monsoon session ended on August 13.

The Congress has already expressed apprehensions that non-prorogation of Parliament was a sign of the government's intentions to call a special session to pilot the pending Bill.

A Union Cabinet rejig is expected to follow the special session, it is learnt.

Union Home Minister Amit Shah has been working to shore up the numbers needed to pilot a re-worked Constitution Amendment Bill that seeks delimitation of Lok Sabha constituencies to make space for 33 per cent seats for women.

The original Bill, moved during a special session in April, failed for want of a two-thirds of MPs present and voting.

The government has since been working to generate political consensus on the issue, with Prime Minister Narendra Modi appealing to all parties for

support in his Independence Day address this year.

The government is also said to be engaging Tamil Nadu parties, including the DMK and the ruling VCK, on the matter.

Congress leaders privately say the government is still short of a two-thirds number and may rely on the strategy of abstentions from the House at the time of voting.

One of the Opposition leaders said a plan to hold the special session might coincide with the upcoming 81st Session of the United Nations General Assembly where a multi-party MP delegation was always sent.

"The government may send a substantial MP delegation to the UNGA in New York and hold a special session at the same time in Delhi. That may happen as a strategy towards abstentions from the House. Let us see," a senior Opposition leader said. The 81st Session of the UNGA begins on September 8 and will run till September 28 this year. Last year, the BJP-led NDA dispensation had sent two high-level multi-party delegations of 30 MPs for the UNGA session.



Telangana HC Division Bench Stays Single Judge Order, Clears Path for Kalyana Lakshmi & Shaadi Mubarak Schemes

Hyderabad, Sept 1

A division bench of the Telangana High Court allowed the state government to continue the implementation of the Kalyana Lakshmi and Shaadi Mubarak schemes and disbursal of financial assistance to the families of brides at the time of their marriage across all communities within certain family income limits.

The bench comprising Chief Justice Apareesh Kumar Singh and Justice G.M. Mohiuddin stayed the interim orders issued on August 12 by a single bench that had halted the operation of eight government orders (GOs) related to implementation of the schemes and disbursal of the amounts.

Without going into the issue of whether the executive orders through the GOs had legislative backing or not, the bench viewed that the Comptroller and Auditor-General (CAG), the guardian of public funds, had not specifically indicted the expenditure incurred under the schemes as lacking legislative or constitutional sanction.

Earlier, the bench asked petitioner Vijay Gopal

several times the CAG report had made an indictment of the schemes. When the petitioner submitted that there was no such indictment, the bench observed that that was the answer. Saying so, the bench stayed the single judge's orders.zVijay Gopal filed the writ petition challenging the GOs issued for implementation of the scheme on the grounds that the executive could not formulate an elaborate welfare policy, prescribe eligibility criteria and disburse thousands of crores of public money merely by issuing government orders without legislative backing. As the government failed to submit counters, the single judge had issued interim stay orders on the GOs. The government later filed counters but the single judge was not inclined to vacate the interim stay. Following this, the state government approached the division bench which heard the matter on Tuesday.Advocate-General A. Sudarshan Reddy argued that the scheme was introduced in 2014, was a continuous scheme and that the Supreme Court had applauded them. He argued that the schemes were consistent with the objectives emphasised by the Supreme Court in matters concerning the prevention of child marriage.

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Telangana's legacy—don't set aside past, build on it

Telangana's financial situation presents a picture in which the economic burden is rising even as revenue increases. During the first four months of the financial year 2026–27, the State's revenue receipts reached Rs 59,642 crore, while revenue expenditure crossed Rs 78,909 crore. As a result, the State recorded a revenue deficit of Rs 19,266 crore. The Congress government has incurred a Rs 33,729.98 crore fiscal deficit by July, equivalent to 57.7 per cent of the annual estimate of Rs 58,458.71 crore. Net borrowings and other liabilities have reached the same level during the period. While revenue is increasing, the faster rise in expenditure and debt burden indicates the need for the present government to give serious thought to financial management. After the formation of Telangana, the leadership of K Chandrashekhar Rao stood out for setting major goals by anticipating the future needs of the newly formed State. His government took significant decisions in irrigation, drinking water, power, rural infrastructure and industrial development, which played an important role in shaping the development direction of Telangana. Programmes such as Mission Bhagiratha, Mission Kakatiya, major irrigation projects and the expansion of the power sector were not merely efforts to address immediate needs. They reflected a vision to build a stronger Telangana for the future. The present government needs to study that long-term vision and planning approach and take it forward with greater strength. The development of a State cannot be measured only by the amount left in the treasury. Changes in people's lives, infrastructure created, expansion of irrigation, availability of electricity, industrial opportunities, transportation and rural-urban connectivity are also important indicators of development.

Asifabad Junction in Chaos as Traffic Signal Remains Non-Functional



Kumrambheem, Asifabad, District. Reporter "Indian Chronicle" September.02. "Asifabad: Traffic movement at the major junction near the bus stand in Kumram Bheem Asifabad district headquarters has become chaotic as the traffic signal has remained non-functional. Hundreds of vehicles pass through the junction every day, including buses, autos, two-wheelers and cars. With the signal not operating, motorists are facing considerable inconvenience and confusion. "The junction remains particularly crowded during morning and evening peak hours. Vehicles arriving from four different directions are attempting to cross the junction simultaneously, often resulting in vehicles blocking one another and slowing down traffic. Commuters say the absence of a functioning signal is making traffic movement increasingly difficult. "Pedestrians Also Facing Difficulties" The bus stand area witnesses heavy movement of passengers, making it difficult for pedestrians to cross the road safely. Elderly people, women and children are reportedly facing greater difficulties due to the lack of proper traffic regulation. "Was the Signal Installed and Forgotten?" "Local residents questioned the lack of regular monitoring of the traffic signal. They said that any technical fault should be identified and repaired immediately. The failure of a traffic signal at such a crucial junction in the district headquarters has raised concerns over the supervision of the concerned authorities. "Traffic Personnel Needed During Peak Hours" Residents have urged the authorities to deploy traffic personnel at the junction during peak hours until the signal is repaired. They also requested officials to inspect traffic signals at other major junctions in the town and rectify any technical problems immediately. "Authorities Must Act Before an Accident Occurs" Motorists expressed concern that the absence of a functioning signal could increase the risk of accidents. They urged the authorities to take preventive measures instead of waiting for an accident to occur before responding to the issue. "Immediate Repairs Demanded" Residents of Asifabad have demanded that the concerned authorities inspect the non-functional traffic signal near the bus stand, identify the technical fault and carry out repairs immediately. They also called for necessary road-safety measures and proper traffic regulation to ensure the safety of motorists and pedestrians.

Tolichowki SI Caught Taking Rs 10,000 Bribe: ACB

"Hyderabad Correspondent, September 1 (Indian Chronicle): The Anti-Corruption Bureau (ACB) on Tuesday caught a Sub-Inspector of Police red-handed while allegedly accepting a Rs 10,000 bribe at Tolichowki Police Station in Hyderabad. The accused officer, R. Pandu Naik, was allegedly demanding the amount from a complainant in return for not registering a case against him based on a complaint filed by his mother, settling the family dispute amicably and not seizing his passport. The ACB recovered the tainted amount from the officer's possession at his instance. Pandu Naik was arrested and produced before the ACB Special Court at Nampally for judicial remand. The case is under investigation.

MLA BANDARI LAKSHMA REDDY Takes Initiative for Rama Temple Construction at Velugu Gutta



"HABSIGUDA , SEPTEMBER 1 (INDIAN CHRONICLE): Uppal MLA Bandari Lakshma Reddy has taken the initiative to facilitate the construction of a Rama temple in the Velugu Gutta area of Habsiguda. Tension prevailed locally after officials of the Industrial Area Local Au-

thority (IALA) removed the gate and other structures that had been erected as part of the temple construction works. On learning about the issue, MLA Bandari Lakshma Reddy personally visited Velugu Gutta and inspected the situation. "Later, he met IALA officials and urged them to take the necessary steps to facilitate the continuation of the Rama temple construction. He stated that the temple was closely associated with the faith and religious sentiments of local residents and urged the officials to respect their sentiments and resolve the issue amicably. "The IALA officials responded positively to the MLA's request and assured him that they would extend cooperation for the construction of the Rama temple, it was stated. "Local residents expressed happiness over the MLA's initiative to resolve the issue in an amicable manner. BRS leaders Pasula Prabhakar Reddy, Kaleru Jai Naveen and JCB Raju, along with party workers and others, participated in the programme."

Negligence at Government Office Sparks Public Outrage

Staff Accused of Derogatory Remarks Against Media



"Kumrambheem, Asifabad, District. Reporter "Indian Chronicle" September.02. "Asifabad: Government offices are meant to provide essential services to the public. Officials and staff are expected to receive applications, address grievances, provide information about government schemes and respond to citizens in a responsible and courteous manner. However, allegations of negligence and inappropriate behaviour by some staff members at a government office in Asifabad district have reportedly caused dissatisfaction among the public. "According to information, when media representatives visited the office to seek information regarding public issues, a staff member allegedly remarked, "The news will appear in newspapers tomorrow, but it will be on my mobile today." The alleged remarks have sparked discussion over whether such comments are appropriate for an employee working in a government office. "Seniority Should Come With Responsibility" It is also alleged that another staff member remarked that he had been working at the same office for several years. While long years of service can provide valuable experience, locals say such experience should be used to improve public services rather than to discourage those who question the functioning of the office. People approach government offices with the expectation that their grievances and applications will be addressed. Repeatedly making them visit offices, delaying applications or responding impatiently to questions can create a negative impression about the government system,

residents said. "Why the Alleged Discomfort With Media Questions?" "Bringing public issues to the attention of authorities is an important responsibility of the media. Questioning officials about issues related to public services is also part of the democratic process. Instead of making sarcastic or allegedly derogatory remarks, staff members should provide appropriate information and clarification, locals said. If there are shortcomings in the functioning of an office, corrective measures should be taken rather than adopting an attitude that a news report does not matter, residents observed. "Higher Officials Urged to Examine the Matter With allegations being raised over the functioning and behaviour of staff members, locals have urged senior officials to look into the matter.

They have sought an examination of whether applications and grievances are being addressed on time, whether staff members are treating visitors courteously and whether there is any negligence in the discharge of official duties. "People said that public service should remain the primary responsibility of every government employee, irrespective of position or seniority. At the same time, media representatives also have a responsibility to verify allegations, obtain the versions of concerned officials and publish reports based on facts. The key question now is whether the concerned higher authorities will examine the allegations and review the functioning of the office, or whether the complaints will continue.

You Need SC Votes, But Not Their Rights? Shyam Naik and Suguna Lash Out at Modi Government



"One Nation, One Election" — Why Not "One Nation, Equal Education"? "Kumrambheem, Asifabad, District. Reporter "Indian Chronicle" September.02. "Asifabad: As elections approach, political parties make promises to win the votes of SC and weaker sections, but once in power, their issues and constitutional rights are allegedly ignored, said Asifabad Assembly Constituency in-charge Shyam Naik and DCC District President Suguna. They stressed that ensuring social justice and equal opportunities is the responsibility of governments. Speaking on the occasion, they questioned why the Central Government, which is promoting the concept of "One Nation, One Election," is not taking similar steps to ensure equal-quality education for children belonging to poor, Dalit, tribal and backward communities. Instead of focusing only on "One Nation, One Election," the country needs "One Nation, Equal Education, Equal Opportunities and Equal Rights," they said. They said SC communities constitute a significant section of the country's population and that the nation's development cannot be complete without their progress. Political parties that consider SC votes valuable during elections should show the same commitment towards education, employment, economic development and social security, they demanded. "Students from poor families face several difficulties in pursuing higher education, including expenses related to fees, accommodation, books and transportation. Governments should implement strong policies to ensure that every poor student has access to quality education, they said. Protect Reservations" Shyam Naik and Suguna stressed the need to protect the reservations and constitutional rights provided to SC communities. They demanded that opportunities available to socially and economically disadvantaged sections in education and employment should not be reduced. "They also called for effective monitoring to ensure that welfare schemes intended for disadvantaged communities reach every eligible beneficiary at the grassroots level. "End Inequality in Education" The leaders said governments must prevent economic disparities from widening inequalities in education. Children from poor and middle-class families also have the right to quality education, they said. They demanded that government schools and colleges be strengthened with adequate infrastructure, teachers and technological facilities, particularly in rural areas. Special encouragement and support should also be provided to students from disadvantaged communities, they added. "Create Employment Opportunities for Youth Pro-



viding employment opportunities to young people, along with education, is a major responsibility of governments, they said. They demanded more jobs, skill-development programmes and self-employment opportunities for unemployed youth. "Special initiatives should be introduced to help SC youth achieve economic independence, they said. Governments should not restrict themselves to making promises during elections but must fulfil those commitments after coming to power, they asserted. "People Will Give the Right Answer" Shyam Naik and Suguna warned that governments that ignore public issues will ultimately face the people's verdict in a democracy.

SC communities should not be treated merely as a vote bank but should be recognised as equal partners in society, with their rights fully protected, they demanded.

They said that just as political parties have the right to seek votes, people also have the right to question their rights and demand accountability. "Development does not mean the progress of only a few. True development means ensuring progress for every section of society, beginning with the most disadvantaged," they said. Shyam Naik and Suguna demanded that the Central Government take concrete measures to ensure social justice, equal education, employment and economic opportunities for SC communities. "You need SC votes during elections, but not their rights after coming to power? People are watching everything. At the right time, the people themselves will give their answer through their verdict," they said. "End...

Bhagyanagar Ganesh Utsav Samithi Announces New Uppal Branch Committee



UPPAL, SEPTEMBER 1 (INDIAN CHRONICLE): The Bhagyanagar Ganesh Utsav Samithi has constituted a new committee for its Uppal branch. The full-fledged committee was announced at a meeting held under the leadership of Uppal branch convenor Akula Rakesh. The new committee was formed under the guidance and suggestions of Bhagyanagar Ganesh Utsav Samithi Malkajigiri Parliament spokesperson Marneni Phanindra, Uppal Assembly constituency co-convenor Yellagoni Prakash Goud, and senior Uppal branch leaders Ravula Balakrishna Goud, Bonga Ramesh Goud, Upjoju Balwanth Chary and Reddygari Devender Reddy. Bachha Shivakumar, Yerra Narsingh, Venkat Mudiraj and Koka Ravi Varun were appointed as co-convenors of the Uppal branch. Nama Shrayan was appointed as the Division In-charge. Jenny Venkatesh was appointed as the RTA Department In-charge, Naveen Goud as the Police Department In-charge, Ravula Akhilesh as the GHMC Department In-charge, Jaswanth Reddy as Legal Advisor, Vijay Goud as Division Co-coordinator, Satish Chary as the HMWSSB In-charge, Ambati Sandeep as the Electricity Department In-charge, Kothapalli Shiva as the Media In-charge, Vinay as the Social Media In-charge, and Mamindla Yashwanth as the Office In-charge. A large number of youth from the Uppal Assembly constituency attended the committee formation programme and extended their support to the newly appointed committee members. Gundu Puneender, Adepu Ramesh, Matte Abhiram Reddy, Alwal Balu Mudiraj, Yerra Vamsi, Kappa Naveen, Vinod, Bodge Vijay Goud, Sappidi Vivek, Eega Vinay, Arun, Abhishek, Neelam Deepak and others participated in the programme.

'Luxurium' Launched for Indian Consumers



"Hyderabad, September 01 (Indian Chronicle) : Whirlpool of India has launched its premium 4-door refrigerator range, 'Luxurium', designed to meet the food storage needs of Indian households, according to Nakul Tiwari, Vice President-Marketing, Whirlpool of India. Speaking in a statement issued in the city on Tuesday, Tiwari said the 654-litre refrigerator comes equipped with 360-degree Triple Cooling Technology, three independent cooling systems, a convertible compartment that can be converted within 30 minutes, over 100 storage modes and zero-bending crisper drawers. The refrigerator carries a 3-star BEE energy rating and is available in Duo Noir, Nero Quartz, Dark Quantum, Rhodium Steel and Cosmos Black finishes. The Luxurium range also features Obsidian Interiors, Quad Theatre Lighting, Metal Cooling, a Beverage Rack and iCare Expert, among other features, he said.

BRS to Hold Protest Against 1,000 Days of Congress Government



Massive protest rally from Ambedkar statue to NTR statue in Boduppal today "Manda Sanjeeva Reddy calls upon BRS cadre to participate" "BODUPPAL, SEPTEMBER 1 (INDIAN CHRONICLE): A party coordination meeting was held in Boduppal under the leadership of former ZPTC member and Boduppal BRS president Manda Sanjeeva Reddy and general secretary Meesala Krishna. The meeting discussed in detail the protest programmes to be organised by the BRS from September 1 to 8 against what the party described as the "failed 1,000-day rule" of the Congress government. "Speaking on the occasion, Mandha Sanjeeva Reddy alleged that the Congress came to power by making 420 promises during the elections but had failed to fulfil them. He accused the government of betraying women, farmers, youth and various sections of the people of Telangana during its 1,000 days in office. "As part of the state-wide week-long protest programme called by the BRS, a massive protest rally will be held in Boduppal on September 2. The rally will begin at 9 a.m. from the Ambedkar statue and proceed towards the NTR statue. "Party leaders and activists will carry placards highlighting the 420 promises made by the Congress during the elections. "Mandha Sanjeeva Reddy called upon BRS leaders, former corporators, division presidents and secretaries, Telangana movement activists and party workers to participate in large numbers and make the protest rally a success. "Former Mayor Samala Buchi Reddy, senior leaders Kotha Ravi Goud, Ramachandra Reddy and Bandaram Sridhar Goud, among others, attended the meeting.

50,000 Financial Assistance to Muslim Minority Widows in Ramanthapur MOHAMMED RAFIQ Participates in Cheque Distribution Programme“



“RAMANTHAPUR , SEPTEMBER (INDIAN CHRONICLE): As part of the welfare initiatives being undertaken by the Congress government to provide financial security to widowed women, the “Revanthanna Ka Sahara” programme was organised at the Medchal-Malkajgiri District Collectorate. “The programme was held under the leadership of State IT Minister Sridhar Babu, with State Congress leader Mohammed Rafiq participating in the event.

On the occasion, Mohammed Rafiq distributed financial assistance cheques worth ₹50,000 each to Muslim minority widowed women from Ramanthapur Division, with the support of Uppal Congress Party In-charge Mandumula Parameshwar Reddy. “Speaking on the occasion, Mohammed Rafiq said financial assistance had been sanctioned for 36 Muslim minority women from Ramanthapur Division, and cheques were distributed to six beneficiaries as part of the first phase. “He said the Congress government’s objective was to stand by families in need and provide financial support to economically disadvantaged women. He stated that the government was implementing welfare schemes not merely through words but through concrete action. “Mohammed Rafiq expressed his special gratitude to Chief Minister Revanth Reddy, IT Minister Sridhar Babu and Uppal Congress Party In-charge Mandumula Parameshwar Reddy for their support in making the programme successful. Minority Congress leader Sarf Raj, senior Congress leaders Gangaputra Bhaskar and Cable Ashok, Poyakavargam Youth Congress Vice-President M.D. Shakeel and others were present.

Pay Fee Reimbursement Arrears Immediately, Demands BC Youth Association President Jillepalli Anji Thousands of Students Take Out Rally in Ramanthapur

— Rajya Sabha Member R. Krishnaiah Extends Support“RAMANTHAPUR , SEPTEMBER 1 (INDIAN CHRONICLE): Demanding the immediate payment of pending fee reimbursement and scholarship dues, thousands of students took out a massive rally in Ramanthapur under the leadership of Jillepalli Anji, State President of the BC Youth Association. R. Krishnaiah, National President of the BC Welfare Association and Rajya Sabha Member, participated in the rally in support of the students. “Speaking on the occasion, R. Krishnaiah questioned why the state government was reluctant to clear the fee reimbursement dues of 14 lakh BC, SC, ST and minority students across Telangana. He said that nearly four lakh students who have completed their courses in various colleges across the state are unable to obtain their certificates because of pending fee payments. “He alleged that college managements were pressuring students by refusing to issue certificates until their outstanding fees were paid. Despite studying for as many as five years, many students were unable to obtain their certificates because they could not afford to pay the fees from their own pockets. As a result, they were also unable to apply for government jobs, he said. “Krishnaiah criticized the government, stating that although Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy repeatedly emphasizes the importance of education in public meetings, students were facing serious difficulties because scholarships and fee reimbursement amounts were not being released on time. “He alleged that the present government had not introduced any new welfare scheme for BCs after coming to power and was instead attempting to discontinue schemes that had been implemented by previous governments. He said that student organizations had been protesting for the past two months demanding clearance of fee reimbursement arrears, and that despite political parties extending their support, the government had failed to respond. “Krishnaiah recalled his long-standing struggle for the welfare of BCs, stating that he had fought for their rights under 16 Chief Ministers over the past 50 years. He said previous governments had responded to such movements by introducing several welfare measures. “He recalled that during the tenure of Jalagam Vengala Rao, full mess charges and scholarship schemes were introduced. During the tenure of M. Chenna Reddy, 25 percent reservations were provided in private engineering colleges. He said N. T. Rama Rao introduced



20 percent reservations for BCs in local bodies and increased the number of residential schools. “Krishnaiah said that during the tenure of Y. S. Rajasekhara Reddy, large-scale funds were allocated for fee reimbursement, scholarships and college hostels, describing the initiative as a landmark achievement. During the K. Chandrashekar Rao government, he said, 290 BC residential schools, 206 minority residential schools, 100 SC residential schools and 50 ST residential schools were sanctioned, taking the total to 650 residential schools. “He alleged that previous governments had implemented several welfare schemes for the development of BCs, SCs and STs, while the present government was moving towards discontinuing such schemes. He predicted that Revanth Reddy would go down in history as the “Chief Minister of cancellations. “Demands “The protesters demanded that: “The government immediately release the Rs. 8,000 crore fee reimbursement and scholarship arrears without imposing any conditions. “The fee reimbursement scheme should be continued under the previous system. “Colleges should not collect fees from students at the time of admission. “As promised in the Congress election manifesto, the government should bear the entire fee of students pursuing courses in colleges. “College students’ scholarships should be increased from Rs. 5,000 to Rs. 10,000 per student, on the lines of Andhra Pradesh. “State BC Youth Association President Jillepalli Anji, Neela Venkatesh, Modi Ramdev Yadav, Bachupally Srinivas, G. Ananthaiah, Rajender, Bhaskar, Satish, Srinivas Yadav and others participated in the programme.

BJP LEADER GADDAM SAI KIRAN demands immediate resolution of drinking water and drainage problems in Venkat Reddy Nagar



“UPPAL, SEPTEMBER 1 (INDIAN CHRONICLE): BJP leaders, residents, and welfare association representatives met Water Works Department General Manager (GM) Santosh and submitted a memorandum demanding the immediate resolution of severe drinking water and drainage problems in Venkat Reddy Nagar, Ram Reddy Nagar, and Vasavi Nagar colonies under the Venkat Reddy Nagar Division. “The programme was held under the leadership of BJP leader Gaddam Sai Kiran. During the meeting, Sai Kiran brought to the GM’s attention the drinking water and drainage problems being faced by residents of the colonies. “He stated that sewage water was flowing from taps for the first 15 minutes whenever the water supply was turned on, causing serious inconvenience to residents. He also expressed concern over the health risks posed by the supply of contaminated water. “Demanding a permanent solution to the drainage problems, Sai Kiran called for the reconstruction of approximately 1,000 metres of severely damaged drainage pipeline in Venkat Reddy Nagar and a permanent solution to the 400-metre drainage line problem in Ram Reddy Nagar. “He also demanded the immediate resolution of the overflowing drainage problem in Streets 3, 4 and 5 of Vasavi Nagar, along with the drinking water issue in the area. “Sai Kiran further pointed out that inadequate water pressure in the colonies was affecting the supply of clean drinking water and causing severe hardship to residents. He urged officials to take immediate action on issues affecting public health. “GM assures immediate action: After being briefed about the seriousness of the problems, GM Santosh immediately spoke to the concerned Deputy General Manager and Assistant Engineers over the phone and instructed

them to conduct a field-level inspection. “He assured the delegation that steps would be taken shortly to resolve the 1,000-metre and 400-metre drainage line problems, as well as the contaminated water supply issue. He also assured that immediate measures would be taken to prevent further inconvenience to residents. “Colony welfare association leaders, colony presidents Satyanarayana Goud, Ashok and Nagaraju, Kukkala Satyanarayana, Avula Sudhakar, Gaddam Venkat Sai, and a large number of local residents participated in the programme.

Indiramma Minority Mahila Yojana Cheques Distributed

MEDCHAL-MALKAJGIRI, SEPTEMBER 1 (INDIAN CHRONICLE): A cheque distribution programme for beneficiaries selected under the Indiramma Minority Mahila Yojana was held at the Medchal-Malkajgiri District Collectorate on Tuesday. “State IT and Industries Minister Duddilla Sridhar Babu, MLC and Chief Whip Patnam Mahender Reddy, Medchal-Malkajgiri District Congress Committee President Thotakura Vajresh Yadav, and Uppal Constituency Congress Party In-charge Mandumula Parameshwar Reddy attended the programme as chief guests and distributed cheques to the beneficiaries. “Later, generator equipment was distributed to beneficiaries from Turkayamjal. “Speaking on the occasion, Minister Sridhar Babu said the government was taking steps to ensure that every eligible beneficiary receives the benefits of various welfare schemes. He said the government was giving special priority to the economic empowerment of women and minorities. “District Collector Manu Chowdary, MLA Gandhi, Kamma Corporation Chairman Bandi Ramesh, Minority Corporation Chairman Kotwal Obedulla, Quthbullapur senior Congress leader Bhupathi Reddy, along with Congress leaders from the Uppal constituency, officials and beneficiaries, were present. “

BRS lines up week-long protests in Karimnagar against Congress government

Party alleges failure to implement poll guarantees and promises; Harish Rao and KTR to join rallies.



Karimnagar September 01 (Correspondent): The Bharat Rashtra Samithi (BRS) has announced a week-long programme of protests in the Karimnagar Assembly constituency from September 2 to 8, targeting the Congress government over what the party alleges is its failure to implement the electoral guarantees and promises made in 2023. The programme, announced at a preparatory meeting of senior party leaders here on Monday, will include rallies, human chains and public campaigns, besides submission of petitions on various issues. Former Minister and Karimnagar MLA Gangula Kamalakhar presided over the meeting.

Former Minister and Siddipet MLA T. Harish Rao and BRS working president K.T. Rama Rao (KTR) are scheduled to participate in the programmes on September 3 and 5 respectively. Mr. Kamalakhar alleged that the Congress government had failed to fulfil the six guarantees and 420 promises announced during the Assembly election campaign. He said the BRS would take the alleged failures to the people through the week-long campaign. Mr. Kamalakhar also raised issues relating to irrigation, land restrictions under Section 22-A, G.O. 97, government employees and pensioners, and welfare schemes.

He alleged that farmers in the Karimnagar rural mandal

were facing difficulties due to inadequate irrigation facilities and demanded that water be supplied through the SRSP canal. He also alleged that private lands in parts of Karimnagar had been included in the prohibited properties list under Section 22-A and demanded that genuine grievances of landowners be addressed. On G.O. 97, he alleged that the measure would adversely affect polytechnic students. He also criticised the government over issues concerning dearness allowance and pensions and alleged that the Congress had not fulfilled its promise of providing one tola of gold under the Kalyana Lakshmi scheme. Mr. Kamalakhar contrasted the present administration with the previous BRS government and claimed that Karimnagar had witnessed significant development during the tenure of former Chief Minister K. Chandrashekar Rao. He cited the city renovation programme and the development of Karimnagar under the Smart City initiative. The BRS has planned a series of programmes during the week. On September 2, party workers will form a human chain at Telangana Chowk carrying a 420-foot-long flex highlighting the alleged failure to implement the 420 promises. The party will also distribute what it calls “debt cards” to the public.

On September 3, Mr. Harish Rao will participate in a protest rally from Telangana Chowk to the Collectorate along with people affected by land restrictions under Section 22-A. A special protest highlighting issues concerning senior citizens and persons with disabilities will be organised on September 4. On September 5, Mr. K.T. Rama Rao will participate in a rally involving students and youth from Circus Grounds to the Collectorate. Protests on local issues will be organised in wards and gram panchayats on September 6. Petitions will be submitted at the Prajavani programme at the Collectorate and at mandal headquarters on September 7. The week-long programme will conclude on September 8 with the submission of petitions on public issues at Ambedkar statue locations. Mr. Kamalakhar called upon BRS workers to mobilise people for the programmes and sustain the campaign against what he described as the failures of the Congress government. BRS constituency in-charge Konduru Ravinder Rao, former MLC Naradasu Laxman Rao, city president Challa Harishankar, former District Library Organisation chairman Ponnani Anil Kumar Goud, Rural Mandal president Pendyala Shyamsunder Reddy, Kothapalli Mandal president Kasarapu Srinivas Goud, former Mayor Sardar Ravinder Singh, corporators and former corporators, public representatives and other party leaders attended the meeting.

Talasanani Calls for Student Mobilisation Over Rs 11,000-Crore Fee Reimbursement Dues“



“Hyderabad Correspondent, September 1 (Indian Chronicle): BRS deputy floor leader and former minister Talasanani Srinivas Yadav on Tuesday called on students to mount a united campaign against the Congress government, alleging that its failure to clear fee reimbursement and scholarship dues was jeopardising the future of thousands of students across Telangana. A large group of students led by

ABVP representatives met Talasanani at his camp office in West Marredpally and submitted a memorandum seeking immediate release of the pending amounts. Talasanani said the fee reimbursement scheme was introduced during the tenure of former Chief Minister Y.S. Rajasekhara Reddy to ensure that financial constraints did not prevent poor students from pursuing higher education. He said the previous BRS government had also ensured timely payment of scholarships and fee reimbursement. The Congress government, however, had accumulated dues of around Rs 11,000 crore, leaving several educational institutions reluctant to issue certificates to students who had completed their courses, he alleged. The delay was causing considerable anxiety among students and their parents, he said. “Talasanani assured the students that the BRS would support their campaign and put pressure on the government during the Assembly session beginning September 7 to clear the arrears. Drawing a parallel with student-led protests over the NEET question paper leak, Talasanani urged students to organise themselves and intensify their efforts for the release of the pending funds. ABVP leaders Balu, Abhinay, Gautham and Revanth were among those who submitted the memorandum.

Sahay Foundation Chairman Akula Mahender Presents Clay Ganesha Idol to Uppal MLA Bandari Lakshma Reddy“

“UPPAL, SEPTEMBER 1 (INDIAN CHRONICLE): On the occasion of Ganesh Chaturthi, Sahay Foundation Chairman Akula Mahender presented a clay Ganesha idol to Uppal MLA Bandari Lakshma Reddy at his residence in Sainikpuri. Speaking on the occasion, Akula Mahender said that promoting clay Ganesha idols while giving priority to environmental protection was highly appreciable. He stated that worshipping clay Ganesha idols would help preserve traditional practices while also contributing to environmental conservation. “He described Lord Ganesha as the foremost among the deities, the remover of obstacles and the



deity who fulfils the wishes of devotees. He prayed for the blessings of Lord Ganesha to bring happiness, good health, peace and prosperity into the lives of all people in the Uppal constituency. He also wished that every family would be blessed with joy and well-being.

Commissioner Desai directs officials to expedite SIR, pension and housing processes.

Karimnagar September 01 (Correspondent): Karimnagar Municipal Commissioner Praful Desai has directed ward officers to expedite the receipt and online registration of applications for Cheyutha pensions before the extended deadline of September 15. Reviewing the progress of various government programmes at a meeting with gazetted officers and ward officers at the Karimnagar Municipal Corporation office here on Tuesday, Mr. Desai sought division-wise updates on the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls, Cheyutha pensions and the Indiramma housing programme.

He instructed officials to speed up the selection of beneficiaries under the Indiramma housing scheme, issue proceedings to those selected and facilitate the commencement of house construction. On Cheyutha pensions, Mr. Desai directed officials to identify deceased beneficiaries and submit the details promptly so that the records could be updated. He also asked officials to complete the distribution of notices and hearings under the SIR exercise without delay. Emphasising accountability, the Commissioner told ward officers to remain accessible to residents in their respective divisions and discharge their responsibilities diligently. He warned that negligence in the performance of duties would invite action. Additional Commissioners Aiyaz



and Suvantha, Deputy Commissioners Khader Mohiuddin and Venu Madhav, Executive Engineer Lachireddy and other officials and ward officers attended the meeting.

SUV hits daily wager, man helps him, another car runs both over. Art director’s son held



GNS News Agency, Sept 1

On the morning of August 31, Nandu Lal, a daily wager from Bihar, was walking near the Outer Ring Road (ORR) roundabout in Hyderabad when he was knocked down by a speeding SUV. The driver fled from the spot. Around this time, a man passing by witnessed the mishap and stopped to help a seriously injured Lal. But even as this person, identified as Zaid Quadri, was shifting Lal into his vehicle, another SUV rammed into his car. Due to the impact, Lal died on the spot while Quadri was seriously injured. This vehicle, too, fled from the spot.

Raidurgam Police registered a case and launched a hunt for two hit-and-run drivers, scanned CCTV footage and

identified the vehicle involved in the second collision through its broken bumper. On Tuesday, police determined that the vehicle is owned by Anand Sai, a prominent art director. Police learnt that his son Sandeep was at the wheel when the SUV crashed into Quadri’s vehicle. Raidurgam Police Inspector Thota Bhupathi confirmed that the vehicle involved in the secondary collision was being driven by Sandeep. He was taken into custody and brought to Raidurgam Police Station on Tuesday afternoon. The SUV he was driving has also been seized. First vehicle not traced yet. Meanwhile, the vehicle that first hit Lal, while he was walking towards Khajaguda village, has not been traced yet. Police said they are working to track down the vehicle and arrests would be made in the case soon. This comes barely a fortnight after a similar accident, involving the son of a prominent personality, left one person dead. On August 21, Jana Sena Party’s Rajya Sabha MP Lingamaneni Ramesh’s son Sanjush was summoned by the Cyberabad Police after his Aston Martin hit a woman outside a mall in Hyderabad, causing her death. The incident occurred on August 16, when the 21-year-old was allegedly speeding in the high-end luxury car and hit Bharati Mukhi, a 26-year-old mall employee. Sanjush stopped his vehicle and rushed the victim to a nearby hospital where she was declared dead. Sanjush has not been arrested yet with officials seeking legal opinion in the matter.

Karnataka cops suspended over leaked call about bribes paid for SI postings

GNS News Agency, Sept 1

The Karnataka Police suspended three officers on Monday after their conference call purportedly discussing bribes paid for sub-inspector postings and other transfer-related dealings surfaced on social media. M N Deepan, Superintendent of Police, Uttara Kannada, said sub-inspectors Kiran Patil, Krishna Arageri, and Vinod Reddy were suspended after a preliminary inquiry by an officer of the rank of additional superintendent of police.

Deepan said the departmental inquiry against the officers would continue. “The allegations of bribery referred to in the conference call are being investigated,” he told indianexpress.com. Police sources said Vinod Reddy had served at Haliyal and was transferred to Mundgod. He subsequently served with the Special Investigation Team in Beltangady. Kiran Patil was serving in Haliyal, while Krishna Arageri was attached to the crime wing in Haliyal.

The conversation also discussed monthly kickbacks or commissions officers allegedly pay their seniors. The Op-



position JD(S) shared the two-minute audio online on August 29, alleging corruption in police postings, and demanded the suspension of the officers and a high-level inquiry into the allegations. The police said the departmental inquiry would examine the allegations in detail, including the money discussed in the conference call, and that further action would depend on the inquiry’s findings.

3 held after Modi photo removed from Pune college during Amit Thackeray’s event



Amit, son of Maharashtra Navnirman Sena (MNS) chief Raj Thackeray, had visited Government Polytechnic College, Shivajinagar, as part of a student interaction and membership programme. (ANI Videograb) Amit, son of Maharashtra Navnirman Sena (MNS) chief Raj Thackeray, had visited Government Polytechnic College, Shivajinagar, as part of a student interaction and membership programme. (ANI Videograb)

The police arrested three people after a group led by Amit Thackeray, son of Maharashtra Navnirman Sena (MNS) chief Raj Thackeray, allegedly removed Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s portrait from a Pune polytechnic college’s office on Monday. He allegedly questioned the authorities about the cleanliness of the college’s hostel, mess, and toilets. The FIR names Amit Thackeray, president of the Maharashtra Navnirman Vidyarthi Sena, as an accused and refers to 20-25 unidentified office-bearers, stu-

dents, and workers of the organisation who allegedly accompanied him.

According to the FIR, Thackeray and the group arrived at the administrative office of Government Polytechnic Pune around 12.30 pm without permission. He allegedly gave instructions loudly after questioning the officials over cleanliness. The group visited the college in Shivajinagar as part of a student interaction and membership programme. College principal Rajendra Kashiram Patil said in his complaint that a person accompanying Thackeray was asked to remove Modi’s portrait displayed on the left wall of the office. When Patil objected, the person allegedly removed the portrait forcibly. Patil further said the group threatened him and teachers and administrative officials present in the office. They were allegedly told that the group would return and launch an agitation if the instructions were not followed within eight days.

The FIR alleges that the group remained inside the office without any reason and raised “MNS Zindabad” and “Maharashtra Navnirman Vidyarthi Sena Vijay Aso”, among other slogans, causing a commotion. “Three persons have been arrested, and further investigation is on,” said Chilumula Rajnikanth, Deputy Commissioner of Police (Zone 4). The Chaturshringi police registered the case on charges including criminal trespass, unlawful assembly, obstructing a public servant, criminal intimidation, and abetment. Thackeray has said he is proud of having removed the Modi portrait. “Yes, I got the portrait of the prime minister hanging directly beside the portraits of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj and Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar removed,” he told reporters.

Woman dies, 6 injured after real estate developer rams car into bike, 3 autos

Krishna Chamankar, a prominent real estate developer who was once named in the Maharashtra Sadan money laundering scam involving Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) leader Chhagan Bhujbal, was arrested on Monday after his MG Windsor allegedly rammed into a motorcycle and three autorickshaws at a traffic signal in Malad, killing a 34-year-old woman and injuring six others. Chamankar, a partner in K S Chamankar Enterprises, was arrested allegedly for driving rashly, negligently and dangerously. He was produced before a court on Monday and remanded in judicial custody.

In 2016, the Enforcement Directorate (ED) had registered a money-laundering case against Krishna Chamankar. The Bombay High Court, however, quashed the ED case in 2025. According to the police, Chamankar told investigators that when he reached the SV Road junction in Malad (West), he believed his car was in neutral and moving slowly. He said he attempted to apply the brake but allegedly pressed the accelerator instead. A medical examination at a government hospital found no alcohol in Chamankar’s blood sample, police said.

The accident occurred around 8-8.30 pm when Priyanka Satra and her husband, Mayank Satra, were returning home after buying vegetables. They were waiting at the traffic signal on their motorcycle when Chamankar’s car allegedly hit them from behind. Priyanka, a law graduate and mother of two, was thrown off the motorcycle and suffered serious head injuries. She was rushed to hospital but died during treatment. Mayank suffered fractures and back injuries and was admitted to hospital. After hitting the



According to the police, Chamankar told investigators that when he reached the SV Road junction in Malad (West), he believed his car was in neutral and moving slowly. He said he attempted to apply the brake but allegedly pressed the accelerator instead.

motorcycle, Chamankar’s car allegedly crashed into three autorickshaws. Their drivers – Subhedar Chandra Gautam (50), Ramkesh Rajbhar (35) and Abdul Rehman Shaikh (25) – were injured. Two passengers also reported injuries, police said. A police team has been sent to the hospital to verify the passengers’ claims and record their statements.

Priyanka’s relatives gathered at Malad police station late on Sunday night and demanded strict action against Chamankar.

Shakti Sharma becomes first woman non-medical officer to attain air vice marshal rank



New Delhi: In a historic milestone for the Indian Air Force, Air Vice Marshal Shakti Sharma has become the first woman officer (non-medical) in the country’s armed forces to attain the rank of air vice marshal or equivalent, officials said on Tuesday. She assumed the appointment of assistant chief of the air staff (education) at the Air Headquarters on September 1, they said. The air officer previ-

ously held the rank of air commodore, an IAF official said. “In a historic milestone for the Indian Air Force, Air Vpice Marshal Shakti Sharma became the first woman officer (non-medical) in the Indian Defence Forces to attain the rank of Air Vice Marshal (or equivalent),” the defence ministry said.

Commissioned into the Education Branch of the IAF on June 18, 1994, AVM Sharma brings a wealth of experience to her new role, spanning diverse postings across training establishments, field stations, command headquarters and the Air Headquarters, it said. “Throughout her career, she has spearheaded key institutional initiatives, including establishing the IAF Chairs of Excellence at IIT Kanpur and Pune University to drive academic and strategic defence collaboration. She also created history as the first woman officer from the Tri-Services to command a Sainik School, serving as principal of Sainik School, Kapurthala,” the ministry said in a statement.

This landmark achievement marks a new chapter in the journey of women officers in the Indian defence forces. With over three decades of distinguished service, she continues to inspire generations to ‘Touch the Sky with Glory’ — the motto of the IAF, it said.

NCERT preparing revised textbooks for classes 10 to 12 in mission mode

New Delhi: Revised NCERT textbooks for classes 10 to 12 are being prepared in mission mode, Union Education Minister Pralhad Joshi said on Tuesday. The minister also said that the textbooks for classes 1 to 9 as per the new National Curriculum Framework (NCF) have already been released.

Joshi made the comments in his address at the 66th Foundation Day of National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT). “NCERT is playing a crucial role in building a Viksit Bharat and nurturing skilled, capable, and globally responsible human resources through quality education. The new textbooks for classes 1 to 9 are already out and the textbooks for classes 10 to 12 are being prepared in mission mode,” he said.

Joshi noted that in the last two years artificial intelligence has “rapidly become part of our everyday lives”. “With passing years, the AI usage is increasing and even younger groups are using it. Our textbooks and curricula must evolve with these changes and help our young learners to understand use and engage with AI confidently and also responsibly,” he said. “The new National Education Policy (NEP) talks about all these challenges and requirements. Works should also be done to make parents more alert about this and counsel and monitor children accordingly,” he said.



Joshi said with ageing population rising in several countries, India’s human resource is not only an asset for the country but also for the world. “Several countries are dealing with ageing population but India has significant youth population. Our human resource is not only an asset for India but also for the world. Our human resource ranking is going to move up higher in few years. Similarly, the Viksit Bharat mission is not only important for India but also for rest of the world,” he said.

Police deny permission for BRS farmers’ rally in Miryalaguda on September 3



Nalgonda: Police have denied permission for the BRS party’s farmers’ rally and public meeting in Miryalaguda on September 3, citing law and order and traffic concerns. The rally and meeting are part of a week-long protest being organised by the party across the State to expose the failures of the 1,000-day Congress government. The BRS had planned to hold the rally from the flyover bridge to Rajiv Chowk between 1 pm and 5 pm, followed by a public meeting at Rajiv Chowk. BRS working president KT Rama Rao was scheduled to participate.

Former MLA and Miryalaguda constituency in-charge Nallamothu Bhaskar Rao had sought permission, stating that the programme was aimed at highlighting farmers’ con-

cerns, including agriculture, irrigation, power, urea shortage and Rythu Bharosa. In its order, the Miryalaguda Sub-Divisional Police Officer said Rajiv Chowk was a major junction with narrow approach roads and heavy traffic. The police cited the lack of adequate alternative routes and parking space, warning that a large gathering could disrupt traffic on all sides.

The police also pointed out that National Highway-167, connecting Kodad and Jadcherla, passes through Rajiv Chowk and said the meeting could disrupt traffic on the highway. The presence of government and other important offices in the area was another reason cited. However, the police said the BRS could hold a protest at a function hall or ground at another location without causing inconvenience to the public. The police reportedly also cited that Section 30 was in force in the town. However, former Minister and Suryapet MLA G Jagadish Reddy declared that the farmers’ protest would be held in Miryalaguda despite the denial of permission. He asserted that KT Rama Rao would attend the programme, notwithstanding the Congress government’s attempts to prevent the protest. He said while Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy was questioning the absence of BRS chief and former Chief Minister K Chandrashekhara Rao from public life, his continued political relevance in Telangana was causing fear among the ruling establishment. “In 1,000 days of his rule, Revanth Reddy had not spent even 1,000 seconds without referring to KCR. That indicates his fear,” he added.

Family, Left activists bid tearful adieu to former Maoist leader Radhakka in Adilabad



Adilabad: Final rites of former Maoist leader Kursenga Motibai alias Radhakka, wife of the outfit’s central committee member Pulluri Prasad Rao or Chandranna, were performed at Pippaldhari village in Adilabad Rural mandal on Tuesday. Radhakka, 55, suffered a cardiac arrest and died while undergoing treatment at RIMS-Adilabad on Monday evening. She had joined the party after being attracted to its ideologies in 1984. She was the first woman leader from a tribal community. She had served in different positions. She rose through the ranks to become a State committee member. She led the Mangi squad and later worked for the party in Chattisgarh state in 1998.

Family members, locals, artists and activists of Left parties paid floral tributes to the leader. They sang songs hailing Radhakka. They opined that Radhakka played a vital role in strengthening the movement. They observed that

she had fought for the rights of tribal people. They remarked that her contributions would be remembered forever. Radhakka was caught by police while on her way to a hospital in Khammam in 2017. She was in jail for four years. She was released after cases booked against her were struck off by courts. She, along with her husband, was living in Ramagundam after Chandranna surrendered himself before police in November 2025. She visited her parents at Pippaldhari three days back.

Shreyas Iyer to lead India in T20I series against Afghanistan

GNS News Agency, Sept 1

Hyderabad: Shreyas Iyer will lead India in the three-match T20 International series against Afghanistan, to be played in Delhi from September 13 to 17.

The selection of Nitish Kumar Reddy, Washington Sundar, Jasprit Bumrah and Harshit Rana is subject to fitness clearance.

India’s squad: Shreyas Iyer (captain), Abhishek Sharma, Vaibhav Sooryavanshi, Sanju Samson (wicketkeeper), Ishan Kishan (wicketkeeper), Tilak Varma (vice-captain), Shivam Dube, Nitish Kumar Reddy, Axar Patel, Washington Sundar, Varun Chakaravathy, Ravi Bishnoi, Jasprit Bumrah, Arshdeep Singh and Harshit Rana.

From chai to pizza, a city learning to stay awake



Chandigarh 24x7 shops, Chandigarh 24x7 operations, Chandigarh 24x7 shops list, shops open 24 hours Chandigarh, Chandigarh night economy, Chandigarh late night shops, Chandigarh restaurants 24x7, 24x7 businesses Chandigarh, Chandigarh night-time economy, Chandigarh commercial operations, Sector 8-B Chandigarh, Chandigarh late night food, Indian Express newsrom fast-food outlets and chai counters to pharmacies, grocery stores and paan shops, the city's 24x7 commercial footprint is expanding. (Express Photo/Enhanced using AI) Chandigarh may have secured permission to stay awake, but the city's businesses are discovering that staying open through the night is another matter altogether.

Nearly two years after the administration launched its 24x7 commercial operations initiative, almost 200 establishments are now on the list: from McDonald's, pizza outlets, and chai counters to pharmacies, grocery stores, paan shops, and petrol pumps. The number of establishments opting for 24x7 operations has risen more than threefold from the initial 48. "We are encouraging people to register for 24x7 commercial operations under ease of doing business in the city. Women's safety and adherence to labour laws are two key aspects under this initiative, which we are fully ensuring by coordinating with the department concerned, including the Chandigarh Police," Nishant Yadav, Deputy Commissioner, told The list of nearly 200 establishments paints a picture of a city trying to build a late-night economy that goes well beyond traditional nightlife. Major fast-food chains feature prominently. McDonald's, KFC, Domino's, Pizza Hut and Subway have multiple outlets listed for 24x7 operations across sectors including 8-C, 15-C, 22, 35-C, 40-C, 47-C, Manimajra and the Industrial Area. Tea,

too, has found a place in the city's round-the-clock experiment. Chai Sutta Bar, along with Punjabi Chai, Desi Urban Chai, and Audi Chaiwala, features on the list, adding a distinctly local flavour to the late-night food economy. Desserts and quick-service outlets are also part of the mix, with establishments such as Baskin Robbins, Theobroma Foods, The Belgian Waffle Co and Superdonuts among those listed.

Its 24x7 establishments span a wide range of food options, from Baba Chicken, World of Wings and Tikka World to The Belgian Waffle Co, Cakes & Stuff, Superdonuts and El Mexicano. The concentration suggests that Sector 8-B could emerge as one of the city's more prominent late-night food clusters — provided there is enough customer demand to sustain these operations. Grocery and convenience stores, pharmacies and delivery-related establishments have also opted for round-the-clock operations. Blink Commerce has several establishments listed across sectors including 17-B, 34-A and 37-D, while Chandigarh Pharmacy in Sector 11-D is among the pharmacies on the list. Even paan shops and petrol pumps feature. DP Paan House in Sector 15-D, Pandey Paan and Confectioner in Sector 8-C and Nankhu Pan & Confectionery in Sector 44-D have submitted undertakings for round-the-clock operations. Indian Oil outlets in sectors 7 and 33 and a Bharat Petroleum outlet in Sector 21 are also on the list. Taken together, the entries suggest that Chandigarh's 24x7 experiment is evolving from an attempt to keep a few essential or high-demand businesses open into a wider after-midnight commercial ecosystem.

The bigger question, however, is whether the growing list of establishments translates into a sustainable late-night economy. For businesses, staying open through the night means additional manpower, higher electricity and operational costs and, in many cases, separate staff for night shifts. Several entrepreneurs who initially attempted round-the-clock operations say the limited late-night footfall did not justify those expenses. "Some people I know had also tried keeping their outlets open round the clock, but they could not sustain it for long," said Abhishek Bajaj, who owns Sindhi Sweets, a chain of shops. Some eventually stopped operating through the night after finding that revenues failed to cover the additional costs. "Delhi and Gurgaon, however, have an advantage because public transport connectivity continues through the night and several companies and offices operate round the clock, creating a steady stream of people even during late hours. Chandigarh does not have the same ecosystem yet," Bajaj added.

Mrinaltai Gore flyover's 'super smooth' surface leaves bikers slipping

GNS News Agency, Sept 1

The recently opened arm of the Mrinaltai Gore flyover has once again come under the scanner just two months after its inauguration. This time, locals have flagged the 'extremely smooth' surface of the bridge, which has reportedly left many bikers and two-wheelers skidding and led netizens to mock the 'advanced technology' that the citizens are not ready for. Speaking to The Indian Express, residents said Mrinaltai Gore flyover's 'super smooth' surface on the road mastic has become increasingly perilous for motorists. "The site where repeated skidding is being reported is situated on a downward slope. The mastic on the road is super smooth and everytime it rains, the roads become furthermore slippery. This patch has now become a magnet for accidents in the area," said Dhaval Shah, co-founder of Lokhandwala Oshiwara Citizen's Association (LOCA).

Karan Jotwani, co-founder of LOCA, told The Indian Express: "The smooth surface is causing the frequent skidding. To resolve the issue, the BMC must deploy rough tar on the top layer in a bid to make the roads rougher and thereby, less slippery." Inaugurated in July, the flyover provides a direct link between Ram Mandir and Goregaon, allowing motorists to directly zip through instead of taking the SV Road or Link Road. It has also garnered much attention for its cost escalation, prolonged construction period, as well as patchy road surface. Now, citizens have blamed the Mumbai civic body for carrying out shoddy work on the flyover. It has denied the allegations. The 750-metre flyover,



built for Rs 247.97 crore, took nearly eight years to complete. During this period, the project's cost rose by nearly 45 per cent from the original estimate of Rs 170.82 crore. With its 'super smooth' surface making people have the ride of their lives, social media hasn't stayed behind in having its share of fun. "Mrinal tai flyover in Mumbai also comes with the revolutionary 'smooth ride' technology that apparently improve your vehicle's mileage.. Only small issue: the technology is so advanced that bikers haven't learnt how to use it yet.. so they keep falling," a user on social media wrote on X. Earlier in June, some videos surfaced on social media, purportedly showing a melting road surface, loose gravel, and, in one case, a portion of the road caving in under the weight of a motorcycle stand, triggering outrage.

Punjab influencer Manjit Kaur's mother seeks answers after her death



GNS News Agency, Sept 1 Her daughter is dead. The memorial prayer service is yet to take place. With no other support, Kanta Devi has been forced to postpone her grief, compelled instead to piece together the final weeks of her daughter, Punjabi social media influencer Manjit Kaur. Kaur, who was allegedly kidnapped and assaulted before being set on fire in a forested area near Morinda on the night of July 3-4, died at a Chandigarh hospital on August 26. Her family has accused two acquaintances of kidnapping her and the police of failing to record her statement in time. "I am all alone. No man is there to support me. My daughter's bhog (prayer service) has not taken place. I am doing everything myself with a small child to care for," Devi told s. Devi lives with her 11-year-old son, Manjit Kaur's younger brother, in their home in Kharar. Manjit moved out of her family home about a year and a half ago, relocating to New Chandigarh to build an independent life. A divorced mother of a seven-year-old son who lives with his father, she started a beauty parlour business and regularly sent financial support to her mother. Devi recalled that her daughter was planning to start a new life. "She told me she would marry soon. I didn't know much about her personal plans, only that she was preparing to settle down again." The long gap between the alleged crime and Manjit Kaur's death has made the investigation difficult. The police are trying to establish the vehicle allegedly used to take her away, while crucial CCTV footage is no longer available. According to the police, the autopsy

report revealed that she was around seven weeks pregnant when she died. For Devi, time has made one thing increasingly urgent: the need to know the truth. She does not speak of revenge, nor does she claim to have all the answers. She wants to understand what happened to the daughter whose life, she says, she only knew in fragments during her final months. "I just want to know what happened to my daughter, and the truth should come out," she said.

Second phase IT Hub construction works in Khammam delayed

Khammam: Even five years after the foundation stone was laid for the construction of the second-phase IT Hub in Khammam, the building work remains incomplete. The Congress government's alleged negligence has delayed the construction, much to the chagrin of local unemployed youth, who had hoped to find employment if IT Hub-II was established.

It may be recalled that former IT and Industries Minister K T Rama Rao laid the foundation stone for IT Hub-II on April 2, 2021, following the success of IT Hub-I, which was established in December 2020 at Yellandu Circle in Khammam city to promote the information technology (IT) industry in tier-II cities. Rs 36 crore was sanctioned by the Telangana Industrial Infrastructure Corporation (TGIC) for the construction of IT Tower-II, with a built-up area of 55,000 square feet and a seating capacity of 570. Speaking to Telangana Today, educationist and senior BRS leader Gundala Krishna noted that although the contractor was given a one-year deadline to complete the construction, the project remains unfinished. As a result, local engineering graduates are missing out on a valuable opportunity to secure employment within the district itself. IT Hub-II is expected to provide employment to more than 1,500 people across three shifts, with 550 people working at a time, he said.

Zomato bans analogue dairy dishes, warns of action against restaurants



GNS News Agency, Sept 1 New Delhi: Food delivery aggregator Zomato on Monday announced a zero-tolerance policy on the sale of dishes containing analogue dairy products, including analogue cheese and paneer, by restaurants listed on its platform, saying it reserves the right to delist non-compliant restaurants. Analogue dishes replace traditional ingredients with cheaper or alternative substitutes, such as plant oils instead of real milk or cheese, while retaining a similar look and texture.

The move comes against the backdrop of renewed focus on food safety following a reported State-wide crackdown by the Food and Drug Administration in Maharashtra and inspections by the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) at five-star hotels in Delhi. With immediate effect, dishes that restaurant partners have declared as containing analogue dairy products have been delisted from the platform, Zomato said. Restaurant partners that remain non-compliant will also be delisted from the platform, it added. In a communication issued to merchants listed on the platform on Monday, Zomato said, "Our priority is to

ensure that customers receive food that is accurately represented, safe and meets the expected quality standards.

"Accordingly, we are implementing a zero-tolerance policy on the listing and supply of food products containing analogue cheese, analogue paneer and other analogue dairy products on our platform." The food delivery aggregator said the initiative was being undertaken to strengthen transparency and food quality for consumers, in line with food safety and regulatory requirements. "For restaurants that have already declared the use of analogue cheese, analogue paneer or other analogue dairy products on their menus, such items will be turned off from the platform with immediate effect," Zomato stated. It called upon restaurant partners to take immediate measures, including transitioning to natural dairy products; removing items containing analogue dairy products from their menus where such a transition is not immediately feasible; and reviewing product labels and ingredient declarations provided by suppliers to verify the ingredients being used and ensure the accurate representation of products listed on Zomato.

"If a restaurant is found to be non-compliant, Zomato reserves the right to delist such restaurants from the platform, in addition to taking any other action available to us under our policies and applicable law," Zomato stated. Zomato also reserves the right to recover any loss, cost, damage or expense that the company may incur or suffer if non-compliant products are delivered to customers, it added in the communication. Aditya Mangla, CEO of Zomato, said: "At Zomato, our core mission is better food for more people, and that means safeguarding customer health and upholding clear standards for what's listed and served by our restaurant partners. This policy reflects that commitment, one we're taking together with partners who share it."

IOC ramps up LPG production 30pc amid Strait of Hormuz disruptions



New Delhi: State-owned Indian Oil Corporation (IOC) ramped up liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) production by nearly 30 per cent and kept its refineries operating at more than 100 per cent utilisation as disruptions to maritime trade through the Strait of Hormuz threatened India's energy supplies, its chairman said on Monday. The company also diversified its crude sourcing, realigned refinery operations and secured alternative supplies as the escalating conflict in West Asia disrupted global energy markets, IOC Chairman Arvinder Singh Sahney said in his address at the company's 67th annual general meeting.

"For IndianOil, the priority during this unprecedented crisis has remained crystal clear — to maintain continuity of energy supplies despite constrained sourcing options and volatile international markets," he said.

India imports more than 88 per cent of its crude oil requirements, while about 45 per cent of its crude imports and nearly 90 per cent of its LPG imports are linked to the Strait of Hormuz, underscoring the exposure of the world's third-largest oil consumer to disruptions in the strategic waterway. Shopping For Authentic South Asian Apparel

"With close monitoring and guidance from the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas, our teams have responded with agility — diversifying crude sourcing, realigning refinery operations and strengthening supply-chain coordination to secure alternative supplies, optimise cargo movements and rebalance products across regions," he said. IOC used 24-hour control rooms, daily reviews and real-time market monitoring to respond to supply gaps, he said, adding that the company had maintained product availability despite a "significant shift away from Middle Eastern crude grades".

"Despite a significant shift away from Middle Eastern crude grades, our refineries operated at more than 100 per cent utilisation, LPG production was ramped up by nearly 30 per cent within a short period, and our gas business maintained supplies to priority sectors while securing additional LNG from diversified geographies," he said. The dis-

ruption came as IOC reported record operating performance. For the year ended March 2026, the company posted a standalone net profit of Rs 36,802 crore on a turnover of about Rs 8.86 lakh crore, with aggregate sales exceeding 105 million tonnes across petroleum products, natural gas and petrochemicals. Its refineries processed a record 75.45 million tonnes of crude during the year, while liquid pipeline throughput reached a record 102.52 million tonnes and domestic petroleum product sales rose to an all-time high of 88.97 million tonnes.

The momentum continued into the first quarter of the current financial year. IOC processed a record 19.17 million tonnes of crude at 109.4 per cent capacity utilisation, while pipeline throughput reached a quarterly record of 28.55 million tonnes. Its domestic petroleum product market share rose to 43.1 per cent, the chairman said. "While profitability during the quarter remained under pressure from higher crude costs arising from the West Asia conflict, the strength of our operating performance gives us confidence in the underlying resilience of your company," Sahney said.

The company is also accelerating investment in its core refining operations. Expansions at Panipat, Gujarat and Barauni are expected to raise IOC's group refining capacity from 80.75 million tonnes a year to about 98 million tonnes. As India expands its refining capacity towards 300 million tonnes a year, IOC expects to account for more than 40 per cent of the incremental capacity, he said.

The company is simultaneously seeking to reduce its dependence on its traditional refining business, targeting higher contributions from petrochemicals, natural gas, renewables, biofuels, green hydrogen and sustainable aviation fuel. It plans to raise its petrochemical intensity to about 15 per cent by 2030 and increase natural gas sales by 1.5 times by the same year. It also aims to raise upstream integration to more than 10 per cent by 2031. On the energy-transition front, construction has begun on a large-scale green hydrogen plant at Panipat, while IOC has received ISCC CORSIA certification for sustainable aviation fuel production through co-processing at the refinery. Its renewable energy arm, Terra Clean, is developing 1 gigawatt of capacity, with another 4.3 gigawatts under preparation. Sahney said the experience of the West Asia crisis had reinforced the need to build resilience before disruptions occur. "Resilience has to be built before it is tested," he said. "In an uncertain world, energy security depends not only on scale, but equally on agility, diversification and preparedness." He said IOC's approach would be to evolve into a more diversified and integrated energy company while keeping national energy security at the centre of its strategy.

Mettur dam to open for Cauvery delta irrigation as inflow rises



The Mettur dam will be opened on Tuesday to release water for Cauvery delta irrigation as inflow into the reservoir rose to 10,485 cusecs. Increased discharge from Karnataka's upstream reservoirs has raised hopes among farmers preparing for paddy cultivation

Salem: Tamil Nadu Chief Minister, C. Joseph Vijay, will open the Mettur dam on Tuesday to release water for irrigation in the Cauvery delta, even as inflow into the reservoir increased to 10,485 cubic feet per second (cusecs). The improved inflow has brought relief to farmers preparing for paddy cultivation across the delta districts. The release is expected to support agricultural operations throughout the Cauvery basin, particularly in tail-end areas where water normally takes several days to arrive. Heavy rainfall in the Cauvery catchment areas of Karnataka has led to a steady increase in the storage levels of the Kabini and

Krishnaraja Sagar reservoirs. As the two reservoirs are filling rapidly, Karnataka authorities have increased the discharge of surplus water into the Cauvery.

The volume of surplus water released from Karnataka had been reduced during the previous two days. However, the discharge was stepped up again from Sunday, resulting in a gradual increase in the quantity of water reaching the Mettur reservoir. According to Water Resources Department officials, inflow into the dam rose from 9,035 cusecs to 10,485 cusecs. The increased arrival of water is expected to strengthen the reservoir's position ahead of the planned release for delta irrigation. The water level in the dam stood at 90.47 feet, while the available storage was recorded at 53.70 thousand million cubic feet (tmcf).

Meanwhile, 2,000 cusecs continued to be released from the reservoir to meet drinking-water requirements in districts dependent on the Cauvery. CM Vijay will formally open the sluice gates on Tuesday, marking the commencement of irrigation supply to the delta districts. Officials are expected to regulate the discharge after assessing the reservoir's storage, inflow from Karnataka and the requirements of farmers. The release assumes significance as cultivators have sought an adequate and uninterrupted water supply during the paddy-growing season. Farmers in tail-end districts have also appealed to the government to manage the available water carefully to ensure that it reaches all irrigation command areas. The steady rise in inflow ahead of the opening of the dam is being viewed as an encouraging development for Cauvery delta agriculture. Officials will continue to monitor rainfall in Karnataka and the discharge from upstream reservoirs to assess the likely inflow into Mettur over the coming days.

‘Sad that Messi faced so much disrespect’: Leander Paes slams TMC, questions Bengal’s sports infrastructure



GNS News Agency, Sept 1

Days after joining the BJP, tennis legend Leander Paes on Saturday slammed the Trinamool Congress (TMC) government for its handling of the Lionel Messi GOAT tour in December 2025, saying that the manner in which the Argentine football great was treated was “sad and disrespectful”. He also alleged that West Bengal lacks infrastructure for sports other than cricket and football. “It is a sad feeling that Messi faced so much disrespect—that was very wrong. If Dada Sourav Ganguly or his brother Snehasish Ganguly had handled it, they would have protected him and the name of the state. If a player had been made the sports minister, this would not have happened,” Paes, who was with the TMC earlier, said, speaking in Bengali and Hindi. Messi’s appearance in Kolkata had ended in chaos and confusion with angry fans vandalising the stadium.

Paes also spoke about his identity, saying he feels hurt when people question whether he is Bengali. “My name is not Sourav Ganguly, but I am Bengali and Indian. When someone questions my Bengali identity, it hurts me. Politics is a new game...I will play it with class, dignity, passion, and patriotism. I will not speak ill of anyone. My mother is Bengali, my father was a Portuguese Christian. He passed away seven months ago, but we all belong to this country,” he said.Speaking about his life in Kolkata, Paes said he was born in the city. “My journey in tennis and sports began at a club in Kolkata. I studied at La Martiniere School.

In the Kolkata Maidan, I learned sports. The feeling in my heart to play for the country, I learned from here,” he said.Only 2 stadiums hereHighlighting a need for sports infrastructure, Paes said, “In Kolkata, sports have huge potential. The city has a rich history in sports. When I was born, my dream was to play for the country. The effort I put in in 40 years—be it 20 Grand Slams or to motivate kids—I struggled for 40 years,” he said.“There are only two stadiums here: Eden Gardens and Salt Lake Stadium. For children who play other sports, what has Bengal given them? Bengal has no stadium for Davis Cup, no indoor stadium. In summer or monsoon, children cannot play for 6-7 months. Norman Pritchard [the first athlete overall to win two medals in one Olympics for India] was born here in 1900. Only four Olympic medals have come from Kolkata in over 100 years. The infrastructure has not improved,” Paes pointed out.The tennis legend said that after joining the BJP, he met Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who spoke to him as a “son of Bengal”. “I told him I do not want Bengal to become an old-age home. I want to bring life to Bengal’s youth, not let them be brain-dead or forced to move to another state. Sports, sports education, industry, infrastructure, and ancillary businesses—I want to spread Bengal’s name across the world. The Prime Minister listened to me,” Paes said, adding that PM Modi gave him “seven visions” focused on sports and youth development.“He has given a boy from Bengal the opportunity to serve the nation. We will move forward with this and aim to make the country a superpower. By 2036, the country will achieve something different,” he added.On March 31, just weeks before the West Bengal Assembly elections, Paes joined the BJP in the presence of Union ministers Kiren Rijiju and Sukanta Majumdar at the party headquarters in New Delhi.His switch to the BJP came after a five-year association with the TMC, which began in October 2021. At the time, Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee had described him as a “younger brother”. He campaigned for the party during the Goa elections in 2022 but did not contest. Later, he was left out of the party’s 69-member Goa state committee announced in January 2022.Assembly elections will be held in two phases in West Bengal, on April 23 and April 29. The results will be announced on May 4.

‘People rushed onto streets, calls failed’: How 4 from UP made it home from Nepal

GNS News Agency, Sept 1

For 23-year-old Ashutosh Mani Upadhyay, his first flight was also his way out of flood-hit Nepal.He had travelled to Nepal just two months ago to work as a junior pipeline fitter at a factory in Rasuwa district. But before he could settle into his new job, he found himself being evacuated by helicopter along with five other Uttar Pradesh residents.Rasuwa was among the worst-hit areas, though Ashutosh said he was away from the area when the floods struck.

“There was a sense of fear and uncertainty everywhere in Nepal,” he recounted. “I was told to board a helicopter that would take us to a safer place. I was excited because I had never travelled by air before. The flight lasted only a few minutes but I will remember for the rest of my life,” he added.The six were flown to a cantonment area, where they completed the necessary formalities before hiring a vehicle to travel to Gorakhpur in Uttar Pradesh. Ashutosh reached his hometown of Mureli Gadwa village on Monday.For families across Uttar Pradesh, the wait for news from relatives stranded in Nepal has begun to ease.The Uttar Pradesh Relief Commissioner’s emergency helpline received calls about 22 people whose families had lost contact with them. Families of 10 of them have since told authorities that their relatives are home and safe, an official said.Some were evacuated with the help of the Nepal government and officials stationed there, while others made their own way back.‘I was afraid the borders could be sealed’Krishna Pratap Singh, 45, had travelled from Aligarh to Nepal on August 21 in search of work.

“I was terrified after hearing that a large number of people had been killed and property damaged just a few kilometres from where I was staying. There was a huge rush in Kathmandu, with people from outside the city struggling to find a way back home. There was no local government official or organisation to help us,” said Singh, who works in the wood business.He said he tried to contact his family but couldn’t reach them.“I decided to return... The family with whom I was staying also pressured me to go home. I was also afraid that the borders could be sealed,” he said.Singh said Nepalese authorities later flew him to the India-Nepal border, from where he travelled by road and



entered India.‘Come back home immediately’On August 27, when Raj Kumar Gautam, 44, finally managed to call his family in Maharajganj from Kathmandu, they had only one thing to tell him: Come back home immediately.

Gautam had been working with a local contractor involved in making wooden furniture in Kathmandu for the past year. He has been travelling to Nepal for work regularly for the past two decades.He said panic had spread across Nepal after reports of flooding and widespread damage emerged. “There was widespread chaos. Phone calls were not going through and even the WiFi was not working. I knew my family would be worried, and I was desperately trying to contact them to tell them that I was safe.”Gautam said people had rushed onto the streets, desperately looking for any possible way to leave Nepal. “I somehow managed to find a vehicle carrying other passengers and made my way to Maharajganj via Bihar,” he added.“When I finally reached home, my three daughters and son surrounded me, relieved to see me back,” said Raj Kumar, a resident of Jagannathpur village in Maharajganj.For Deepak Gupta’s family in Bareilly, the fear began when his phone stopped connecting.The 33-year-old travels to Nepal for six to seven months every year to sell artificial jewellery and gemstones sourced from Delhi. He was in Kathmandu when the floods hit.“We became worried when we could not reach him on his phone,” said his elder brother, Vijay Gupta.

“He said his phone had been stolen amid the rush and panic. He was in Kathmandu,” said Vijay.

Why a nation of world-class minds fails to retain its own talent

A few months ago, a friend expressed a concern that now feels almost universal among Indian parents. Despite the country’s expanding higher-education map, she struggled to find a college that offered rigorous, practice-oriented learning for her son. Her search had already drifted toward universities abroad. This led me to ask: What propels so many youngsters to look beyond their own borders? Is it the allure of a privileged global tag? Or does our higher education system fail to inspire confidence and offer growth opportunities? This is the paradox of modern India: a country that produces world-class talent but struggles to retain it.As the Ministry of External Affairs reports, the number of Indian students going abroad has surged from 1.3 million in 2023 to more than 1.8 million in 2025. Data from the Reserve Bank of India’s quarterly balance of payments further shows that this outward push has contributed to a \$6-billion deficit. For a nation that proclaims itself an innovation hub, the irony is unmistakable: our finest minds continue to enrich foreign economies, laboratories, and knowledge systems.Aspirational and economical

At one end are elite institutions with limited seats that push top scorers to look abroad; at the other, few Indian colleges offer jobs that repay tuition within a year, making overseas education both aspirational and economically sensible. Students often earn far more abroad for comparable roles, and many countries heighten this appeal with post-study work visas and pathways to long-term residency that add substantial future value. Layered onto this are anxieties about outdated pedagogy, the friction of urban living, and the desire for cleaner, freer, more cosmopolitan environments.For some, foreign education is a release from

India’s relentless academic sorting mechanisms; for others, it becomes a chance to reinvent themselves, unburdened by the expectations and labels that shape their performance at home. The exodus reflects both India’s structural gaps and a testament to the expanding horizons of its youth.

It is not enough to slow the outward flow of talent. What we need to do is to build an academic ecosystem that truly matches the ambitions of this generation. This requires moving beyond a handful of elite “islands of excellence” and cultivating a far broader landscape of schools and universities that offer credible, world-class environments. By 2047, India will need an education system that fosters confidence, curiosity, and creative risk-taking.While recent emphasis on strengthening foundational learning is a welcome step, a deeper contradiction is evident: India now has the world’s second-largest network of international schools, growing from 884 in 2019 to 972 by January 2025. Even as primary and secondary education increasingly moves beyond rote learning, higher education remains ill-equipped to absorb these globally prepared students, nudging many to look abroad.Change underwayThe contours of renewal are already visible. A new generation of Indian institutions is expanding research-driven, interdisciplinary undergraduate programmes that increasingly match global standards, while private universities bring world-class pedagogy and international exposure to Indian campuses. Yet this promise will remain fragile unless structural barriers are addressed, most notably the need for transparent, merit-based admissions, improving research culture, building a connection between industry and academia, and decisive action against fraudulent colleges that erode trust in higher education.

‘We surveyed 1000 construction sites, and not a single one was following guidelines’, says PMC Commissioner Naval Kishore Ram



GNS News Agency, Sept 1

Pune Municipal Commissioner Naval Kishore Ram, who will soon complete one year in office, was at The Indian Express office for an interaction. The 2008-batch IAS officer from the Maharashtra cadre is no stranger to Pune, as he had previously held the position as its district collector from April 17, 2018, to July 28, 2020, and then went on to serve the Prime Minister’s Office (PMO) and the Ministry of Finance.Ajay Jadhav: You have been the district collector of Pune. After serving in PMO, you have come back to the city as the Commissioner of Pune Municipal Corporation (PMC). What changes have you noticed during this period, and what are your plans for the city as a municipal commissioner, given that you will soon complete one year in office?

Naval Kishore Ram: When I was the Collector, the management and organisation of the city seemed better than it is today. The administration was fast and proactive. In the years since, even with good administrators, day-to-day civic amenities have not been as good as they should have been.A major change has come in development and redevelopment policy. Pune’s average Floor Space Index (FSI) was 1.5 in 2020; it is now 4.5. In areas like Model Colony, which remain green and beautiful, there is now constant noise from redevelopment. It feels like living near a factory. This is happening across Pune, including the Peth areas. Infrastructure growth needs to be controlled. When development speeds up, other amenities like water supply, roads, and parking must grow at the same pace. Pune’s growth should not look like reckless expansion. We need disciplined growth and perhaps a city-specific policy.Ajay Jadhav: How is a specific Pune policy possible without ignoring UDCPR rules framed by the Maharashtra government? Will PMC seek an exemption?

Naval Kishore Ram: No one should be opposed to development, but this is the time to regulate it. We must follow the Unified Development Control and Promotion Regulations (UDCPR) rules and regulate properly. The common perception is that the administration overlooks the interests of ordinary citizens. Our focus should be on making things easier for the common man. That needs to change.Naval Kishore Ram: I am not saying PMC should stop giving permissions. I am saying we must follow the rules strictly. We surveyed 1000 construction sites, and not a single one was following the guidelines. There are 13 rules meant to reduce air and noise pollution.In the 23 newly included villages, we may stop construction unless civic facilities are ready. We cannot allow unchecked growth without drainage, roads, or a water supply. At present, the water supply scheme is being implemented in only seven of the 23 villages. In places like Mohammadwadi and Undhri, people have faced water problems for 15 years. That cannot be repeated.

Manoj More: But will PMC stop all constructions in the city if it cannot ensure roads, drainage, and parking?Naval Kishore Ram: We cannot stop construction. UDCPR and other rules allow development and redevelopment. What is needed is strict adherence to the regulations. A blanket ban is not possible. But we will be far more careful and meticulous in sanctioning new projects.Sunanda Mehta: Redevelopment is happening widely in Pune, but basic infrastructure remains unchanged. How much is PMC involved? Are there set rules for redevelopment?Naval Kishore Ram: The contradiction is that where redevelopment is needed, it is not happening, and where it is not needed, it is happening. We have 50-60 old settlements and colonies with houses that can collapse any time, but redevelopment is not happening there. Instead, permissions are being given where it is commercially attractive.Redemption is allowed under UDCPR, though there are different restrictions and guidelines in the Peth areas.On average, buildings should be redeveloped after 30-40 years. But in some cases it happens in 10-15 years if a building becomes weak and is declared unstable after a structural audit. So it is subjective.I cannot sound too negative because every day I approve many proposals. My point is only that redevelopment needs to be controlled and regularised. Growth must be disciplined.Ajay Jadhav: How do you check a situation where one-storey houses are demolished and replaced by 10-storey buildings, while roads and drainage remain the same?Naval Kishore Ram: The PMC has to play a different role. If we follow the rules strictly, we cannot do much. So we have to look at this differently. For big projects, amenity space should also mean green space. Otherwise, the city will slowly become a fully paved area with no permeable space. Land is used for roads or buildings. Amenity space should be turned into gardens or green areas. This is a discretion we can use. Otherwise, clubs, schools, or hospitals commercialise the area, and the amenity part gets lost.

Soham Shah: Metro ridership is far below the projection, while Pune Mahanagar Parivahan Mahamandal Ltd (PMPML) is ignored. PMPML has 10 lakh riders, down from 12 lakh, and the metro has only 1.5 lakh. What do you say?Naval Kishore Ram: PMPML has definitely been ignored. The Chief Minister is keen to provide more buses to improve public transport. We are already adding 1,000 buses. At present, we have around 1,800 to 2,000 buses, but we need about 5,000 for a smooth service.Buses are useful because bus stops are accessible. In theory, 93% of people can catch a bus within 500 metres, but less than 20% actually use them. One reason is poor pedestrian walkability. Our system is largely designed for car owners. We are working to raise the fleet to 5,000 buses within 2-2.5 years.Sushant Kulkarni: Monsoon preparedness remains a concern. Every year, meetings are held, but the first heavy rain cripples the city. What needs to change?Naval Kishore Ram: In the monsoon, first heavy rains clog cities everywhere. That is not an excuse. Road work, metro work, and other projects damage stormwater drains, and once they are blocked, the impact spreads.For example, on Ganeshkhind Road, metro work is going on on one side, and stormwater drainage is jammed on the other. This time, my focus will be on identifying inundation spots and fixing them properly.Road design is also a problem in some places. If water accumulates, it means there is no outlet. Roads should be designed so that water flows

automatically into drains. Every year, there is a study, yet stormwater drainage in Pune is only 16 per cent, which is very low. We lack integrated planning for roads, drainage, stormwater, electricity poles, and water pipelines.

Naval Kishore Ram: The defect liability system for contractors has been wrongly framed. If roads are dug for cables or pipelines, contractors are relieved of responsibility. I want to change that. If a road has to be dug for an emergency, it must be done — but why should the contractor’s liability end? In my view, the contractor should maintain the road for 10 years.We are also trying to make agencies lay utility lines at the same time as road work, instead of later. The cycle rally roads looked good because we worked in mission mode, but that does not mean they will stay good after two months. In my budget, I have prioritised good integrated roads in the 23 villages, especially the most used and worst-condition roads. We have 33 missing road links, and 12 will be completed this year.

Sushant Kulkarni: Is the PMC coordinating with Traffic Police for improving traffic situations?Naval Kishore Ram: We are working with the Traffic Police to address Pune’s traffic issues by improving road connectivity. Our target is to increase road coverage by 2 per cent. Only 9 per cent of the city area is under roads, among the lowest percentages in India.We spend Rs 4-5 crore every year on footpaths. I have allocated Rs 100 crore for footpath repairs, and you will see the effect. We need more walkability everywhere.Soham Shah: You had said earlier that you are not satisfied with the quality of education in PMC schools. What have you done to improve it?Naval Kishore Ram: It is very difficult to inspire and motivate education officers to do something innovative. In private schools, everything is glossy and beautiful, while government schools are in very poor condition. So we have taken up 75 schools and allocated Rs 2 to 2.5 crore to each for infrastructure. But infrastructure alone will not solve the problem.Our first focus is that schools should look good physically, and teachers’ training must be improved. PMC teachers are very politicised, and there is no transfer policy. I will be introducing a transfer policy for civic school teachers. We will not make them travel too much, but changing schools itself brings motivation.Dipanita Nath: The Riverfront Development has become a cause of concern to many environment-conscious people of Pune. What is your perspective?Naval Kishore Ram: I respect all environment-conscious people. Why should we think they are opposed to us? Unfortunately, in our city, development and sustainability have become two separate camps.

As for the Riverfront Development (RFD), tell me any big city that does not want to beautify its river. Patna has become very beautiful after the building of ghats. In Pune, the riverfront has already been disturbed by people dumping debris. As for tree felling, wherever we can do the work without cutting trees, we will. Some trees are more than 100 years old, and it is not right to fell them. Also, people think the RFD is a money-making project. That is not true.

Arul Horizon: A water tank was made six to eight years ago in Mohammadwadi, but it’s not in use. Builders are selling flats showing this water tank. So, how soon will the water be filled there?Naval Kishore Ram: Earlier, we had only 10 to 12 locations for water supply. An equitable water supply became necessary because we need more locations and stronger transmission and distribution networks. We have to build 82 new overhead tanks. Of these, 35 have been built, but only five are commissioned.Water should be available everywhere through smart metering. If we implement the Equitable Water Supply scheme in mission mode within six months, the city’s water situation will improve greatly. Water is the city’s biggest concern; roads come second. In the civic general body, water is the main issue discussed by corporators.Manoj More: Have you gone around the city, especially on the Pune-Mumbai highway at Patil Estate, where encroachers are calling the shots?Naval Kishore Ram: Yes, I have been to Patil Estate and experienced the hurdle to smooth traffic flow. This has been going on for years. We do have a plan to ease congestion and remove encroachers there. It will happen soon.Sunanda Mehta: What is the most difficult and the best thing about being the commissioner of Pune city?Naval Kishore Ram: I love living in Pune because there is positivity in the city. I have been to many cities and studied in Delhi, for which I feel nostalgia. But in Pune, despite all odds, people are very nice. They may be argumentative, even audacious, but deep down, they are good. The best thing about Pune is that people will criticise you, but they do not become your adversaries. The worst part is that some things you feel should happen in the city just don’t.

NASA’s Artemis II astronauts share stunning images of Earth from space

New Delhi: United States’ National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) Artemis II astronauts sent stunning images of Earth as they approached closer toward the moon.

Photo captured by Commander Reid Wiseman showed a curved slice of Earth framed by the Orion capsule’s window. A second image revealed the entire globe, with its oceans crowned with white clouds and a glowing green aurora, NASA said.The first astronaut moonshot has been made in more than half a century, according to multiple reports.

“In the image of Earth taken by the Artemis II crew, we can see the electric lights of human activity. In the lower right, sunlight illuminates the limb of the planet,” NASA captioned a photo on X platform.In the first photo, a longer shutter speed had let in more light from Earth, while the shorter shutter speed in the second photo emphasised Earth’s nighttime glow.Another photo captured the stark divide between night and day on Earth, known as the terminator.“Whether awake or dreaming, we’re all here on this planet together,” the space agency captioned it.It’s great to think that with the exception of our four friends, all of us are represented in this image,” said Lakiesha Hawkins, an exploration systems leader, said, adding that the mission was progressing well.As of late Friday afternoon, NASA’s crew in the spacecraft were over 1,80,000 kilometres from Earth, with another 2,40,000 kilometres to reach the near moon orbit at their destination probably by Monday.The team of three Americans and one Canadian have planned a swing around the moon in their Orion capsule, execute a U-turn and return directly to Earth without landing. The team became the first travellers to the Moon since Apollo 17 in 1972.

After resigning as UK PM, Keir Starmer to stand down as MP: ‘Will focus on...’



GNS News Agency, Sept 1

Former United Kingdom Prime Minister Keir Starmer announced on Tuesday that he will stand down as member of Parliament from MP for Holborn and St Pancras, reported local newspaper Camden New Journal. Starmer said that he will turn his focus to other things such as defence and international affairs. "I will now focus on other things and that will be international affairs including defence, security, trade and technology in a fast-changing world," he was quoted as saying.

Following this move, which comes after speculation over whether Starmer will stay as MP after resigning as

PM, a by-election will be conducted in London's Holborn and St Pancras parliamentary constituency. Starmer announced his resignation as UK PM and Labour Party leader on June 22 and was succeeded by Andy Burnham, who took office on July 20. Starmer, after his resignation, had told BBC that will continue as MP until next general elections in the country. However, in his statement on Tuesday, he said that he was "ready to pass the baton to a successor" and to focus on "other things".

"I will also continue, as I have done for a long time now with others, to work on combating violence against women and girls; that is an issue that matters to me hugely," he said. "It's work I started before I became an MP and it's work I'm keen to continue after I'm an MP. So international affairs on the one hand, and continuing my work on violence against women and girls on the other," he added. Starmer served as director of public prosecutions, the UK's top public-sector prosecutor, before starting his Parliament stint in 2015 and leading the Labour Party from 2019 to 2026. In 2024 general elections, Starmer secured a landslide victory but soon saw his popularity plummet. Facing a sharp decline in poll ratings, Starmer announced his resignation as Labour leader in June this year and was succeeded by Andy Burnham. Meanwhile, Burnham will face lawmakers in the House of Commons on Tuesday for the first time since taking office six weeks ago.

What to know about the US primary election in Massachusetts

Voters in the US state of Massachusetts head to the polls on Tuesday for a primary election featuring a closely watched United States Senate contest between Democratic incumbent Senator Ed Markey and US Representative Seth Moulton. The race is the latest contest that pits the Democratic Party's progressive and moderate wings against each other. But in a twist, Moulton, the challenger, is part of the moderate New Democrat Coalition, while Markey, the long-time progressive incumbent, is fighting to hold on to his seat. Voters will also decide competitive Democratic primaries in the 6th and 8th Congressional Districts, as well as races for the state's governor, state legislature, and district attorney.

What time do polls open and close in Massachusetts?

In the 6th District, voters will choose a Democratic nominee to succeed Moulton. The top contenders include former local election official Dan Koh, financial technology executive John Beccia, and Massachusetts State Representative Tram Nguyen. Koh enters Tuesday as the leading fundraiser, with about \$4.7m in contributions, and has endorsements from former US President Joe Biden and former Vice President Kamala Harris. Nguyen has raised about \$895,000, while Beccia has boosted his campaign's spending power with a \$4m personal loan. The winner will face Republican Micah Jones, who is unopposed for his party's nomination.

In the 8th District, 13-term Democratic incumbent Representative Stephen Lynch, 71, faces a primary challenge from progressive attorney Patrick Roath, 39, who is endorsed by Leaders We Deserve, the political action committee (PAC) headed by gun-safety activist and political organizer David Hogg. Roath has criticised the centrist voting record of Lynch, who broke with Democrats to vote against former US President Barack Obama's Affordable Care Act in March 2010, and who was Massachusetts's only congressional member to vote for current US President Donald Trump's Laken Riley Act, which requires federal law enforcement to detain and deport immigrants who have been charged with nonviolent crimes regardless of whether those charges ever result in a conviction. The winner will face a midterm election against Republican Robert Burke, who runs uncontested and who lost his 2024 bid for Congress to Lynch. Get instant alerts and updates based on your interests. Be the first to know when big stories happen.

In the gubernatorial race, the Democratic primary is effectively uncontested, with incumbent Governor Maura Healey running for the Democratic nomination, but with two Republican candidates vying for Healey's seat. Brian Shortleeve and Michael Roger Minogue, who are running in the GOP primary, are both military veterans with business backgrounds. The most notable difference between the two candidates is that Shortleeve backs abortion rights, while Minogue does not. Both of them have supported Trump.

Who is running in the Massachusetts US Senate primary?

The biggest statewide contest is the Democratic US Senate primary between Markey and Moulton. Markey is



seeking a third full term, but faces a primary challenge from Moulton. Markey, who turned 80 in July, entered the US Senate in 2013 after nearly 37 years in the US House of Representatives. He last faced a competitive primary in 2020, when he defeated then-Representative Joseph Kennedy III by 10 points. Moulton, a six-term congressman and Marine Corps veteran, briefly sought the Democratic presidential nomination in 2020. Age has been a central theme of Moulton's campaign. Markey, who turned 80 in July, is the oldest Senate Democrat running for re-election this year. Moulton, 47, has called for "generational change" in the Democratic Party, and argues that Markey is too old to represent a generation confronting challenges like artificial intelligence (AI).

Markey came under pressure during a recent debate, when he was asked whether he uses AI platforms such as ChatGPT or Claude in his work. Markey responded that he uses whatever is available through his iPhone or iPad, saying he did not know which companies his devices might be using. Moulton seized on the exchange, arguing that leaders need to understand the technologies they will be responsible for regulating. "Senator, if you don't even know what you're using on your phone or your iPad, this is why we need a new generation of leaders to regulate these technologies," Moulton said, calling Markey's loose grasp of technology "potentially disqualifying". Markey defended his record on technology, arguing that familiarity with individual AI products is less important than establishing safeguards around the technology. He has pointed to legislation addressing AI's effects on children, workers, civil rights and the environment.

Markey has won the endorsement of the High School Democrats of America and the College Democrats of America, as well as support from prominent progressives including US Representative Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez of New York and Senator Bernie Sanders of Vermont. Markey also has the support of US Senator Elizabeth Warren, a fellow Democrat from Massachusetts. "Ed Markey is one of the strongest progressive voices in the United States Senate," Sanders said in his endorsement of Markey. "He has been an ally in taking on the billionaires, Big Tech, Wall Street and private equity as they continue to try to take over every aspect of our lives and further corrupt our government."

World needs India's 'third way' to tackle conflicts, environmental crisis: Mohan Bhagwat

Toronto: RSS chief Mohan Bhagwat has said the world needs an Indian "third way" to address conflict, environmental degradation and the tension between individual well-being and social progress. Addressing more than 2,000 Hindus and friends of the community in the Greater Toronto Area, Bhagwat said humanity had achieved unprecedented scientific progress but had often used it for destructive purposes. "There are so many conflicts. Ecology, environment, it is in danger. World is in a dilemma. Nations are there, but then nations quarrel," he said. He warned that the pursuit of national progress could sometimes come at the expense of other countries. "So if we talk of national progress, it may mean the calamity for other nations," Bhagwat said. The RSS Sarsangchalak cited the splitting of the atom as an example of scientific achievement being directed first towards destructive ends. "Clean energy is on second place. Weapons of mass restrictions, they are with the priority. We use the atom first for those," he said.

Bhagwat said prevailing models often presented individual happiness and social well-being as competing objectives. "If an individual has to be happy, society has to suffer. If we try to create a happy society, individuals have to be current. What is the way?" he asked. "There has to be a third way, and this new third way is ancient very old way of Hindustan," he said. Bhagwat described that alternative as a worldview in which the individual, society and nature could advance together without harming one another. He said it arose from the recognition of an underlying unity across humanity and the natural world. "Individual society and the environment can progress together without harming each other," he said. "We can earn livelihood. We can satisfy our desires without forgetting the salvation, realising ultimate reality through Dharma. We can do it." He

distinguished dharma from a particular religious practice or form of worship. "That is not worship. That is sustenance. That is balance. That is looking towards everybody as their own," Bhagwat said. He also argued that Hindu identity could not be restricted to a single language, belief system or way of living. "When I say Hindu, the word Hindu cannot be defined by any specific language, through any specific worship, or through any living style," he said. "All these are there. These are diversities of human beings. Hindus respect all, Hindus accept all. They don't mind," he added. Bhagwat said differences were natural and should be respected. They should not, however, obscure the essential unity connecting people and the rest of creation. "Diversity is natural. Unity is the reality," he said. "You have to tackle with natural, keeping mind, keeping in mind the reality." He said this understanding could help nations prosper without weakening others. It could also allow societies to cooperate in advancing humanity and protecting creation. "All the nations will thrive, will prosper, will cooperate, will contribute to the human progress and progress of the creation," he said. Bhagwat called for introspection instead of treating disagreements as a contest in which only one side could be correct. "Whether you are right, whether I am right. Both are right and both have some wrongs," he said. "What we need is to introspect, correct ourselves, you together." He said people could remain united despite their different opinions, preferences and temperaments. "Okay, there are many opinions. There are many kinds. There are many tendencies. There are many likings, many dislikes, but anyway, we have resolved to be together in spite of what we are and what others are," Bhagwat said. Bhagwat has headed the RSS since 2009. His Toronto address formed part of a North American visit that also included engagements in New York.

UK has billions in contracts with firms tied to illegal Israeli settlements



At least 17 companies linked to illegal Israeli settlements in the occupied West Bank hold United Kingdom public-sector contracts worth more than 2.1 billion pounds (\$2.85bn), an Al Jazeera investigation reveals. The findings come as more than 140 UK Labour MPs are calling on the government to ban trade with illegal Israeli settlements, a move Prime Minister Andy Burnham is considering.

Our analysis of procurement records, company filings and corporate disclosures found that businesses named by the United Nations over their involvement in illegal Israeli settlements – and companies those businesses ultimately own or control as subsidiaries – have secured contracts across the British public sector, including in areas such as road maintenance, transport, emergency services and driving licensing. "Evidence is growing that the UK may be in breach of its international obligations ... by continuing to contract with entities identified by the UN as providing assistance of this sort," Stephen Humphreys, professor of international law at the London School of Economics, told Al Jazeera. Data compiled by public procurement analysts Tussell, and shared with Al Jazeera, shows the 17 companies and entities hold 125 public-sector contracts with a combined award value of 2.129 billion pounds (\$2.89bn).

Companies owned by Motorola Solutions, the United States technology and communications giant, account for more than 1.7 billion pounds (\$2.3bn) of the total – the vast majority through its British subsidiary Airwave Solutions. Other contracts we reviewed are held by firms within four other corporate groups including Heidelberg Materials, a German multinational building materials company; the French engineering group Egis; the Spanish train manufacturer CAF and Chinese conglomerate Fosun. A report by the United Nations Human Rights Office identifies the five corporate groups as involved in business activities related to illegal Israeli settlements.

Heidelberg Materials' Israeli subsidiary owns a quarry on Palestinian land in the occupied West Bank, while Motorola is embedded in the security infrastructure of illegal settlements. Egis and CAF are involved in Jerusalem's expanding light-rail network – a project activists say entrenches Israel's control by integrating settlements into the city while further fragmenting Palestinian neighbourhoods. Fosun International, whose subsidiary Breas Medical receives UK public money, also owns the controversial Israeli cosmetics manufacturer Ahava, which operates in the Mitzpe Shalem illegal settlement in the occupied West Bank. Civil rights groups, including the Palestinian Solidarity Campaign in the UK, decry Ahava as a firm that is "complicit" in the theft of Palestinian land and livelihoods. Meanwhile, violence is escalating in the occupied West Bank.

Get instant alerts and updates based on your interests. Be the first to know when big stories happen. In July 2024, the International Court of Justice found Israel's continued presence in the occupied Palestinian territory unlawful and said it must end "as rapidly as possible". The court also placed obligations on other states "not to render aid or assistance in maintaining the situation created by Israel's illegal presence in the Occupied Palestinian Territory". That raises questions over Britain's continued commercial relationships with the companies identified in Al Jazeera's investigation, observers said.

"UK government is propping up apartheid" Humphreys believes that Britain may also be failing to meet its legal obligations by "failing to launch its own investigation into their activities, with a view to preventing them if necessary". The UK has also warned businesses against bidding for construction tenders in illegal settlements. "Businesses should not consider bidding for construction tenders," a government statement issued this month said, warning of "legal and reputational consequences" and the risk of involvement in "serious breaches of international law".

Former Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn said Al Jazeera's findings expose a contradiction between the UK's stated position and its economic ties. "Quite simply, the UK government is propping up apartheid," Corbyn told Al Jazeera. "Every day, the UK deepens its complicity in Israel's economy of occupation and, in turn, Israel's economy of genocide," settler attacks The Cabinet Office told Al Jazeera that individual public authorities make decisions to exclude suppliers case-by-case for each contract. It said public procurement in the UK should not be used to boycott suppliers linked to other countries unless formal UK sanctions, embargoes or restrictions are in place. Here's what we found about some of the companies involved in settlement trade:

Motorola Solutions: Tech embedded in illegal settlements The UN identifies Motorola in connection with two settlement-related activities: the "supply of security services, equipment and materials to enterprises operating in settlements" and the "provision of services and utilities supporting the maintenance and existence of settlements, including transport". Al Jazeera contacted the Motorola Solutions group for comment but received no response. It is the largest beneficiary of UK public money that we investigated.

Motorola's subsidiaries are entrusted with providing communications equipment to the emergency services in the UK. The largest contract identified by Al Jazeera is held by Airwave Solutions, a Motorola subsidiary. The Home Office awarded Airwave an extension worth 1.562 billion pounds (\$2.13bn) to provide the secure communications network used by police, fire and ambulance services across England, Scotland and Wales. Motorola Solutions UK separately holds contracts worth 123.9 million pounds (\$170m), including a 36.5-million-pound (\$49.8m) Ministry of Defence contract for Airwave radios, accessories and airtime. Five companies now ultimately controlled by Motorola Solutions Inc – Airwave Solutions Ltd, Motorola Solutions UK Ltd, CRFS Ltd, 3TC Software Ltd and Noggin IT Ltd – hold 91 active UK public-sector contracts worth 1.726 billion pounds (\$2.3bn), according to the latest Tussell data. Motorola Solutions Inc and its Israeli subsidiary, Motorola Solutions Israel Ltd, were included when the UN Human Rights Office first published its database of businesses involved in specified settlement-related activities in 2020. Both remain in its latest version.

Official records provide a glimpse of how the company's technology has been embedded in settlements. Tenders from Mateh Binyamin Regional Council and the municipal corporation of Ariel, both illegal settlements, show Motorola command-and-control technology being used in security and surveillance infrastructure.

Motorola equipment has also been bought by the Israeli Civil Administration, the military body through which Israeli administrators civilian affairs in the occupied West Bank. In 2005, the UN reported that Motorola supplied surveillance systems to settlements including Hebron, Karnei Tzur and Bracha. Motorola's relationship with the Israeli authorities continues today. An Israeli government procurement document obtained by Al Jazeera shows Motorola Solutions Israel was awarded a 25.5-million-shekel (\$8.7m) contract in May 2026 to maintain approximately 19,000 police radios and provide encryption licences until April 2028.

Heidelberg Materials: A controversial quarry on occupied land The UN has listed Heidelberg Materials over the commercial use of natural resources in occupied Palestinian territory. In Britain, five Heidelberg Materials companies hold 25 public-sector contracts worth 184.79 million pounds (\$252m). Almost all of that – 179.03 million pounds (\$244m) – is held by Hanson Quarry Products Europe Ltd. Its contracts include 60 million pounds (\$81.9m) from Westmorland and Furness Council for road surfacing and highway works between 2024 and 2027, and a 50-million-pound (\$68.3m) surfacing maintenance contract with Somerset Council. Its Israeli subsidiary, Hanson Israel, owns the Nahal Raba quarry, south of Qalqilya in the West Bank. The quarry sits on land belonging to the Palestinian villages of az-Zawiya and Rafat, according to Who Profits.

An official Civil Administration planning notice reviewed by Al Jazeera shows a proposal was approved to expand the site. Who Profits, a group that researches links between the private sector and the economy in the Israeli-occupied territories, said the approval was granted on May 28, 2025. Heidelberg told Al Jazeera that in 2023, Hanson Israel "ceased all activities at the Nahal Raba quarry and the associated asphalt plant and ready-mix concrete plant", adding that only security personnel are present on site.

Egis: Selling transport infrastructure that supports settlements French engineering group Egis provides another type of connection via transport infrastructure linking illegal Israeli settlements in occupied East Jerusalem with the rest of the city. The UN lists Egis in connection with the "provision of services and utilities supporting the maintenance and existence of settlements, including transport". Egis's own material shows that its involvement in Jerusalem's expanding light-rail network continues today, with the company website advertising a job for an engineering expert based in Jerusalem on its light-rail projects.

A general view shows Jerusalem's light rail tram as it passes by the old city's walls in Jerusalem November 13, 2014. If there has been a constant target of Palestinian attacks during weeks of unrest in Jerusalem, it is the city's Light Rail, a sleek tram that snakes through downtown, past the ancient walls of the Old City, symbolically uniting the Jewish West and the Arab East, an area Israel captured in a 1967 war. Launched in 2011, the project was hailed as a piece of infrastructure that would transform the city, bringing Israelis and Palestinians closer through shared public rail transport. While in some ways that has happened, the past few months have torn that cosmopolitan picture apart. Picture taken November 13, 2014. REUTERS/Ronen Zvulun (JERUSALEM - Tags: TRANSPORT POLITICS CIVIL UNREST TPX IMAGES OF THE DAY) ATTENTION EDITORS: PICTURE 01 OF 26 PICTURES FOR WIDER IMAGE STORY 'RIDING THE FINE LINE' SEARCH 'TRAM RONEN' FOR ALL IMAGES

A general view shows Jerusalem's light rail tram as it passes by the old city's walls in Jerusalem November 13, 2014 [Ronen Zvulun/Reuters] Jerusalem Transportation Master Plan procurement documents from 2017 also identify Egis Rail as its general consultant, responsible for supervising and coordinating planning and design work on the Blue and Green lines.

Jerusalem's light rail crosses into occupied East Jerusalem and links illegal Israeli settlements there with West Jerusalem. UN reports have described the railway as "additional infrastructure serving the illegal settlement network" and said it further isolates occupied East Jerusalem from the rest of the occupied West Bank. Egis told Al Jazeera it "formally expressed its disagreement with this inclusion" in the UN database. In Britain, five companies and entities controlled by Egis hold six public-sector contracts worth 133.60 million pounds (\$182.4m). Almost the entire amount comes from a single contract, with the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency awarding Egis Projects UK Ltd a 133.23-million-pound (\$181.9m) contract for enforcement services across Britain. Egis businesses also hold UK public contracts, including Galson Sciences, Helios Technology, Egis Transport Solutions and architecture practice Weston Williamson + Partners.

CAF: Constructing project to continue into 2027 Spanish train manufacturer CAF is also involved in Jerusalem's light-rail network. The company has disclosed that the 1.8-billion-euro (\$2.10bn) Jerusalem project was awarded in 2019 to TransJerusalem J-Net Ltd, a firm owned 50 percent by CAF and 50 percent by Israeli construction business Shapir.

CAF said the project includes construction of the Green Line and extension of the existing Red Line, "which partially run through East Jerusalem". The construction phase is expected to continue until 2027. The UN identifies CAF over the "supply of equipment and materials facilitating the construction and the expansion of settlements" and the "use of natural resources, in particular water and land, for business purposes".

Al Jazeera contacted CAF for comment but received no response. Meanwhile, CAF has an extensive relationship with Britain's public sector, including supplying trams for one of the country's major urban networks. The West Midlands Combined Authority awarded CAF an 83.5-million-pound (\$114m) contract for a new generation of trams for the West Midlands Metro. The contract runs until December 2027, according to Tussell data. Fosun: Owner of a cosmetics company accused of excavating Dead Sea mud in occupied territory Chinese conglomerate Fosun International is identified by the UN under the category covering the commercial use of natural resources, particularly water and land. Its connection to the occupied West Bank centres on Israeli cosmetics manufacturer Ahava Dead Sea Laboratories. Fosun itself announced in April 2016 that it had agreed to acquire Ahava for 290 million shekels (\$76.8m). Fosun's subsequent statutory reporting recorded Ahava as 99.46-percent owned. A European Commission statement in 2018 said Ahava "does have operations in the settlement Mitzpeh Shalem, located in Occupied Territories". According to the Quaker-founded organisation, American Friends Service Committee (AFSC), repeated site visits confirmed that Ahava's former factory in the illegal Mitzpe Shalem settlement remained operational as of 2026.

Nothing silky, smooth for sericulture farmers in Andhra Pradesh



On the outskirts of Chebrolu in Gollaprolu mandal of Kakinada district, vast fields of harvest-ready mulberry plants quivered in the monsoon winds. Amidst their vibrant green, however, herds of cattle greedily munch on the matured crop. They move quickly, clearing rows after rows within short periods. This, however, is not a raid by wandering cattle on the hard work of a sericulture farmer, but a poignant reflection of the rapid decline of one of the largest mulberry pockets in Coastal Andhra. Once a thriving business, sericulture in the region is being abandoned by distressed farmers, leaving their last mulberry crop for cattle to feed on.

Stretching along the banks of the Left Main Canal of Polavaram Irrigation Project, Chebrolu panchayat underwent a mulberry revolution in the 1980s, when the crop replaced two of the region's prime commercial crops — chilli and onion. It made sense to switch as silkworms gave a maximum yield of 150 kg cocoons per harvest, with feed from an acre of mulberry plantation. The season begins in July, and four harvests can be made a year, taking the total expected yield of cocoons per year per acre of mulberry feed to around 600 kg. Until two years ago, the business was good. Two reeling units established by the Department of Sericulture in Chebrolu ensured demand for cocoons produced locally and reined in transportation costs, and costs mattered for the farmers, 90% of whom are tenants paying a rent of nearly ₹30,000 an acre. They also shell out around ₹20,000 to irrigate the plantation with groundwater, in addition to the input cost of ₹80,000 per acre per annum. Profitability of sericulture, however, went on a tail-spin after the Chebrolu cocoon market was shut two years ago in the aftermath of the silk reeling units putting up the shutters. "Closure of Chebrolu cocoon market forced us to go to the nearest cocoon markets of Hindupur in Anantapuram district (800 km) or Palamner in Chittoor district (750 km)," says 28-year-old farmer Nallaravula Ramesh. He recalls last year's trip to Hindupur and how they struggled to protect the cocoons during the long haul. To reduce transportation cost, Chebrolu farmers formed a group to hire lorries and take their produce to Hindupur or Palamner markets. Tenant farmer Oruganti Suribabu, who grows mulberry on eight acres, explains: "We get in touch with lorry owners who operate their vehicles from Bengaluru to Rajamahendravaram and Visakhapatnam transporting flowers. We hire these vehicles at a cost of ₹20,000 per quintal of cocoon to go to the markets in Hindupur or Palamner". However, even at these markets, the farmers say they don't get a fair deal.

"Once we reach the market, the buyers, who know very well why we ended up there, begin to bargain for a lower price than the day's government-fixed rate," says Oruganti Suribabu. The highest price for cocoon (bivoltine worm) was ₹638 a kg at the Government Cocoon Market at Hindupur (as of July 5), but the buyers normally quote a price ₹150 to ₹200 lower than the market price per kg. "And we cannot even decline such an offer; we can neither take it back or stay in the market for a few days for a better price," says Suribabu. Since the distance between Hindupur and Palamner is nearly 200 km, the farmers seldom attempt to visit the other market in search for a better price. A new threat emerges. Hit by the non spinning syndrome, scores of farmers at Chebrolu in Kakinada district have abandoned sericulture to shift to other commercial crops. Ramesh, who is also a tenant mulberry farmer, has been spending sleepless nights for over a fortnight now. In his concrete shed, the month-old silkworms are expected to spin cocoons in a week, but this year he is not sure whether that would happen at all.

It was during the last monsoon that at least twenty mulberry plant farmers in Chebrolu, including Ramesh, noticed a strange but devastating behavioural change in the silkworms: none of them were spinning cocoons. An investigation by Central Silk Board (CSB-Ministry of Textiles) named the phenomenon non-spinning syndrome or NSS. Since the appearance of the syndrome in 2024, mulberry plant cultivation in Chebrolu grama panchayat plummeted, with the total area under cultivation falling from 1,140 acres in 2024 to 814 acres within a year. The number of silkworm sheds have collapsed from 400 in 2022 to nearly 150 now. In June 2025, the government shifted the Central Silk Board's Regional Research and Extension Centre (CSB-REE), which is tasked evaluation of the changes in agro-climatic conditions and helping farmers adopt technologies to tackle existing challenges, from Vijayawada to Chebrolu. On July 1, the CSB appointed E. Bhuvaneshwari, Scientist-D, as in-charge of the REE. "In Chebrolu, indiscriminate use of pesticides on cotton fields adjacent to the mulberry crop is suspected to be the cause for the NSS, which was first recorded in Andhra Pradesh here last year," observes Ms. Bhuvaneshwari. She had previously investigated the prevalence of NSS in silkworms in north Karnataka, where groundnut farmers had extensively used pesticides. "The investigation is still going on to tackle and prevent the spread of NSS," says Ms. Bhuvaneshwari, who is engaged in persuading the farmers to adopt new technologies and scientific methods for quality cocoons and crop management. As for Ramesh, he has told his father that he would quit sericulture if it drives him to debt again. As of July so far, 131 private silk reeling units operate in Hindupur, creating a huge demand for cocoons, according to Sericulture Information Linkages and Knowledge System, Silk Board of India. Oruganti Srinu, a second-generation sericulture farmer who cultivates mulberry on four acres, says the government should encourage household-level reeling units, similar to those in Hindupur, in Chebrolu as well. "This will guarantee livelihood for women and create demand for cocoons locally."

Notably, Chebrolu had an automatic silk reeling unit with a daily spinning capacity of 240 kg. Inaugurated in September 2019 by the then Minister for Agriculture Kurasala Kannababu, this unit was supposed to be a game changer and shore up sericulture in the region. It was owned by Vulavakayala Satti Raju, a local traditional silk reeler-turned-entrepreneur. "Within a year, however, our unit was hit by the COVID-19 lockdown, during which mulberry farmers went on crop holiday. It pushed me into debt, and I had to shut down the unit in 2022," says 64-year-old Satti Raju. "I had bought seven acres with profits from the traditional method of silk production, which is done on charkha. I used to supply silk to the famous Uppada Jamdani saree weavers in Kakinada district and operated 60 handlooms to weave silk sarees... I had to sell five acres to run the reeling unit," says Satti Raju, who is now an agent who procures cocoons from those unable to take their produce to Hindupur and Palamner markets, earning a commission. Another pain point among farmers the pending payment of incentive from the government, which offers ₹50 as incentive per kg of cocoons arriving at the government market. According to Assistant Sericulture Officer-Chebrolu T. Satyanarayana, ₹3 crore in incentive is still pending from the government. "I have been waiting for the ₹2.5 lakh from the government, which owes the incentive amount to every farmer here. This year, I had to scale down the area under mulberry cultivation and shift to cotton," alleges 42-year-old Srinu. Oruganti Siva, a 22-year-old farmer whose harvest failed last year reportedly owing to NSS, says the farmers who gave up mulberry cultivation after suffering losses due to lack of markets and the threat of the syndrome have mostly shifted to cotton. "Until June, no expert or scientist was available in the Sericulture Department office in Chebrolu," he says. Siva has fully given up mulberry cultivation and went for cotton on his two-acres. Farmers who own land but don't wish to lease it are replacing mulberry with oil palm, a new commercial crop gaining acceptance in this area. In the Pithapuram Assembly Constituency Action Plan for Viksit Bharat-2047, the Pithapuram Area Development Authority (PADA) has proposed improving infrastructure and cocoon market facilities in Chebrolu. PADA was established in November 2024, extending its jurisdiction up to Gollaprolu Mandal. "We have submitted reports to the government for the release of the pending ₹3 crore incentives to the farmers and revival of the cocoon market," says PADA vice-chairperson A. Chaitra Varshini. Many tenant farmers still hope that a 'Silk City' will come up in Chebrolu, as promised by Deputy Chief Minister K. Pawan Kalyan in the run up to the 2024 general elections. "We voted him to power and are waiting for him to make good on his promise," they say.



them. Millions of pastoral groups such as the Dhangar, Rabari, Kuruba etc. depend on these ecosystems for grazing. When we fence off grasslands or plant "forests" on them, it's not just ecology we damage but also livelihoods, mobility, and local knowledge systems. In many cases, pastoralist groups are also stewards of biodiversity and ecosystem health. However, Indian grasslands and pastoralist systems have not received the desired protection and management.

What should be the road ahead?

Rather than trying to turn deserts into forests, we should study how life thrives without abundance. This is not to say that land degradation should not be addressed. Reversing degradation in drylands requires careful restoration that respects native vegetation, focuses on soil and moisture conservation, and draws from indigenous knowledge of land management. Low-tech solutions like water harvesting, rotational grazing, and protecting natural regrowth often outperform greenwashing projects that aim to plant millions of trees to "green" the desert. We need policies that recognise ecosystem diversity, reward soil carbon storage, and support pastoralist land use. A functioning desert or savanna, with its intricate food webs, seasonal rhythms, and cultural continuities, is far more alive than a failed monoculture plantation. Perhaps it is time to rename World Day to Combat Desertification and Drought to World Day to Combat Land Degradation, and give deserts their respectable name back. The authors are with the Ashoka Trust for Research in Ecology and the Environment.

Groundwater crisis deepens in Karnataka's hard rock terrain



Stretching across much of peninsular India, the Deccan Plateau hides a silent, subterranean struggle. Beneath its sunbaked soil lie ancient, fractured layers of basalt and granite — hard rock aquifers that dominate the region's groundwater story. In Karnataka, this rocky reality is nearly absolute: about 99% of the State relies on these stubbornly unyielding formations for its water needs. With limited porosity and a dependence on narrow fractures and weathered pockets to store and move water, these geological formations offer far less than they promise, unlike the generous flow of sedimentary aquifers.

In a new study, researchers from the Water, Environment, Land and Livelihoods (WELL) Labs in Chennai examined Aralumallige and Doddathumakuru gram panchayats in the Upper Arkavathy watershed near Bengaluru, revealing a sharp decline in groundwater levels driven by intensive agricultural practices. These areas supply vegetables, exotic crops, and flowers to Bengaluru, banking on water-intensive farming. While monsoon rains offer seasonal relief, farmers depend on deep borewells for the rest of the year. Borewells drilled into granite bedrock alter the subsurface geology, creating microfractures that fast-track rainwater deep underground. As a result, instead of recharging shallow aquifers, water bypasses them entirely, disrupting the local hydrology and weakening long-term water retention.

Every year, the water table continues to drop. According to the study, published recently in PLoS Water, the average depth of gram panchayat drinking water borewells dramatically increased from 183 m during 2001-2011 to 321 m in 2011-2021. Thus almost 55% of all wells drilled in the Aralumallige sub-watershed have failed, with a staggering 70% of drinking water wells failing within a decade of their construction, primarily due to falling water tables. The study also highlighted water quality issues. While nitrate levels in drinking water were often higher than the prescribed norm of 50 mg/l, people didn't abandon their wells. Interviews with gram panchayat officials revealed that only two of the 79 abandoned borewells were shut due to elevated fluoride concentrations. The findings collectively suggest groundwater quality issues, while acknowledged, aren't the primary drivers of borewell abandonment. Instead, the overwhelming cause is the chronic and severe depletion of the water table. Mounting challenges. Electricity is free for farmers, but gram panchayats are grappling with a mounting economic crisis. The frequent drilling of deep borewells, which require powerful pumps, has pushed them into steep electrical debt. Revenue collection can't cover the ballooning annual power bills, directly affecting the ability of panchayats to maintain rural water infrastructure. Funds meant for development

projects are being redirected to cover utility costs, stalling local progress. Meanwhile, the State government has begun pressuring panchayats to pay outstanding taxes despite their financial strain.

Borewell drilling costs are borne by individuals. For small farmers, this means investing ₹4-5 lakh in a single borewell, with no guarantee of success. Many end up leasing their land and migrating to urban areas for a stable income. Labour, pump installation, and infrastructure expenses have hit the rural economy hard. Despite widespread awareness of water scarcity, there have been few efforts to educate farmers on the consequences of water-intensive cropping. The region's terrain limits greywater reuse and youth migrating away further disrupts sustainable practices. While Karnataka banned eucalyptus farming due to the species' high-water use, its long-term impact on groundwater persists. The new study also pointed to a broader concern: despite widespread groundwater overexploitation, there is very little quantitative evidence on the risks to water sustainability at the local level. This makes it difficult to predict borewell failures or estimate the true costs faced by drinking water authorities. The researchers have argued that poor water resource management is the biggest threat to sustained rural drinking water access in India. While global 'water, sanitation, and hygiene' initiatives focus on technical and financial infrastructure, they often overlook the foundational problem: neglected resource management. In the study, the researchers used data from the Sujala Project, a key groundwater recharge initiative by the Karnataka government, to trace depletion trends. They also referenced the Jal Jeevan Mission, India's flagship programme for universal piped water access, which has funded new infrastructure and replaced failed borewells. While the study wasn't directly critical of these programmes, it argued that long-term success hinges on addressing the root crisis: groundwater depletion and the financial strain it imposes on local governance.

As Lakshmikantha N.R., one of the study's authors, put it: "Until and unless you change the farming technique of over-extraction, no amount of recharging will change the state of the groundwater" in Aralumallige, Doddathumakuru, and other rural parts of the Deccan Plateau. He also recommended that gram panchayats begin compensating farmers for using less electricity and extracting less water, encouraging more sustainable practices while reducing rising electricity bills. "If such an initiative isn't taken," he warned, "within 3-4 years there will be no groundwater left to drink or use." Until the 1970s, Bengaluru depended on tanks and reservoirs to replenish groundwater. But with the advent of borewells, which operate on shorter timescales, traditional systems were abandoned. In Aralumallige, the local lake, once a key recharge reservoir, has now been encroached upon, its soil dug up, its green cover denuded. Before borewells, the lake's discharge channels helped recharge surrounding areas. In 2022, despite heavy rainfall, the lake remained dry. The findings paint a sobering picture: without urgent shifts in agricultural practices and stronger local governance, groundwater in the Deccan Plateau may slip beyond recovery. According to the researchers, sustainable farming, recharge infrastructure, and policy incentives must work in tandem and not as afterthoughts. The study recommends better policies and technologies to help rural farmers and governing bodies use their resources without inviting a crisis.

a spotlight on volunteers from Chennai who green neighbourhoods



The pandemic had two contrasting effects on newly sprouted initiatives. Some went into a tailspin and never recovered from it. And there were others that got their tail up, the pandemic years, strangely, providing them with a conducive environment for growth. Deepa Lakshmi and her husband K. Mohanasundaram had barely started a hyperlocal greening exercise around their moorings in Mogappair East when the pandemic struck. Now, Deepa Lakshmi is an English teacher at Chennai Higher Secondary School on Subbrayan Street in Shenoy Nagar, and in addition to her teaching role, serves as in-charge headmistress of the school. While latching the doors of the school (and taking the classes online), the pandemic threw wide open the door to environment action. Deepa Lakshmi seized that opportunity.

"It all started during COVID. There was so much free time," recalls Deepa Lakshmi, co-founder of a volunteering force called Team Green. "We used to water the few plants we had, and then one day, we just planted some saplings. Neighbours noticed, and slowly people started joining us." The streets in the neighbourhood saw more green; and then the streets beyond the neighbourhood did. What began as a simple act became a habit not just for this duo and their neighbours in Mogappair East, but also for many eco-conscious people elsewhere in Chennai. Team Green — as this group of sapling-toting volunteers are called — has expanded to Perungudi, Keelkattalai, Madipakkam, Gated Communities in OMR, Perumbakkam, Tiruvottiyur and Thirumullaivoyal. Team Green provides saplings of native trees for free to residents and individuals upon request — a huge volume of such requests being honoured on special days such as Environment Day — but not before extracting a promise from them. The recipient has to take a vow to never abandon the saplings. They would be put through a wringer of questions, much like someone adopting a puppy would be before taking the bundle of fur home. A quick run-through of the posers high up on the questionnaire: who will be responsible for the care of the saplings? Has proper soil preparation been done? The interviewee will find themselves being edified about plant care. Team Green does not leave anything to chance. A volunteer would one day invite themselves to the recipient's stomping ground to see how the saplings are coming along. This stringent process weeds out dilettantes, and brings on board only those extremely keen on greening their neighbourhoods and personal spaces. Residents interested in greening their patches constitute much of the demand. Colleges (through their outreach wings such as NSS units) also seek saplings for their environmental initiatives. Team Green provides saplings for

free, except when they do not have the saplings of a specific tree species that has been sought. In such an event, they help procure it from a nursery, with the cost being borne by the one making the request. Deepa Lakshmi is part of a force driving an initiative called Vidiyal, which splices women's empowerment with environment action. Vidiyal is designed in a manner that gets groups of three to four women from an underprivileged background to gather every day at a designated school to nurture saplings. They are provided with soil, seeds and used milk packets, these materials having been collected and supplied by Team Green volunteers. The women work from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m., nurturing saplings and starting new ones with the soil and seeds. In case you are wondering what the milk packets are for: they serve as coverings for the saplings. Currently, around 15 to 20 women are engaged in this work on a full-time basis. The project operates on a community-supported model where volunteers contribute financially to pay the women for their efforts. For instance, a donation of ₹900 is enough to pay three women ₹300 each for a day's work. Those who wish to support just one person can contribute ₹300. Deepa mentions that they never have to actively seek sponsors, as there is always a steady flow of generous volunteers who come forward to pitch in and help sustain the project. Deepa notes that Team Green is not an NGO, only a scattered but tightly-knit group of individual volunteers. The volunteering group functions on its own except for collaborations with Exnora from time to time. Deepa finds the most supportive volunteer in her hearth: her husband Mohanasundaram who has handed over the reins of his earthmoving business to his team, distancing himself from its day-to-day activities and thereby freeing up time for Team Green's activities.

Ola Electric posts Rs 428 crore loss in Q1 FY26 as revenue halves

New Delhi: Bhavish Aggarwal-led electric two-wheeler maker Ola Electric on Monday reported a consolidated net loss of Rs 428 crore in Q1 FY26, as revenue from operations also nosedived to Rs 828 crore a 49.6 per cent year-on-year decline from Rs 1,644 crore revenue in the same quarter last fiscal.

The net loss widened by nearly 30 per cent (year-on-year) from Rs 347 crore net loss in Q1 FY25 for the company, according to its stock exchange filing. The e-scooter deliveries were also hit year-on-year from 1.25,198 in Q1 FY25 to 68,192 in Q1 FY26. The earnings before interest, taxes, depreciation, and amortisation (EBITDA) loss was reported at Rs 237 crore against Rs 205 crore year-on-year. Ola Electric expects FY26 volumes to be around 3,25,000-3,75,000 vehicles and revenue to be around Rs 4,200-Rs 4,700 crore. "Our goal in this phase is to consolidate and institutionalise our operations, improve our margins, and get ready for the next phase of growth driven by our expanding product portfolio," said the company in its shareholders' letter. The company said it is ready with in-house solutions for risks like rare earth magnets and Anti-lock Braking System (ABS).

Why must India recognise its open ecosystems? | Explained



The story so far: Deserts are often imagined as failures of nature, and barren wastelands in need of redemption. This worldview fuels grand ambitions to “green” the desert, through afforestation, irrigation schemes, or even climate engineering. This gives way to the idea that deserts are broken ecosystems. So pervasive is this vilification, that land degradation is also known as “desertification”, and June 17 every year is celebrated as World Day to Combat Desertification and Drought.

Are deserts important?

In truth, deserts are ancient, diverse, and resilient biomes, finely tuned to extremes. They occupy nearly one-third of the Earth’s terrestrial surface, and are home to uniquely adapted plants, animals, and human cultures. It is ironic that humans disregard deserts, when several early civilisations were set in desert climates, whether in early Mesopotamia, Egypt, or the Indus valley. Indeed, some historians argue that it is these very harsh desert conditions that prompted humans to develop complex societies and technologies that could invent ingenious ways of irrigation to survive in otherwise inhospitable conditions.

What about other open spaces?

India’s relationship with open spaces is full of contradictions. On the one hand, we fetishise them. Real estate ads routinely promise sweeping lawns with names like Savana or Utopia. But when it comes to the country’s own

vast open natural ecosystems such as grasslands, savannas, scrublands and open woodlands, we have done the opposite. These landscapes have been systematically ignored in policy or worse, actively erased. On official maps, millions of hectares of these ecosystems are classified as wastelands, a term inherited from colonial land-use categories. In policy terms, a wasteland is land waiting to be fixed, often by planting trees, converting it for agriculture or paving it over for industry. What should be protected and stewarded has instead become a target for transformation. India’s deserts, grasslands and savannas are home to species found nowhere else: the Great Indian Bustard, the caracal, the Indian wolf etc. These ecosystems also store carbon, not in big trees above ground but rather, deep in the soil. Equally important are the communities dependent on them. Millions of pastoral groups such as the Dhangar, Rabari, Kuruba etc. depend on these ecosystems for grazing. When we fence off grasslands or plant “forests” on them, it’s not just ecology we damage but also livelihoods, mobility, and local knowledge systems. In many cases, pastoralist groups are also stewards of biodiversity and ecosystem health. However, Indian grasslands and pastoralist systems have not received the desired protection and management.

What should be the road ahead?

Rather than trying to turn deserts into forests, we should study how life thrives without abundance. This is not to say that land degradation should not be addressed. Reversing degradation in drylands requires careful restoration that respects native vegetation, focuses on soil and moisture conservation, and draws from indigenous knowledge of land management. Low-tech solutions like water harvesting, rotational grazing, and protecting natural regrowth often outperform greenwashing projects that aim to plant millions of trees to “green” the desert. We need policies that recognise ecosystem diversity, reward soil carbon storage, and support pastoralist land use. A functioning desert or savanna, with its intricate food webs, seasonal rhythms, and cultural continuities, is far more alive than a failed monoculture plantation. Perhaps it is time to rename World Day to Combat Desertification and Drought to World Day to Combat Land Degradation, and give deserts their respectable name back.

Household assets, liabilities

A disturbing trend it shows is net financial savings of households, as a percentage of GDP, is declining. Let us understand more about it.Q1 of 2020-21, i.e. April-June 2020, was peak of lockdown and economic slowdown. In these months, net financial assets i.e. incremental flows were, surprisingly, higher than usual. It was 15% of GDP. GDP was itself lower due to economic contraction which contributed to it. In absolute terms, people saved and invested in financial assets, so the ratio was higher. In July-September 2020, net financial assets were lower at 11.7% of GDP. In October-December, net financial asset flows slid to 8.5% GDP. This is counter-intuitive.At the height of lockdown when people were losing jobs and small businesses closing down, how can savings be higher? This is not usual behaviour. In challenging times, we generate an ‘emergency response’. Over, 2020-21, net financial asset flows were 11.5% of GDP. In 2021-22, it was 7.2% of GDP and in 2022-23, it was 5.1%. In 2023-24, it was slightly better at 5.3%. This also is an interesting trend: when economic growth has revived, why did net financial savings slip? People are availing of loans to fund assets like house or cars. The dip in savings, is net of financial liabilities. In 2020-21, financial assets were 15.4% of GDP; net of financial liabilities of 3.9% of GDP, it was 11.5%. Financial liabilities, from 3.9% of GDP in 2020-21 and 3.8% in 2021-22, rose to 5.9% of GDP in 2022-23 and 6.4% in 2023-24. When economy is growing, why do people need more loans? This concerns behavioural aspect: when one feels more secure, it’s time to improve lifestyle even with debt.

As per a report released by the RBI on June 30, among broad categories of household debt, non-housing retail loans, mostly used for consumption, formed 54.9% of total household debt as of March 2025 and 25.7% of disposable income as of March 2024. Moreover, the share of these loans has been growing consistently over years outpacing housing, agriculture and business loans.Share of mutual funds in the overall pie is increasing. In 2020-21, MFs were only 2.1% of financial asset flows. In 2021-22, it surged to 6.1% and stayed at 6% in 2022-23. In 2023-24, it moved up to 7%. Household allocation to MFs at ₹17.3 lakh crore in March 2021 rose to ₹33.9 lakh crore in March



2024.Takeaways, suggestions

The data reflects collective financial behaviour of people. However, you should have your own justification for behaving the way you do. The basis must be financial planning, preferably with inputs from a professional financial planner. The basic tenets are:1) When you consider leverage to finance an asset, it is about quality: is it likely to maintain value or depreciate fast or is it just to fund a lifestyle? Real estate is the only asset that may appreciate in value.

2) If you are leveraged, EMIs should not exceed 40% of income.

3)Having an emergency corpus, equivalent to six or 12 months income, is important. It should be built in times of peace, not in times of war.

4) Investments must be distributed more to ‘growth assets’ like MFs than contractual return ones like deposits

5) Start systematic investment plan.

6)When you have surplus cash, it is better to pre-pay loans and cut EMIs. Return on investments, particularly contractual-return ones like bank deposits yield less than EMI interest.

ConclusionTaking on liabilities to fund assets is a mixed bag. As long as EMIs are within a threshold of income and the asset is adding value, you may go ahead with it. However, assuming liabilities to fund lifestyle or conspicuous consumption is risky.

Time is apt to restore J&K’s Statehood

When one travels from Srinagar to Uri, the Jammu and Kashmir (J&K) Lieutenant Governor (LG)’s overhaul of the region’s challenging terrain is perceptible. His bureaucrats outline his main accomplishments: first, efficient transportation networks have facilitated better access to services, and tourism; and second, civilian killings and militant recruitment have considerably declined. The locals agree. Industrialists say the elimination of separatist infrastructure has allowed businesses to thrive. A section of the people appear to have moved on from the separatist discourse, but they do not explicitly admit it. They fear this would deflect from Kashmir’s political questions, especially the need for a plausible political trajectory which remains elusive as New Delhi delays restoration of J&K’s Statehood.Political uncertainty culminating in political premonition serves nobody’s interest. It needs to be replaced by an optimistic vision for the future, drawing from compassionate terms of engagement between New Delhi and J&K. Handing over full executive powers to J&K’s elected government is the first step.

The Supreme Court (SC) in December 2023 recommended the restoration of J&K’s Statehood but did not specify a deadline. Now is the apt time. Among many reasons is the urgency to not fritter the democratic participation that Kashmir Valley witnessed in last year’s Assembly elections. A population reckoning with bureaucratic rule wanted to empower a regional leader. The people reposed faith in Omar Abdullah’s capacity for calibrated navigation, hoping the National Conference (NC) would negotiate a respectable arrangement for J&K, at the least Statehood.

New Delhi ought to engage with and empower a Chief Minister elected with a historic mandate. It is advisable to also engage with other regional players, especially former Chief Minister Mehbooba Mufti and emerging young leaders such as Waheed Parra. The mainstream leaders’ secular politics is Indian democracy’s asset. Trying to scupper them by facilitating political proxies will be preposterous.Mr. Abdullah has shown political sagacity by repairing ties with New Delhi. But over a podcast recently, he lamented that he is unable to get work done as he has little authority over the officials. His presence merely as a custodian of status quo is causing dissatisfaction among the voters. It has also earned him accusations of pusillanimity, including from elements within his party, who are publicly advocating a more



confrontationist course, significantly expanding their personal appeal. Mr. Abdullah could also animate his constituency with lofty sound-bites, but he understands a collision course with New Delhi will not help J&K’s case.Sources say Mr. Abdullah is hopeful that Statehood will be restored in August. Acknowledging the people’s will even when the Union government has the power to perpetuate the LG’s hegemony will generate far more political optimism than economic implements could alone.Only twice in history has Kashmir witnessed relative peace: from 1948 to 1952 when Jawaharlal Nehru empowered Sheikh Abdullah to effect social and economic overhaul; and from 1975 to 1984, following the Indira-Sheikh Accord to when Indira Gandhi toppled Farooq Abdullah’s government. Clearly, ‘peace’ is contingent on harmonious relations between New Delhi and the State government.Recently, a daily in Kashmir reported that restoration of Statehood will be followed by fresh elections, as the previous elections were meant for a Union Territory. This created a furore in Srinagar. It is unlikely that there will be another Assembly election. But the lack of a political roadmap built on consensus is deepening public apprehension.Particularly alarming is the regional divide between Kashmir Valley and Jammu. An example of it was the mob violence in Jammu against a Kashmiri man accused of stealing. Such incidents underline the urgency of setting up a State Human Rights Commission and the SC-recommended Truth and Reconciliation Commission.In the foreseeable future, the BJP will remain the predominant force in Jammu, and the NC in Kashmir.

Secularism — implicit from day one, explicit in 1976



“God is dead. God remains dead. And we have killed him. Yet his shadow still looms...” , said Friedrich Nietzsche. As many as 66 Constitutions make some reference to God in their Preamble. True, Nehru led from the front in India’s adoption of secularism. He explicitly said in his autobiography of how what he called “organized religion” filled him “with horror... almost always it seemed to stand for a blind belief and reaction, dogma and bigotry, superstition and exploitation”. Nehru’s strong views on religion did play a significant role in India’s choice of secular polity. Unlike today’s politicians, he did not need religion to succeed in politics.Though the Supreme Court has said more than once that the term secular in India does not connote either strict separation between religion and state like in France or the non-establishment of religion like in the United States, the debate on the artificial imposition of secularism during the Emergency and the urgent need for its deletion continues though Indian secularism is rooted in Emperor Ashoka’s Dhamma and is consistent with noble ideals of India’s freedom struggle. Article 51A(b) makes it a fundamental duty of every citizen “to cherish and uphold noble ideals which inspired our national struggle for freedom”. Secularism was one such ideal.Secularism spells autonomy

The advocates of Hindutva think that minorities have got some special privileges through secularism and that the time has come to bring an end to neutrality of the state in religious matters. Unfortunately, supporters of a theocratic state do not understand that secularism is basically good for religions as it protects religions from state domination and interference. Religions remain independent and autonomous under secularism. If a religion becomes state religion, the state takes over the control of such religion.Our secularism ensures autonomy of the Hindu religion and the proponents of Hindutva must understand this. Has not Islam been destroyed through various so-called Islamic states? Mahmud Ghazni and Illutmish defied the caliph and assumed the title of king . Zawabit or state-made laws prevailed over Shariah during medieval India. Did not Henry VIII defy Papal authority just to marry Anne Boleyn and create the Anglican Church with the King as its head. In the consecration of the Ram temple in January 2024, the state’s decision prevailed over the theological view of the Shankaracharyas. The state, not religion, decided what is auspicious.Is the salvation of souls really the mandate of a modern state? British Political theorist John Locke in his famous ‘A Letter Concerning Toleration’ (1689) forcefully said no because the state was brought into existence only for ‘procuring, preserving, and advancing’ citizens’ civil interests. Care of souls, he argued, was not given to the state because the state consists of only outward force while religion consists of the inward persuasion of mind. Roger Williams, the founder of Rhode Island, favoured separation of the church from the state to protect the garden of the church from the ‘wilderness of secular order’.Secularism could triumph in the 18th century because reason triumphed over religions. While secularism is nothing but an idea of modernity, a non-secular theocratic state is the relic of the past. Even if we are fed up with modernity, the moot question is this: should we become a Saudi Arabia, an Iran or a Pakistan? An overwhelming majority of Hindus do not want to emulate these regressive countries.The importance of the Ashokan edicts

Should we reject secularism because this term was not used in the original Constitution? To say that India’s Constitution became secular in 1976 is a blatant lie. Like several other things borrowed from Ashoka the Great who ruled from 268-232 BC, the seeds of Indian secularism too can be traced back to Ashokan edicts. Rajeev Bhargava has written extensively on the significance of these edicts. Rejecting the idea of one particular religion as a state religion, Rock Edict 7 said that all religions should reside everywhere, for all of them desire self-control and purity of heart. One of the biggest problems of today’s India is hate speech. Rock Edict 12 prohibited glorification of one’s religion and condemnation of others’ religions. Ashoka’s dhamma was not religion but the principles of governance, i.e., constitutional morality

and ethics that a king must follow. He favoured the acceptance and co-existence of different religions and went beyond mere toleration.The Motilal Nehru Committee’s constitution (1928) which was the first attempt to draft the Constitution clearly stated in Clause 4(11) that “there shall be no state religion for the Commonwealth of India or for any province in the Commonwealth, nor shall the state either directly or indirectly endow any religion or give any preference or impose any disability on account of religious belief or religious status”.

The Karachi Resolution of the Congress in 1931 which presented the blueprint of a future Swaraj in Resolution no 2(9), specifically declared that the “state shall maintain neutrality in regard to all religions”. Even the Hindu Mahasabha’s draft constitution of 1944 with V.D. Savarkar’s blessings too declared in explicit terms in Article 7(15) that ‘there shall be no state religion or either centre or provinces’. Why do we refuse to follow even Savarkar?On October 17, 1949 when the Preamble of the Constitution was under discussion in the Constituent Assembly, H.V. Kamath proposed that the Preamble should begin with the words ‘in the name of God’. We should thank god that in an overwhelmingly religious country, god lost by 17 votes in a tally of 68 to 41. Similarly, the word ‘secular’ was not specifically included; yet, members, in one voice, spoke of it being a fait accompli of a liberal democratic constitution and consistent with the ideals of our freedom struggle. No member of the Constituent Assembly ever proposed a Hindu Rashtra including Syama Prasad Mookerjee.Three years prior to the insertion of the word secular, the Supreme Court had held secularism to be the basic structure in the Kesavananda Bharati case (1973). Silences of the Constitution are equally important. For instance, the words federal, judicial review, rule of law too have not been used in the Constitution. But these ideas have rightly been held as part of the basic structure.If we are really fed up with the separation model of secularism, we should consider the jurisdiction model. We have several options from modern democracies. Certainly, we may declare in the Constitution that Hinduism (not Hindutva) is the dominant spiritual heritage of India — just like in England where the Anglican Church is the official Church of England and the king is the defender of faith but recognises equal rights to all citizens ensuring freedom of religion and prohibiting all discriminations on the basis of religion. The Irish Constitution is another model. Its Preamble begins with the name of the Most Holy Trinity, but the state cannot endow any religion or discriminate on religious grounds. Article 3 of the Greek Constitution declares the Greek Orthodox Church as the dominant religion. The opening words of the Preamble are – ‘In the name of Holy, Consubstantial and Undivided Trinity’. But Article 4 talks of the right to equality. Article 5(2) guarantees the right to life, liberty and honour without any discrimination based on religion and gives freedom of religion to all faiths. Muslims of Western Thrace in fact have the right to elect their own Mufti (religious and judicial officer) and their disputes are resolved in accordance with Islamic law. They have an option of either using civil courts or sharia courts.

Article 2 of Pakistan’s Constitution declares Islam as the state religion. Only a Muslim can occupy high constitutional office. But even the Preamble itself explicitly lays down that the ‘adequate provision shall be made for the minorities freely to profess, practice freedom of religion and develop their culture’. Moreover Article 36 again says that the state shall safeguard the legitimate rights and the interests of minorities including their due representation in the federal and provincial services. Accordingly, the Constitution makes a provision of reservation for them.

Though Article 9 of the Sri Lankan Constitution falls short of declaring Buddhism as state religion, it does give “Buddhism” the ‘foremost place’ and places an obligation on the state to protect and foster Buddha Sasna. Of course, it not only guarantees freedom of religion but (unlike India) in Article 10, explicitly gives ‘freedom to have or adopt a religion or belief of his choice’. Minorities are governed by their personal laws and sharia courts function within the premises of regular courts and High Courts.Our secularism based on Ashoka’s Dhamma was designed to allow people to live together in civility and promote equal respect for all religions. The state must remain religion neutral. India’s opposition to Pakistan was based on the separation of religion and state. The framers of the Constitution too intended a secular state, and not a theocratic state. Even the Bharatiya Janata Party has been insisting on its opposition to the Congress’s negative secularism and used to promise positive secularism. If what was implicit from day one was merely made explicit in 1976, ‘Humgama Hai Ku barpa (what is the fuss about)?Faizan Mustafa is a Constitutional Law expert and presently serving as the Vice-Chancellor of Chanakya National Law University, Patna, Bihar. The views expressed are personal

Thali prices rise in June as tomato, potato costs increase

Mumbai: The price of a home-cooked meal or a thali increased in June compared with the preceding month on dearer tomato prices, a report said on Tuesday.A vegetarian thali’s cost moved up 3 per cent to Rs 27.1 in June as compared with Rs 26.2 in May, while the same for a non-vegetarian thali was up 4 per cent to Rs 54.8 per thali in June as against Rs 52.6 in May, as per the report.

The monthly ‘Roti, Rice, Rate’ report by an arm of domestic rating agency Crisil explained that an 8 per cent decline in arrivals led to a 36 per cent increase in the price of tomatoes on-month which pushed up the cost of the thalis.

Additionally, consumers had to contend with a 4 per cent increase in the cost of potatoes, it said. In the case of a non-vegetarian thali, a 5 per cent increase in broiler prices also hurt, it added.Crisil Intelligence’s director Pushan Sharma said it expects thali costs to inch up sequentially as seasonal



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changes push up vegetable prices. In the case of onions, a moderate price rise is expected in the absence of fresh arrivals and controlled release of rabi stock, while

tomatoes, it is weak summer sowing which will push up the prices.However, the report said that when compared on-year, there was an 8 per cent decline in vegetar-

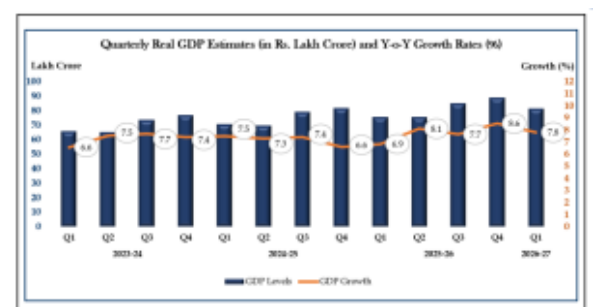
ian meal prices to Rs 27.1 per thali and 6 per cent in non-vegetarian meals, the report said, adding that this was largely due to the high base of June 2024.

India’s GDP growth beats RBI forecast in June quarter, expands 7.8%

India’s real GDP grew 7.8% in the April-June quarter, well above the Reserve Bank of India’s forecast of 7.0%, driven by near double-digit growth in the manufacturing and services sectors. The manufacturing sector grew by 9.2% in April-June, up from 8.3% in the same quarter last year. The tertiary sector, or services, expanded by 10%, higher than 8% a year ago. Services growth was driven by the ‘financial, real estate, IT, professional services, and ownership of dwelling’ sub-head, which posted a growth of 12.1%, sharply higher than 8.8% in April-June 2025. While the latest GDP growth rate is lower than the 8.6% recorded in January-March – revised up from the previous estimate of 7.8% – it is well above the 6.9% recorded in the same period last year, or the first quarter of 2025-26.

GDP chart GDP growth for FY26 has been revised upwards to 7.8% from 7.7%. Nominal GDP increased by 10.3% in the last quarter as against 8.1% in April-June 2025. Nominal GDP growth is the value of all final goods and services produced in the country, without adjusting for the level of inflation. As such, it is usually higher than real growth. The Union Budget for 2026-27 assumed India’s nominal GDP this fiscal will be Rs 393 lakh crore, showing a growth of 10% over MoSPI’s first advance estimate of GDP, released in January. However, since then, the statistics ministry has revised the GDP series, which has a base of 2022-23. Under the new series, the nominal GDP for 2025-26 is over 3% lower than was previously estimated. Consequently, to meet the Budget’s nominal GDP assumption of Rs 393 lakh crore, nominal growth must be more than 13.5% this year.

Meanwhile, the gross value added (GVA) rose by 8.2% in April-June, up from 7.0% in the first quarter of 2025-26. GVA measures the value addition, or the difference in value of output produced and the value of input used. It is also calculated by subtracting net product taxes from the GDP. Estimated growth of real GDP in Q1 of FY 2026-27 is 7.8%. Nominal GDP in Q1 of FY 2026-27 is estimated to have grown by 10.3%, while Real GVA has recorded growth of 8.2%. According to Madhavi Arora, Chief Economist at Emkay Global Financial Services, the strong Q1 GDP growth number “validates the cyclical upturn in the economy” which is being reflected in a broad range of high-frequency indicators, including corporate earnings. “This resilience came despite elevated raw-material costs amid the Middle East crisis, suggesting that volumes remain resilient and firms have been able to pass through a meaningful portion of higher input costs. However, the stronger GVA growth of 8.2% appears to reflect a sharp increase in net public-sector subsidies, which outpaced the growth in net indirect taxes,” Arora added. India’s GDP growth rate has been surprising on the upside since the middle of 2025 and



the latest print of 7.8% comes despite the sharply higher energy prices and supply disruptions caused by the war in West Asia. With wholesale inflation surging due to the war and headline retail inflation also on the up, economic activity was supposed to weaken and lead to a markedly lower print, as predicted by the RBI.

However, data released on Monday by the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI) suggests the Indian economy has weathered the energy storm. Economists have already started raising their growth forecast for 2026-27 as a whole. For 2025-26, MoSPI’s initial estimates were also exceeded, with the provisional estimate of 7.7%, released in June, slightly higher than the ministry’s second advance estimate of 7.6%, made public in February. This figure has now been raised further to 7.8%. Upwards revisions were also made to the GDP growth rates for the previous two years. Now, growth in 2023-24 is estimated to have been 7.3%, up from 7.2%. A similar 10-basis-point upward revision to 7.2% from 7.1% was made to the growth rate for 2024-25. “Despite the supply shocks and higher commodity prices due to the Iran war, the growth resilience reflects a troika of factors: 1) the limited pass-through of retail fuel prices and low inflation; 2) the government’s deft supply-side management and continued focus on public capex; and 3) de-escalation of trade tensions with the US,”

Nomura economists said in a note on Friday following the release of industrial production data for July, which said output rose 6.7% following an 8.8% expansion in June. Given the strong start to 2026-27 and the likely “stable growth momentum” in the July-September quarter, Nomura recently raised its growth forecast for the current year to 7%, although a slowdown in seen in the second half of the year to around 6.7% from 7.3% in the first half. As per the RBI’s forecasts, made on August 5, GDP growth is seen at 6.4% in July-September, 6.5% in October-December, 6.8% in January-March 2027, and 7.3% in April-June 2027. For 2026-27 as a whole, the RBI’s growth forecast is 6.7%.

GST Council to meet after a year on Sept 12; blocked credit, simpler compliance likely on agenda

Tax experts said the transition-related issues of GST 2.0 need to be discussed threadbare by the Council, especially cases involving the levy of compensation cess that is not levied in the revamped regime anymore on goods such as automobiles. (AI generated image) Tax experts said the transition-related issues of GST 2.0 need to be discussed threadbare by the Council, especially cases involving the levy of compensation cess that is not levied in the revamped regime anymore on goods such as automobiles. (AI generated image) After a long gap of over a year, the Goods and Services Tax (GST) Council has decided to hold its next meeting on September 12 in Delhi, an office memorandum issued by Revenue Secretary Arvind Shrivastava, who also holds the position of the Council’s ex-officio secretary, stated.

The Council, which will meet for the first time after the GST 2.0 rate rationalisation in September last year, is likely to take up issues of blocked input tax credit for several goods and services that are facing a higher tax rate for inputs as against the final output, especially after being moved to a lower tax slab under the indirect tax regime.

In September last year, the GST Council undertook a significant rate rationalisation process under GST 2.0, bringing two broad slabs of 5% and 18% along with a special 40% rate for luxury goods. While the agenda for the upcoming 57th meeting is yet to be finalised, the Council is also expected to discuss a uniform and simplified registration framework by states and Centre for businesses looking to register under the GST regime. Automatic processes and cancellations in GST registration as well as simpler compliance rules for documentation are also expected to be discussed by the Council. Incidentally, the meeting of the Council, which is headed by the Union Finance Minister and has representatives of 28 states and three union territories, is being held in Delhi on the same day as the first day of the 18th BRICS Summit in the national capital.

Experts flag transition issues after GST 2.0 overhaul Tax experts said the transition-related issues of GST 2.0 need to be discussed threadbare by the Council, especially cases involving the levy of compensation cess that is not levied in the revamped regime anymore on goods such as automobiles. “The focus should now shift from incremental changes to improving the quality of the GST framework itself. Priorities include providing a mechanism to regularise legacy tax positions, particularly in online gam-



ing, addressing genuine input tax credit hardships arising from supplier defaults, streamlining GST administration for large PAN-India businesses, resolving transitional issues around compensation cess, and laying down a phased roadmap for bringing petroleum products within the GST framework.

Equally important is reducing interpretational ambiguities that continue to drive avoidable litigation and compliance costs,” Manoj Mishra, Partner and Tax Controversy Management Leader, Grant Thornton Bharat, said. Blocked input tax credit has also become a significant issue for several sectors especially if the inputs are in the form of services (which is taxed at 18%) and the output is in a lower tax slab of 5%. While the GST overhaul reduced the rates on several cars and also did away with the compensation cess, dealers who had requisitioned the cars from manufacturers at the older rates had paid GST and cess on it, for which auto dealers’ association, Federation of Automobile Dealers Associations (FADA), had even approached the Supreme Court to get their dues worth Rs 2,500 crore. In September last year, the GST Council undertook a significant rate rationalisation process under GST 2.0, bringing two broad slabs of 5% and 18% along with a special 40% rate for luxury goods. Under the next-generation reforms for GST, small cars with engine capacity not exceeding 1,200 cc (petrol) and 1,500 cc (diesel) and with length not over 4 metre were decided to be taxed at 18% against 28% plus cess levy earlier. Bigger cars were moved to the 40% slab as against 28%. It continued with the compensation cess levy only for tobacco and related products that was later replaced by higher excise duty rates and a Health Security se National Security Cess.

Mumbai property registrations projected to rise 11 pc to 14-year high in August

Mumbai: Property registrations in Mumbai’s Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) jurisdiction are projected to rise 11 per cent year-on-year (YoY) to 12,503 units in August 2026, marking the highest registration level for the month in more than 14 years, a report said on Monday.

The state government is expected to collect around Rs 1,123 crore in stamp duty during August, representing a 12 per cent YoY increase over the Rs 1,000 crore collected in the same month last year, according to an analysis by Knight Frank India of data from the Maharashtra Department of Registrations and Stamps. However, activity is expected to moderate on a sequential basis. Property registrations in August are projected to decline 10 per cent month-on-month (MoM) from 13,824 units in July, while stamp duty collections are estimated to fall 11 per cent MoM from Rs 1,255 crore. The August numbers follow a mixed but broadly resilient trend in Mumbai’s property market during 2026. Registrations stood at 11,219 units in January, before rising to 13,029 in February and 15,983 in March. Activity moderated to 14,285 units in April and 12,403 units in May, before recovering to 13,413 units in June and 13,824 units in

July, the report said. Stamp duty collections have followed a similar pattern. Collections rose to Rs 1,534 crore in March, the highest level recorded in the period shown, before easing to Rs 1,156 crore in April and Rs 1,055 crore in May.

Collections subsequently increased to Rs 1,086 crore in June and Rs 1,255 crore in July, before being projected at Rs 1,123 crore in August. The August projection also compares favourably with the corresponding period last year. In August 2025, Mumbai recorded 11,230 property registrations, while stamp duty collections stood at Rs 1,000 crore. The projected increase of 1,273 registrations and Rs 123 crore in revenue underscores the continued underlying demand for residential properties in the city. Shishir Bajjal, International Partner, Chairman and Managing Director, Knight Frank India, said Mumbai’s residential market continues to witness healthy demand, with August expected to post the highest property registrations for the month in over 14 years. He said that although registrations and stamp duty collections have moderated sequentially, their strong YoY growth highlights the resilience of underlying housing demand. The rise in activity and higher stamp duty collections compared with August last year indicate sustained interest from homebuyers across the market.

Meta’s child safety deal can change social media’s impact on children’s mental health

Meta’s agreement to settle the US states’ landmark case over Facebook and Instagram impact on children is significant because of its size and because it signals a possible change in who bears responsibility for children’s online safety. Meta has agreed to pay up to about \$17–18 billion and introduce protections for under-18 users, including a default two-hour daily limit, a midnight-to-6 a.m. block, muted notifications during school hours, stronger age assurance, parental controls and greater restrictions on harmful content. The agreement follows allegations that Meta encouraged compulsive use and mishandled children’s data. Meta has not admitted wrongdoing.

The importance of the settlement lies in the shift away from the familiar argument that parents alone must control children’s digital lives. For years, technology companies have pointed to parental supervision, while families have struggled to manage products engineered around engagement, notifications, recommendation systems and endless scrolling. The agreement places responsibility back on the platforms. It therefore represents more than a financial penalty: it challenges the idea that a profitable digital environment can be treated as neutral while its youngest users carry the risks. This matters because the post-Covid generation of children and teenagers has grown up with an extraordinary expansion of screen-based life. In clinical practice, screen addiction is a real and serious problem. Children may reach a point where they stop attending school, withdraw from friends and family, lose interest in ordinary activities and become unable to regulate their use of phones, gaming or social media. Often there is an underlying vulnerability—anxiety, depression, learning difficulty, neurodevelopmental difference or family distress—that makes the virtual world attractive. That does not make the technology harmless; it makes vulnerable children even more deserving of protection. The developmental concern is not simply the number of hours spent on a screen, but what is being consumed and what is being displaced. Sustained play, reading, creative activity, physical movement, face-to-face conversation and downtime help children practise attention, language, emotional regulation and social skills. When every pause is filled by a device, children may lose opportunities for reflection and assimilation of the day’s experiences. In clinical assessments, difficulties with attention, frustration tolerance, impulse control, organisation and emotional regulation can become strikingly visible.

Neuroscience adds weight to the concern, although it should not be overstated. A systematic review and meta-analysis of problematic internet use found convergent reductions in grey matter in frontal and anterior cingulate regions involved in reward processing and top-down inhibitory control. Reviews of problematic gaming in adolescents similarly identify alterations in prefrontal, attention, emotion-regulation and reward networks. These findings are associations, not proof that social media alone damages every child. But they reinforce the need to take compulsive digital

Assam doctor, 47, collapses at gym: Why sudden cardiac arrest happens during workout

The gym is supposed to be the place where we go to make the heart stronger. That is what makes the sudden collapse of a 47-year-old doctor in an Assam gym so unsettling. Dr Sahin Rahman, an associate professor at Nagaon Medical College and Hospital, reportedly collapsed while working out and could not be revived. He was young, a doctor and clearly into fitness. “But heart health is not conditional and could be brought on by underlying and unidentified complications, fatal rhythm disturbance, stress, lack of sleep or extreme dehydration. We are increasingly seeing cases of silent cardiovascular disease in people who appear healthy,” says Dr Ranjan Shetty, lead cardiologist and medical director, Sparsh Hospital, Bengaluru. Listen in:

The dangerous assumption of looking fit A lean body, regular workouts, a low resting heart rate, the ability to run several kilometres or lift heavy weights—all may seem reassuring. But none of them can point to an undiagnosed heart disease. During strenuous exercise, the heart works harder, blood pressure rises and the demand for oxygen increases. For a healthy heart, this is part of the body’s normal response to exertion. But if there is a vulnerable coronary artery, a significant rhythm abnormality or an underlying structural problem, the sudden increase in cardiovascular demand can, in some cases, trigger a crisis. The exercise session often exposes a problem you did not know of. Why 40s are high risk By the 40s, a person’s cardiovascular health reflects years of accumulated exposure—to cholesterol, blood pressure, diabetes, tobacco, inadequate sleep, stress, diet, alcohol consumption and family history. Some people carry considerable risk without experiencing a single dramatic warning. This is particularly relevant in India, where heart disease often presents at younger ages than many people expect.

The doctor who may not have time to be a patient Then there is stress. Doctors occupy a peculiar position in the health system. They know the symptoms. They know the risk factors. They tell patients to sleep better, exercise, control their blood pressure and check their cholesterol. But the profession itself can make those things difficult. Long shifts. Night duty. Interrupted sleep. Emotional exhaustion. Constant responsibility. Meals taken between patients. Years spent working against the body’s natural clock. But chronic stress and poor sleep can contribute to cardiovascular risk, particularly when they sit alongside other factors.

Zega Unveils Japanese-Inspired Mizuwari Cocktail Series In Hyd

Japanese cocktail menu Hyderabad: Zega at Sheraton Hyderabad Hotel has introduced a new cocktail menu inspired by Mizuwari, a Japanese style of preparing drinks by mixing spirits with water. The new series features seven cocktails, each built around one of the traditional virtues associated with the Samurai.

The menu includes Makoto, inspired by honesty and sincerity, combining vodka, Aperol, yuzu lime and fizz. Chu, representing duty and loyalty, brings together bourbon whisky, lime, sesame and Angostura bitters. Other cocktails in the collection include Ikigai, which draws on the idea of purpose and a long, happy life through gin, cherry cordial, hibiscus and sparkling elements. Rei takes inspiration from beauty in imperfection, pairing vodka with pickled ginger, kaffir lime, cucumber and watermelon.

The remaining drinks include Jin, a gin-based combination featuring passion, strawberry sweet vermouth, cit-



behaviour seriously. Mental health is another concern. Research has linked heavier social-media use with anxiety, depressive symptoms, body dissatisfaction and disordered eating. A 2026 meta-analysis of 45 studies involving more than 33,000 adolescents found significant associations between social-media engagement and body-image and eating-disorder symptoms, with stronger associations for Instagram. The digital environment can also expose children to self-harm material, eating-disorder content, exploitation, misogyny, violent imagery and other age-inappropriate material. Recommendation systems can intensify exposure by repeatedly feeding users what keeps them engaged. Yet this is not an argument for banning technology. Digital tools can expand access to education, support differently abled learners and create opportunities for creativity, connection and participation. The distinction must be between technology used as a genuinely useful tool and platforms designed to capture attention. That is why the Meta settlement could become a turning point. The two-hour limit, night-time restrictions, school-hour notification controls, age assurance, reduced social-comparison features and stronger parental controls are useful steps. But critics are right to ask whether they go far enough. The crucial question is whether platforms will change underlying addictive design and recommendation systems, rather than simply placing the burden of control on parents. Schools, governments and technology companies must therefore share responsibility. Schools can establish clear rules, reduce unnecessary access to social media on school devices and teach digital literacy. Governments can demand transparency, independent audits and age-appropriate design. Companies should remove addictive features, limit harmful recommendations and make child-safety protections the default rather than an optional setting. The message from the Meta case is clear: children cannot be expected to outsmart systems built to maximise engagement. The settlement is not the end of this debate, but it is a recognition that digital childhood is a public-health and developmental issue—not merely a parenting problem. If other platforms follow Meta’s lead, the ruling could mark the beginning of a safer digital culture in which children’s development, privacy and mental health are treated as more important than keeping them online.



When the workout becomes a stress test A strenuous workout is, in effect, a controlled stress placed on the cardiovascular system. Heart rate climbs. Blood pressure rises. The body releases adrenaline. Muscles demand more oxygen. Most of the time, that is precisely why exercise is good for us. But intensity matters. Someone with an undiagnosed cardiac condition may tolerate ordinary daily activity without difficulty and still experience trouble when suddenly pushed to a much higher level of exertion. Heavy lifting, maximal effort, intense cardio, inadequate hydration or simply exercising beyond one’s conditioning can add to the physiological stress. The prescription for one person’s body may not be the prescription for another’s. The warning signs we ignore Some people have no warning at all. Others do—and dismiss it. Unusual breathlessness. Chest pressure or discomfort. Fainting or near-fainting. Sudden dizziness. Palpitations.

An unexplained drop in exercise tolerance. These are not necessarily signs of heart disease. But when they occur during or immediately after exercise, they deserve medical attention rather than an assumption that one is simply tired, unfit or having a bad day. Begin your cardiovascular risk assessment (cholesterol, blood sugar, obesity, hypertension) much earlier rather than waiting until middle age. Take persistent symptoms seriously. And if you are planning to move from little exercise to extreme exertion, do not assume that enthusiasm is the same thing as preparedness. Get a resting ECG, 2D Echo, stress test or CT coronary scan if you are 35+. Also, every public space should have automated external defibrillators (AEDs) which can revive the patient by resetting the heart and sorting out the rhythm disturbance.



rus and fizz. Yu, which blends gin, cherry wine, Campari and lime, and Meiyu, made with white rum, pineapple, Campari and lime. Rather than simply focusing on flavours, the series connects each drink to a different idea from Japanese philosophy.

BCB president Tamim Iqbal says Bangladesh should have played 2026 T20 World Cup



GNS News Agency, Sept 1 Bangladesh Cricket Board President Tamim Iqbal said that while Bangladesh and India's diplomatic ties were strained due to the Mustafizur Rahman incident earlier this year, Bangladesh should have played the T20 World Cup. "Look, Mustafizur's issue was obviously something that the whole country was disappointed with. This was in no way right thing to do, this should never have been done. At that time I endorsed this, I am saying it even now. But we are going to play a World Cup," Tamim said on YouTube channel 'Not Out Norman'

"If you go to a point of no return on the very first day, then that (solution) won't happen. And I feel in some cases, sports should remain as sports. So much trouble happened recently, right? Iran went to play in America during the ongoing war between two countries, I mean, that was bigger

than this, a war is going on. So that's my point, I mean, a war is going on....we should have definitely played the World Cup. We should have definitely done the negotiation in a better way," he added. Relations between the two neighbours had worsened after the Bangladesh cricket team declined to travel to India for its group-stage fixtures at the ongoing 2026 T20 World Cup, citing security concerns. The move was in response to IPL franchise Kolkata Knight Riders releasing Bangladesh bowler Mustafizur from their team on the BCCI's directions. Ultimately, Bangladesh was replaced by Scotland in the tournament. Since then, with the advent of a new regime in Bangladesh, tensions have eased and talks are ongoing for a bilateral series. Tamim said that that both the countries are continuing to look for a window despite their hectic schedules. The BCB chief admitted that the three ODIs and three T20Is will not happen in September as originally planned. India have a three-match T20I series against Afghanistan in the same window beginning September 13. "That it (India series) won't happen hasn't been decided yet," Tamim said. "Both boards are very sincere that this thing happens. Both BCCI and BCB are looking at windows as well, which time what can be done. Roughly a date, around which we are also thinking whether it can be done at this time or not," he added. "If I saw the intention was negative, then today I wouldn't even have said this word to you, 'Let's see what happens, we're hopeful.' I wouldn't have even said this word. Intentions are very positive," he asserted.

Babar Azam on PCB threat to Imran Khan's sons: 'I haven't heard that thing...'

The start of the second Test at Lords between England and Pakistan was embroiled in controversy after Sky Sports telecasted an interview with former Pakistan captain and former Prime Minister Imran Khan's son Kasim and Suleaiman during the lunch interval on the opening day of the Test. With reports emerging that the Mohsin Naqvi led Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) had lodged an official complaint with the broadcasters and how PCB deliberated on not taking the field after the interview was aired, Pakistan captain Babar Azam had denied such reports and has shared how there was no conversation about such a possibility within the team as well as team management.

Speaking with BBC Test Match Special post Pakistan's 194-run loss against England on Sunday, Azam was asked whether there was any question of Pakistan not taking the field after the lunch break on the opening day of the Lord's Test. The Pakistan captain replied in negative. "No, no, no. I haven't heard that thing," said Azam, When asked further whether he was aware of any conversations going about such a possibility, Azam again replied in negative. "No," Azam replied.

In the Sky Sports interview with host and former England captain Michael Atherton, Khan's sons Kasim and Sulaiman had spoken about concerns regarding their imprisoned father's health in Pakistan's Adiala Jail. According to reports, PCB Chairman and Pakistan's minister of interior affairs Mohsin Naqvi had requested Sky Sports not to air the interview before the broadcasters aired the interview. On the second day of the Test, Pakistan coach Sarfraz



Ahmed was also asked about the interview and the reported threat by PCB. Ahmed replied in negative and shared he does not know about any interview. "I don't know anything. I'm just focusing on the match. You're talking about the interview? We don't know about the interview. All are OK. We were having lunch at that time," Ahmed told reporters at the end of the second day's play. Kasim had shared in the interview about how Khan is being treated in the jail by Pakistan authorities. "They're completely isolating him for more than 23 hours a day in a cell. So right now it's really crucial for us that he gets proper treatment. When he was seen by them, he had an eye patch on from the eye situation. He seemed visibly stressed. And that is something that's very hard for us to imagine because he embodies a kind of calm assured presence every time I have seen him, even in very very tough situations," Kasim said in the interview.

'I despised every moment': Novak Djokovic on physical struggles after shock US Open exit

GNS News Agency, Sept 1

Novak Djokovic has opened up about the physical struggles that derailed his US Open campaign, admitting he "despised every moment" on court during his shock first-round defeat to Argentina's Mariano Navone. The 24-time Grand Slam champion, who was chasing a record-extending 25th major title, fell 7-6(5), 5-7, 4-6, 6-2, 6-1 in a grueling four-hour-plus contest at Arthur Ashe Stadium. It was his first first-round loss at a major since the 2006 Australian Open. Speaking after the match, Djokovic said he had been dealing with similar issues throughout the season. "I think it was obvious that it was an awful feeling on the court for me. It's something that I've been carrying, unfortunately, pretty much every match this year," he said. He described how his body broke down during the match. "Vomiting, throwing up, a serious issue there. Then my whole body starts to collapse, basically cramping and pain. The back just gave up in the end and shoulder, and I couldn't close it out," he added.

Djokovic had won the third set and was leading in the fourth before Navone turned the match around. He said he tried his best to stay in the contest but could not overcome his physical struggles. "I won a set and then the third one. Then I was like, 'Okay, maybe there is a chance'. I didn't want to give up in fourth or fifth, so I wanted to kind of finish the match," he said. Despite the pain, Djokovic acknowledged the support of the New York crowd, who tried to lift him up in the final set. He was clearly moved, tearing up as



the fans rallied behind him.

"They were super nice. So grateful to experience this. When it comes to the match itself and overall feeling of how I felt with body and while playing, it was really not enjoyable. I pretty much despised every moment that I spent on the court for that," he said. "But from the perspective of the crowd and support, it was incredible, honestly, from the beginning. They were trying to lift me up in important moments, and I'm very sorry that I didn't perform as well as I should have or could have or wanted to for them. But the love and appreciation they gave me in the end really touched my heart," he added. The defeat ended Djokovic's hopes of a 25th Grand Slam title at this year's US Open. His exit comes after World No. 1 Jannik Sinner withdrew from the tournament due to injury, while defending champion Carlos Alcaraz entered the event after a long break.

'That's all for show': Stuart Broad slams Imam-ul-Haq over calf injury controversy

GNS News Agency, Sept 1 Former England fast bowler Stuart Broad has launched a scathing attack on Pakistan opener Imam-ul-Haq, accusing him of putting on an act after he was ruled out of the second Test against England at Lord's with a calf injury. Imam sustained a low-grade calf strain while fielding on the opening day, shortly after dropping two crucial catches. He was initially treated by Pakistan's medical team before being officially ruled out of the remainder of the match the following day, leaving the side a batter short. However, on Day 4, Imam was spotted on the Lord's sidelines knocking a ball around with his injured calf taped, visibly limping as he went through the drill. Reports from the Pakistan dressing room suggested he could step out to bat if desperately needed in the second innings. "That's all for show. He has got a bit of stick from media and maybe his teammates. Whatever. You can do that inside the indoor school without anyone seeing, don't have to come wearing shorts and tape and hobble around like that. I am not impressed with that. Sorry," Broad said on Sky Sports.

Broad's remarks added to the growing scrutiny around Imam's injury, particularly after former Pakistan batter and chief selector Mohammad Wasim raised concerns about

the opener's history with injuries. Wasim recalled an incident from 2022, when the team physiotherapist warned him that an injury-related issue involving Imam could emerge before any official announcement had even been made.

"The physio had actually come to me and told me beforehand," Wasim said during an online discussion. "The announcement hadn't even been made yet, and the decision hadn't even been made. I think the player hadn't said anything either. He came and warned me that this was going to happen. And it happened exactly like that. Because of whatever discussions he'd had, he then said that this had happened in the past too, and coaches had complained about similar things."

Amid the controversy, Pakistan's batting faltered once again. Chasing 389, they slipped to 14/3 before Saud Shakeel and Shan Masood mounted a 97-run partnership. Shakeel battled alongside the tail, only to fall for 97. His dismissal triggered a collapse, with Ollie Robinson taking four wickets, Josh Tongue three, and Jofra Archer two as England bowled Pakistan out for 194 to win by 194 runs. Imam had scored 42 and 0 in the first Test at Leeds, which Pakistan also lost.

What Root told his team post Lord's win: 'Celebrate...in a sensible, grown-up way'



With their 194-run win over Pakistan in the second Test of the three-Test series at Lord's on Sunday, the Joe Root led England team sealed the series win. Prior to the second Test, all the talk had been on England pacer Brydon Carse being dropped from the squad after videos of him in handcuffs by Derby police outside a pub were reported by English media. Carse was the eight England contracted player to be involved in a drinking related incident and with the win at Lord's, Root has urged his team-mates to enjoy the win in a 'sensible, grown-up way'.

"It's important we're not -talking about (off-field matters), absolutely. But it's hard to win Test matches, it's hard to win Test series, so enjoy it and celebrate it, but in a sensible, grown-up way. It's been a really good start to, I don't know what you want to call it, this new team," said Root post the match. England had won the first Test at Leeds with an innings and 103 runs. In the Lord's Test, Root could only score four runs in England's first innings before he fell for 24 in the second innings. The 35-year-old, who currently sits at the second spot in all-time highest run scorers in Tests behind Sachin Tendulkar, surpassed Ricky

Ponting's record of highest run-scorer in Tests at home soil. Ponting had scored 7,578 runs in Australia and Root broke Ponting's record when he reached on 13 during his knock of 24. Root, who is now 1,713 runs behind Sachin Tendulkar's record of 15921, has averaged 29.44 in his last nine innings in Tests and has been dismissed LBW for seven times in those nine innings. Root spoke about how he is working hard in his batting and how there's a big score waiting.

"I've always been quite good at understanding and -eventually problem-solving. I'll continue to keep working hard. I might have been lbw a few times, but lots of those have been umpire's call – if they go the other way it might not be as much of a talking point. We've also seen the ball move more than it ever has. So there has to be a sense of calm and realism around things. I know I'm a good player, and I'd like to think there's a big score around the corner," shared Root. Only four batsmen could get past a fifty in the Lord's Test with pacers accounting for most of the wickets in the Test. Root also spoke about how the balls have been different for this season and the wickets too. "I think they've been very different this year. I think there's a different lacquer to them. I don't know, I've not got evidence on that – you probably need to ask Dukes – but I think there's lacquer on the seam. As a batter, when you practise, they're cracking your bats more frequently. And they seem a lot firmer. I think they're affecting the wickets as well. I think they're -denting more. If they dent the wicket it's going to seam off the dents as well, it's going to move more. It's been challenging. Sometimes you do come across summers where it's the perfect storm: you get overcast conditions, you get a bit of rain to contend with, the balls are slightly different. But that's part of the challenge of Test cricket, being able to adapt," said Root.

'Current board the worst in 70 years...': Rashid Latif lashes out on PCB

With their 194-run loss against hosts England in the second Test at Lord's in the three-match series, the Babar Azam led Pakistan not only lost the series but also their 15th loss in their last 20 Tests. Sunday's loss was also Pakistan's tenth loss in 11 away Tests in this time and Pakistan now stands at the bottom spot in the ICC World Test Championship standings with two wins and six losses in this WTC cycle and 16.67 points percentage. Former Pakistan captain Rashid Latif has blasted the Pakistan team as well Pakistan Cricket Board and how the current board under Mohsin Naqvi is the worst in the last 70 years. "Everyone is talking about the Pakistan team and how it's the worst touring team in the last 50 years. But nobody is speaking about how the current board is the worst in the last 70 years. Nobody is talking about the worst selection committee and coaches. If you combine these issues, you will get the answer to your question. You will know who has ruined this team. Now you are losing consistently. This is the worst cricket board, that's a fact," Latif said while speaking on Geo TV.

In the first Test at Leeds, Pakistan had suffered an innings and 103-run loss. The Babar Azam led Pakistan team failed to get past 200 in both their innings and it was the same at Lord's. England had batted first and posted a first inning' total of 290. Pakistan were bundled out for 110 in their first innings followed by England being restricted to 208 runs in their second innings. Set a target of 388 runs to level the series, Pakistan were bundled out for 194 runs resulting in the heavy loss. None of the Pakistan batsmen



could score a fifty in the first innings followed by Saud Shakeel being the only batter to score a fifty with his knock of 97 runs in the second innings. There were 14 instances when a Pakistani batsman failed to get past single digit score in the Test. Pacer Mohammad Abbas's nine wicket-haul including the five-wicket haul in England's second innings was the only face saving act for the team. Abbas spoke after the match about how the team's performance is a concern for everyone. "Our performance is a concern for everyone. Everyone is worried, including the selection committee and the NCA. We're not doing well, we accept that. We're not batting, bowling or fielding well and we discuss this all the time in meetings. We're all working on it and we need to be, too.. We dropped catches and their key players scored 70-odd extra runs," Abbas said. "That's where the match changed because we could have bowled them out for 200. It's disappointing," Abbas said post the match.

Djokovic stunned by Navone in US Open first round, ends 20-year record

Novak Djokovic's quest for a record-extending 25th Grand Slam title ended in stunning fashion on Monday as he was eliminated in the first round of the US Open by Argentina's Mariano Navone, marking only the third time in his illustrious career that he has lost an opening-round match at a major. The 39-year-old Serb, who was chasing history at Flushing Meadows, fell to Navone in a gruelling five-set encounter that exposed his physical struggles. The defeat shattered a remarkable 20-year streak for Djokovic, as he lost the first-round match at a Grand Slam for the first time since the Australian Open 2006. His only other first-round loss at a major came in the same event in 2005.

At Arthur Ashe Stadium, Djokovic showed his trademark resilience despite his physical distress. After losing a tight first-set tie-break 7-6(5), he fought back to win the next two sets 7-5 and 6-4. However, his body eventually betrayed him. He required treatment on his lower back and suffered cramps, allowing World No. 49 Navone to take the fourth set 6-2 and force a decider. Exhausted, Djokovic lost the final set 6-1 and crashed out of the event.

The match was a brutal physical ordeal from the start. Djokovic, who had spoken before the tournament about feeling prepared, looked far from his best. He was seen vomiting multiple times courtside during the third set and required treatment for back and shoulder issues. He had previously



revealed he is dealing with a health condition that is exacerbated by heat and humidity.

Speaking after the match, an emotional Djokovic said, "It was obvious that it was an awful feeling on the court for me. It's something that I've been carrying, unfortunately, pretty much every match this year... vomiting, throwing up, serious issue there. Then my whole body starts to collapse, basically cramping and pain". Despite the pain, he said he didn't want to give up: "I wanted to finish the match". Meanwhile, a stunned Navone called it "a dream come true" and said he would face the winner of the match between Stan Wawrinka and Matteo Berrettini in the second round.

Why Germany equalling Pakistan's World Cup record should worry Indian hockey

India owned the most coveted record of them all: eight Olympic gold medals, including six in succession between 1928 and 1956. Pakistan, meanwhile, built an equally formidable legacy at the World Cup, winning four titles — in 1971, 1978, 1982 and 1994 — a record that had stood alone for 32 years. For decades, the neighbours defined world hockey.

By winning the 2026 World Cup, Germany equalled Pakistan's record of four titles. It was a landmark achievement for a side that had already won the 2002, 2006 and 2023 editions, and it completed another chapter in the rise and fall of European hockey. The number four is what makes this more than another European victory. For years, the World Cup record was one of the last great statistical monuments to Pakistan's golden age. Now, it has company. And that should resonate particularly strongly in India. There was a time when an India-Pakistan match was not simply one of the biggest fixtures in hockey. It was a contest between the sport's two historical superpowers. India had their extraordinary Olympic dynasty; Pakistan developed a similarly imposing World Cup pedigree. Between them, they won

five of the first eight World Cups — India's only World Cup triumph came four years later in 1975, when they beat Pakistan 2-1 in Kuala Lumpur in a final that remains one of the defining moments in Indian hockey history. Today, that rivalry is already fragile, with India not losing to their arch rivals in a decade. The global dominance, meanwhile, has long waned. For both.

Pakistan have not won the World Cup since 1994 and were knocked out early in Belgium and the Netherlands this time. India, despite remaining Asia's strongest men's side and winning Olympic bronze medals at Tokyo and Paris, arrived at this World Cup chasing a second title 51 years after the first. They leave after finishing eighth. India can still beat Pakistan. They did so at this World Cup. But beating your traditional rival is no longer the same as being among the teams that decide who wins the World Cup. India have won FIH Hockey World Cup once in 1975 whereas Pakistan have won it four times. (AP) India have won FIH Hockey World Cup once in 1975 whereas Pakistan have won it four times. (AP) Look at the World Cup's history and the geographical movement becomes clear.

Sonali Kulkarni defends playing Salman Khan’s mother in Bharat



Sonali Kulkarni has had a rich and diverse filmography across multiple languages. Across her over three decade-long career, she’s been a part of indie films with a heart as well as landmark mainstream films. One of those is Ali Abbas Zafar’s 2019 coming-of-age period drama Bharat, in which she essayed Janki Devi, the mother of the titular protagonist, played by Salman Khan.

Why Sonali Kulkarni played Salman Khan’s mom

Interestingly, Sonali, now 51, is nine years younger than Salman, now 60, who played her son in Bharat. Sonali defends her decision of taking up that role despite the age difference between her and her onscreen son. “During casting, I said, ‘I can’t be playing this role,’” Sonali reveals on SCREEN Spotlight. But she recalls both Ali Abbas Zafar and

casting director Mukesh Chhabra being “very sure” about her casting because of the emphasis they placed on the flashback sequences. “The flashback meant everything to that film. That’s how Bharat gets his name and reacts to situations,” says Sonali, adding, “No director or casting director would like to fit in a wrong person somewhere. That would be a failure on their part also. So, I tried to understand that. So, I took it up as a challenge.” Sonali Kulkarni admits it did take “a lot of convincing” from the director and the casting director to cast her. But what also helped was her own “temptation” to meet Salman Khan, whom she had heard a lot about. “We bonded very well on the sets of Bharat. One can learn from him to treat people well. He was ever gracious. And he scored a point when he gave me his cycle to ride,” said Sonali, laughing.

Adding that the project, backed by Salman Khan Films, paid her “really well”, Sonali also pointed out that she had “maximum scenes with the child artiste” who played the young Bharat, and “very few with the elder Bharat”, essayed by Salman. But she doesn’t have any regrets of tracing that arc either as she got to see Katrina Kaif dance live. “Oh god, she’s such a graceful dancer, and she’s beautiful. We had a gala time on set! So, no complaints from my end,” says Sonali. Katrina, who played Bharat’s longtime love interest Kumud Raina in Bharat, shook a leg with Salman on the popular song “Aithey Aa.” Also starring Disha Patani, Sunil Grover, Tabu, Jackie Shroff, and Nora Fatehi among others, Bharat amassed over Rs 325 crore at the worldwide box office.

‘He had his own set of people’: Boman Irani on reuniting with Priyadarshan after 12 years

One of the most anticipated films of the year, Priyadarshan’s Haiwaan is set to hit screens on September 11. The dark thriller stars Akshay Kumar, Saif Ali Khan, Boman Irani, Shriya Pilgaonkar and Saiyami Kher. While the trailer has already piqued curiosity, Boman says that despite Priyadarshan’s filmography spanning several genres, the “comedy stamp” continues to follow both the filmmaker and him. “The comedy stamp always chases me,” Boman said during an exclusive interview with SCREEN. The conversation came up while discussing Priyadarshan’s body of work. Over the years, the filmmaker has explored several genres, including action, romance and drama. Yet, it is his comedies that audiences most closely associate him with. On reuniting with Priyadarshan after 12 years, SCREEN also asked Boman Irani why it took 12 years for the actor and filmmaker to reunite, despite the two being a “deadly combination” of talent. Boman and Priyadarshan had previously worked together in the 2012 film Tezz, which starred Ajay Devgn, Anil Kapoor and Kangana Ranaut. “I think he had his own group of people whom he was comfortable with. It’s like asking Raju Hirani, ‘Why didn’t you work with so-and-so actor?’ It becomes a family kind of situation, and I think that’s great. But somehow, I was made to believe that I was the first choice for this role,” Boman said.

Watch the trailer of Haiwaan below: Haiwaan also brings Akshay Kumar and Saif Ali Khan together on the big screen after more than three decades. The actors were last seen together in Main Khiladi Tu Anari (1994). Given that Akshay plays a dark character in Haiwaan, we asked Boman if audiences would accept the actor in such a role. “You watch 3 Idiots. Imagine 3 Idiots was not a good movie. Think about it. What would the acceptance of a character like Virus be? They would say, ‘Irritating.’ But when the movie is good, everything gets accepted. You say, ‘Oh well, that was very interesting. It was pretty good advice.’

Rahul Roy says struggling with speech issues after brain stroke: ‘Turned vegan, quit smoking’



Actor Rahul Roy has made a return to acting with his latest project Super Badshah, after his brain stroke in 2020. The actor, known for Aashiqui (1990) and Junoon (1992), suffered the health scare while shooting for a film in Kargil. In a recent interview, Rahul opened up about making changes in his daily routine after the stroke, like turning vegan and quitting smoking. He also revealed taking 8 medicines in a day. During an interaction with Free Press Journal, he shared, “When Karanvir Bohra and Madhavi approached me for the role, I was very excited. The only thing I was sceptical about was my speech problem because of the brain stroke which I had in 2020 when I was shooting in Kargil. But Karanvir was supportive throughout.”

The actor continued, “After my brain stroke, I didn’t even know if I would be able to walk or talk again. I used to be a heavy smoker and a non-vegetarian, but I’ve turned vegan, and am off onion, garlic and milk and am basically having Jain food. Every day after breakfast, I have 8 medicines. But things are much better now than before.”

Rahul Roy suffered a severe cerebrovascular brain stroke in late November 2020 while shooting for the film LAC – Live the Battle in the high altitude and freezing weather conditions of Kargil. He was diagnosed with motor aphasia (an impairment which impacts speech and the ability to do muscular movements for talking). In April this year, Rahul Roy was in the headlines for making ‘dancing reels’ on so-

Think of Munna Bhai MBBS. Sanjay Dutt was 44 years old, hardly a college-going student. Why did they accept it? The movie was good. The story was good,” said the 66-year-old actor. “But if the movie was bad, then people would have questioned, ‘How could they have cast Sanju?’ But the movie was great. So, there was no question of age. Having said that, they (Akshay Kumar and Saif Ali Khan) will be accepted because they are good in the film. But the movie has to be good, and the movie is good,” he concluded. Haiwaan is the official remake of the Mohanlal starrer Oppam (2016), directed by Priyadarshan.

cial media, only to pay his fees for legal cases. The actor, who was once celebrated as a national sensation, shared Instagram reels of him dancing with a content creator on his iconic songs. The clips drew attention online, and the videos were met with widespread trolling. While addressing the backlash in a note on Instagram, Rahul wrote, “I do my work with honesty and modesty. I have some legal matters to pay for, and these are not from today, they are from before the brain stroke happened. If you mock my simplicity or make fun of my struggles, it says less about me and more about you. If you are truly so concerned, then help me find some genuine and decent work so I can pay for these cases. At least I am earning through hard work, not by mocking others.”

He further added, “And after the brain stroke, it is important for me to stay active. I want to work for as long as I am alive. It keeps my mind active and gives me the sense of purpose and responsibility that I am still working today. Yes, it may hurt a little sometimes, but you cannot break me.” Rahul Roy rose to fame with his debut in Aashiqui by Mahesh Bhatt. He then featured in movies like Phir Teri Kahani Yaad Aayee, Junoon, Gumrah, and Pyaar Ka Saaya. The actor also won the first season of Bigg Boss in 2007.

‘Sandeep Reddy Vanga will go to any extent for me’

Hyderabad: Stating that the love he had for ace director Sandeep Reddy Vanga was not something that he could express in words, popular Telugu star Vijay Deverakonda has said that he could go to any extent for the sake of director Sandeep Reddy Vanga. The actor, who participated in the pre-release event of director Venu Gopal Reddy’s romantic drama ‘Romanchakam’, which is being presented by Sandeep Reddy Vanga, Vijay Deverakonda said, “I can’t express the love I have for Sandeep in words. It’s not just a director-actor relationship. It’s not just a brother relationship or a friend relationship. It’s something else.” Recalling the difficulties they faced during the making of the blockbuster film ‘Arjun Reddy’, Vijay Deverakonda went on to say, “Back then, we went to war together. We didn’t know what we were doing. Had the film not worked out, we would have gone crazy. Both of us didn’t have money. We did not have influence. We didn’t have any pull.

‘He had his own set of people’: Boman Irani on reuniting with Priyadarshan after 12 years



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had previously worked together in the 2012 film Tezz, which starred Ajay Devgn, Anil Kapoor and Kangana Ranaut. “I think he had his own group of people whom he was comfortable with. It’s like asking Raju Hirani, ‘Why didn’t you work with so-and-so actor?’ It becomes a family kind of situation, and I think that’s great. But somehow, I was made to believe that I was the first choice for this role,” Boman said.

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Vijay Sethupathi, Nagarjuna, Sudeep and Mohanlal unite ahead of Sep 6 premiere

Viewers across the South India are in for an exciting treat as the Tamil, Telugu, Kannada and Malayalam editions of captive reality show Bigg Boss are all set to premiere on the same day, September 6, 2026. Ahead of the premiere, the makers has unveiled a special Bigg Boss promo bringing together four of the hosts of the South Indian editions, Vijay Sethupathi, Nagarjuna, Kichcha Sudeep and Mohanlal.

The 1.5-minute promo brings the four hosts together in a fun food mix-up that celebrates the distinct cultures and personalities of each language version. The upcoming seasons will see Vijay Sethupathi host Bigg Boss Tamil, Nagarjuna return for Bigg Boss Telugu, Kichcha Sudeepa lead Bigg Boss Kannada and Mohanlal host Bigg Boss Malayalam. The clip was shared with the caption, “Four superstars. Four houses. One epic moment | Bigg Boss. Vijay Sethupathi, Nagarjuna, Kichcha Sudeepa and Mohanlal come together as the countdown begins for Bigg Boss Tamil, Telugu, Kannada and Malayalam. All four editions premiere on 6 September. The wait just got bigger!”

Bigg Boss Tamil Season 10 will air on Star Vijay, with Vijay Sethupathi as the host. Bigg Boss Telugu Season 10, hosted by Nagarjuna, will premiere on Star Maa. Bigg Boss Kannada Season 13 will air on Colors Kannada, with Kichcha Sudeep returning as host. Meanwhile, Bigg Boss Malayalam Season 8 will also premiere on September 6,



with Mohanlal continuing as the host. All the editions can be streamed on Jio Hotstar. Salman Khan-hosted Bigg Boss 20 will also premiere on September 6, making it an action-packed day for fans of the popular reality franchise. Meanwhile, Sourav Ganguly-hosted Bigg Boss Bangla Season 3 premiered on August 30 with Sonamoni Saha, Jhilam Gupta, Srija Guha, Sayak, Jayita, Alexandra, Dipendu Biswas, Nandini Roy, Nirranjan Mondal, Sohini Paul, Tanushree Roy Das and Bharat Kaul as contestants.

Javed Akhtar ‘proud’ of Shabana Azmi for backing CJP protests: ‘Old Shabana has woken up’



Javed Akhtar says he’s “proud” of wife Shabana Azmi for being one of the very few Bollywood celebrities who participated in the Cockroach Janata Party (CJP) protests in New Delhi last month. While a few others extended their support online, the veteran actor was at Jantar Mantar, walking side by side with students protesting against the leak of National Eligibility Entrance Test (NEET) papers.

Javed Akhtar on Shabana Azmi’s activism “This isn’t the first time she’s done this. She’s aged now, so does it less now,” said Akhtar, laughing, on a recent podcast. After Delhi Police hurled tear bombs on the protesters on July 20, Shabana even suffered an asthma attack. Soon after, she was diagnosed with the H1N1 virus, which prevented her from attending the student protests in Mumbai a couple of days later. “I’ve gone to the police station to bail her out. She’s gone for a hunger strike in Mumbai. She’s been quite active,” Akhtar said on Lets Talk With DevnaG. “When our relationship was developing, this is what she was involved in,” he added. The two began dating in the late 1970s after Javed met Shabana at the Mumbai home of his family friend and fellow legendary poet Kaifi Azmi, her father.

“She called me when I was in London to tell me she’s going to Delhi for the protests. When she told me, I knew she would. It’s the call of the conscience. Not once I told her to not go or think twice. The moment she told me I cannot not go, I knew the old Shabana had woken up, and nobody can stop her. And good she did! I’m proud of her,” said Akhtar. Over the past few decades, Shabana has often raised voice against a wide range of issues. These included the 1993 protests at Cuffe Parade in Mumbai, when she sat with slum dwellers to protest against demolition of their homes. Mumbai Police arrested her and 16 others, and she even refused to seek bail or accept the charges against her.

So much so that her mother and veteran actor Shaukat Kafi had to convince the cops to escort Shabana to Tata Theatre for her performance in the popular play Tumhari Amrita during her jailtime. Shabana famously made it to the stage in the very dusty clothes she was detained in. Even-

tually, Javed Akhtar had to bail out his wife. “It’s not like we don’t feel scared. We feel scared most of the times. But in some moments, you’ve to get over the fear and have to call a spade a spade. Otherwise you won’t be able to look into the mirror. If I don’t, I have no loyalty with either my zameen, zamana or zameer (land, time, and conscience). I don’t do it much, but when your conscience is pushed against the wall, you have to do it,” added Akhtar, echoing Shabana’s vocal approach to injustice. When Shabana showed up at the CJP protests last month, she revealed that she and Akhtar first wrote to Prime Minister Narendra Modi, requesting him to discuss the issue with the protesting students. But after acknowledgement of receipt, once they didn’t get a response for the next three days, Shabana chose to participate in the protests herself.

Sreeleela reveals how medical career influenced her acting journey

Mumbai: Actress Sreeleela, who is gearing up for the release of her upcoming film with Kartik Aaryan, has shared how her medical career has shaped the actor in her. The actress opened up about how her exposure to real-life situations during her medical journey has helped her approach acting with greater sensitivity and perspective. Talking about whether her medical experience helps her in cinema, Sreeleela shared, “Definitely. 100 per cent. I feel it is important for an actor to have a lot of knowledge about everything around the world. General knowledge is also very important. Experiences and your sensitivity meter have to be high.”

She further mentioned that her hospital postings exposed her to several deeply personal stories and emotional journeys. She went on, “Hospital stories, what I’ve seen in my course of being in the hospital or in my postings, was, people’s emotional journeys very closely. You see life and death, you see situations, you see people having financial situations to clear bills. There are so many stories. What is cinema? It’s a story and like that I’ve been grateful.” “I mean I was exposed to around three, four stories like this every day, so it gives you so much perspective. It gives, it opens your mind up very differently. You’re very sensitive about microscopic things and you’re very real with that. That’s what I say, that this side it’s just one colourful world, dancing, there’s wonderful costumes, there’s so many people and there’s a white coat. It’s a completely different situation. You’re seeing life and death, so that really matures you as an actor,” she added. On the work front, Sreeleela will make her Bollywood debut with Anurag Basu’s upcoming musical drama.