

**Treesa-Gayatri duo stuns world No. 4, to enter semis**

India's women's doubles duo of Treesa Jolly and Gayatri Gopichand have staged an upset at the BWF World Championships after handing a shock loss to the world no. 4 Chinese pair of Ji Yifan and Zhang Shuxian

P6

Gen Z needs mentors, not political manipulators

Political parties in India seem to believe that when you cannot convince the people, confuse them. That perhaps explains the contradictions in their positions on almost every issue.

P4

A crorepati, but still a middle-class homebuyer

A few years ago, being a crorepati was a big deal. It still is for many. But Hyderabad's real estate prices have changed the meaning of that milestone, at least when it comes to buying a home. Today, Rs 1 crore is no longer necessarily a luxury-home budget.

P7

Sowcar Janaki leaves behind rich south Indian legacy

Sowcar Janaki is a unique figure in Indian cinema history who managed to act in more than seven decades of cinema, performing in over 400 films.

P8

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WINDOWS**Building collapses during demolition; 1 dead, 3 injured**

NEW DELHI: A labourer was killed, and three others were injured when a two-storey building collapsed during demolition work carried out by a private contractor in the Karol Bagh area at 11:15 am on Friday, officials said. The incident occurred on Pyare Lal Road in Regarpura, central Delhi, where labourers were demolishing an old structure. According to the preliminary enquiry, the building owners had hired a private contractor to carry out the demolition work. Police said in a statement that the owner had not taken permission from the concerned agency to pull down the structure. Police said the building suddenly collapsed during the demolition, trapping the labourers working at the site. After being informed by local residents, officials said police and fire service personnel rushed to the spot and launched rescue operations.

No non-electric light goods vehicles in Delhi from 2027

NEW DELHI: From January 1 next year, registration in Delhi will be prohibited for new light goods vehicles (LGVs) running on petrol, diesel or compressed natural gas (CNG) and having a gross weight of up to 3.5 tonnes, the Commission for Air Quality Management (CAQM) stated. Four-wheelers weighing up to 3.5 tonnes are called 'N1 vehicles'. Non-electric LGVs that have a gross vehicle weight of 3.5-7.5 tonnes (categorised as 'N2 vehicles') will be banned from January 1, 2028. The order will affect major manufacturers of non-electric N1 and N2 commercial vehicles such as Tata Motors, Mahindra & Mahindra, Ashok

Python under Vande Bharat Exp triggers panic

HARIDWAR: Panic gripped Haridwar railway station when the cleaning staff of a Vande Bharat Express spotted a python trying to slither inside a coach. According to officials, the Dehradun-bound train arrived at the station's 'washing line' around 9 am on Thursday and was slated to depart around 6 pm following cleaning and maintenance. However, around noon, staff members spotted about a 10-foot-long python slithering beneath the train and near a coach.



ED can't revive 'dead' PMLA case with old FIR: HC

HANS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court has ruled that the Enforcement Directorate (ED) cannot keep a money-laundering case alive by adding an old FIR to an existing Enforcement Case Information Report (ECIR) after the predicate offence underpinning the proceedings has been closed.

Justice Anish Dayal termed the ED's action "illegal and procedurally ir-

Court says agency cannot 'turn clock backwards' by adding six-year-old case; quashes proceedings

regular", observing that the agency could have registered a fresh ECIR based on the separate FIR if statutory requirements were satisfied.

The court said the ED's conduct raised "serious concerns" and appeared to be an attempt to preserve

the existing ECIR and retain its coercive powers under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA), including search, seizure, freezing and attachment of properties.

The ECIR was registered in December 2021 on the basis of a February 2021



Economic Offences Wing FIR arising from a dispute between two factions of the family of late former

MP Mahendra Prasad. The allegations involved share transfers and bank transactions allegedly carried out

using forged signatures of Prasad's wife, Satula Devi.

However, the EOW filed a cancellation report in December 2022 after concluding that no offence was made out. The report was subsequently accepted by the trial court.

The ED later added a separate 2019 FIR to the ECIR through an addendum in August 2025. That FIR related to allegations including wrongful confinement, removal of jewellery and offences un-

der the Passports Act.

The High Court noted that the 2019 FIR existed even before the ECIR was registered and remained outside it for nearly six years.

An ECIR depends on the existence of a predicate or scheduled offence, the court said, adding that once the underlying FIR is closed, PMLA proceedings based on it cannot continue unless the closure is overturned by a superior court.

Complaint of pellet victim

Rahul ends over-6-hour dharna after FIR filed

'This is the first step towards justice and a case has been registered'; there are pellets in his body and he cannot even see as he has suffered injuries in his eyePURNA SINGH
NEW DELHI

CONGRESS leader Rahul Gandhi ended his over-six-hour dharna at the Parliament Street police station here on Friday, after an FIR was registered on a complaint from a young man who has suffered pellet injuries and said this is the first step towards justice. Gandhi sat on the dharna outside the police station after police refused to lodge an FIR on 19-year-old Sahil Lochab's complaint.

"This is the first step towards justice and a case has been registered," Gandhi



said, soon after the Delhi Police registered the FIR. "There are pellets in his body and he cannot even see as he has suffered injuries in his eye. This is injustice with this youngster.

For almost a month, he has been calling for the registration of an FIR and moving from one police station to another. "After hours of protest, an FIR has been registered. One can imagine what the people of the country suffer when they seek justice. There are several rape victims and victims of intimidation and they continue to fight while seeking justice," the leader of opposition in the Lok Sabha said.

Gandhi, who had earlier alleged that police are "under pressure from the top" for not registering a complaint, claimed that the FIR

was lodged only after clearance from top authorities in the home ministry.

"The final FIR has been registered after an okay from the home secretary and (Home Minister) Amit Shah, then you can imagine who was stopping the registration of an FIR as these cops wanted to do so but were not allowed to do so," he said. The Delhi Police registered the FIR in connection with the pellet injuries suffered by Lochab during the July 20 students' protest at Jantar Mantar.

"We have registered an FIR under sections 118 (voluntarily causing hurt or grievous hurt by dangerous weapons or means) and 25 (act endangering life or personal safety of others) of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita," a police officer said.



PM assures support to space startups

HANS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI

PRIME Minister Narendra Modi on Friday assured full support of the government to young space entrepreneurs and urged them to explore how space technology can be used in agriculture, livestock management, dairy, environment and other areas that affect people's everyday lives.

Interacting with CEOs and founders of 20 space startups here, Modi also hailed them for showing remarkable courage by entering a new and demanding domain of space startups as they have taken risks, trusted the reform process and remained consistent in their efforts.

He assured them of the government's full support and called for greater collaboration between space companies and organisations in other sectors to expand the use of their technologies.

"I assured the space startups that the government of India will continue to stand with them as they build India's capabilities for the future. India can offer the world a strong, innovative and commercially viable model in the space sector," he said.

Modi also urged the startups to explore how space technology could contribute to "agriculture, livestock management, dairy, environment and many other areas that touch everyday lives".

Govt rejects ethanol link to sugar price surgeHANS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI

THE government on Friday rejected claims that diversion of sugar for ethanol production was driving a sharp rise in sugar prices, saying instead that lower domestic output, festive-season demand and hoarding had prompted the government to impose stock limits and allow duty-free imports to contain prices. "It is incorrect to



attribute the recent increase in sugar prices to diversion of sugar for ethanol production," the Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food & Public Distribution said in a statement. The share of sugar diverted for making ethanol for doping in petrol, has, in fact, declined to around 9 per cent in the 2025-26 season from about 12 per cent in 2022-23, while nearly three-fourths of India's ethanol production now comes from grains, particularly maize, it said.

New Green Card rules from Sept 18

HANS NEWS SERVICE
TEXAS

The US Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) will issue an updated application form for permanent residence next month, warning that previous versions submitted after the implementation date will be turned away. The revised edition of Form I-485, Application to Register Permanent Residence or Adjust Status, is scheduled for publication on September 18, USCIS stated in an official notification. Form I-485 is utilised by eligible individuals currently residing in the United States to apply for lawful permanent resident status, commonly known as a Green Card. The update is expected to draw significant attention from Indian nationals seeking employment- and family-based permanent residence, particularly applicants who have endured lengthy waits for an immigrant visa number to become available.

FDA suspends license of McDonald's outlet

MUMBAI: The Maharashtra Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has suspended the food business licences of the Bombay Presidency Radio Club and a McDonald's outlet in south Mumbai along with 11 other food establishments across the state for alleged violations of food safety and hygiene norms, officials said on Friday. The FDA is in news since IAS officer Tukaram Mundhe took charge as its commissioner in May and launched a crackdown on food establishments



found violating various laws and rules. In a recent special drive, it inspected 89 hotels, restaurants and dhabas across the state, and issued improvement notices to 71 establishments while suspending the licences of 13 food establishments, an official release said. During an inspection carried out on August 19, Radio Club recorded a non-compliance

rate of 47 per cent, and was asked to stop all purchase, sale and distribution of food during the suspension period, it said. Officials allegedly found a large number of live flies and dead cockroaches in the Club's kitchen. They also allegedly found peeling paint and plaster on the ceiling above food preparation areas, washing powder and other chemicals stored close to food items, food kept directly on the floor, and unclean refrigerators used for non-vegetarian food.

NTA clarifies on Rs 200 answer key challenge fee, refund rules

HANS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI

THE National Testing Agency (NTA) has said that its 'answer key challenge' system is designed to be fair to all students, and rejected concerns about it being expensive.

An NTA answer key challenge is an online process where candidates who take an exam (like JEE Main, NEET, or UGC NET) can object to errors in the provisional an-

'One challenge, everyone benefits. If even a single candidate challenges a question, and the subject experts accept the challenge, the revised answer key applies to every candidate who wrote the exam'

swer key.

The NTA has been under fire lately over issues ranging from NEET-UG paper leak to errors in the UGC-NET examinations.

"On the concern being raised that answer key challenges are 'too expensive': a quick clarification for candidates. The answer key challenge system is designed to be

fair to every student, not just the one who challenges," NTA said in a post on X on August 20, Thursday.

"One challenge, everyone benefits. If even a single candidate challenges a question, and the subject experts accept the challenge, the revised answer key applies to every candidate who wrote the exam," it said. The NTA said that fee is charged for challenging an answer to discourage frivolous challenges and it is re-

funded if the challenge turns out to be right. "The Rs 200/question is refunded to the candidate whose challenge is upheld. The fee exists to discourage frivolous challenges, not to profit from genuine ones," the agency said.

"So if you have identified a genuine error and raised it, if found correct will not only be refunded but one accurate challenge from any candidate can correct the record for lakhs of others," it added.



Uttarakhand HC relocation row: Bench reserves verdict

HANS NEWS SERVICE
NAINITAL

THE Uttarakhand High Court has reserved its decision on a petition challenging the administrative approval given to the land identified for the new high court complex construction. The Uttarakhand High Court is proposed to be shifted from Nainital to the Bel Baba area of Haldwani. A division bench of Justices

Manoj Kumar Tiwari and Pankaj Purohit reserved its verdict after hearing arguments from the petitioner, the state government and other parties. In his petition, advocate and activist Raman Shah questioned the identification of land near the Bel Baba Temple for the proposed high court complex. He contended that the land identified in the Nainital district magistrate's

The Uttarakhand High Court is proposed to be shifted from Nainital to the Bel Baba area of Haldwani; advocate and activist Raman Shah questioned the identification of land for the proposed complex

report is reserved forest land and its proposed use for high court construction is contrary to Section 2 of the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980. The petitioner argued that extensive plantation has been carried out on the land and its character as forest land cannot be altered without following the procedure prescribed under law. He also requested an inquiry into the role of officials involved in identifying the land and sought appropriate action if any viola-

tion was found. Referring to the Supreme Court's order dated July 15, 2026, the petitioner submitted that de-reservation or diversion of reserved forest land requires compliance with the forest conservation laws, including approval from the Central government, and that the character of the land cannot be changed merely on a judicial order. He further claimed that the proposed site falls with-

in an elephant corridor and is an environmentally sensitive area. Construction of a major institutional complex, he argued, could have significant consequences for forests, wildlife and the surrounding ecology and therefore requires careful consideration. Another argument raised before the court concerned the objective behind the creation of Uttarakhand as a hill state. The petitioner contended



that relocation of one of the state's most important institutions from the hills to the plains should be examined in that context. If shifting of the high court becomes necessary, he submitted, the authorities should explore a suitable location within the hill region.

Students of Kannauj school boycott classes, hold protest

HANS NEWS SERVICE
GUGARAPUR

HUNDREDS of students of a government school here boycotted classes and held a protest against the principal for alleged caste discrimination and ordering the felling of trees inside the school campus.

The students of PM Shri Composite School in Gugarapur also surrounded the vehicle of the in-charge principal at the school gate as he was leaving and raised slogans against him.

This comes amid protests by students in Unnao,

The students of PM Shri Composite School in Gugarapur also surrounded the vehicle of the in-charge principal at the school gate as he was leaving and raised slogans against him



The district basic education officer also reached the school and pacified the students and parents, following which classes resumed. Around 500 students are enrolled at the school. District Basic Education Officer Sandeep Kumar said the complaints raised by the students and parents were being investigated.

In recent weeks, school students in many parts of UP have held protests over issues affecting their education and basic facilities.

On Wednesday, hundreds of students of Jai Prakash Narayan Sarvodaya Vidyalaya in Unnao had staged a sit-in over alleged poor-quality food, inadequate drinking water, shortage of teachers and the behaviour of the principal.

The protest briefly disrupted traffic before senior officials intervened and assured the students that their grievances would be addressed.

Pb bandh draws strong response

Markets shut, traffic hit at several places

HANS NEWS SERVICE
PATIALA/FEROZEPUR

SHOPS and markets remained shut while traffic movement was hit on the highways at many places in the state on Friday in the wake of a 'Punjab Bandh' call given by the Qaumi Insaf Morcha to press for the release of 'Bandi Singh' (Sikh prisoners).

Heavy police deployment was made at many places across Punjab, including Amritsar, Ludhiana, Mohali and Jalandhar, to maintain law and order. The call for the bandh was given from 7 am to 2 pm. Bandi Singh refers to Sikh prisoners convicted for their involvement in militancy during the Punjab insurgency of the 1990s.

Commuters, including office-goers and travellers, bore the brunt of the bandh call as they got caught up in road blockades by supporters of the Qaumi Insaf Morcha and various farmers' bodies at several places, including Patiala, Mohali and Jalandhar.

Commuters at some places were seen requesting the protesters to allow them to proceed towards their destinations as tractor-trolleys and other vehicles were parked in the



middle of roads, including state and national highways, by the agitators. Essential services such as medical emergencies, travel to airports, exams and wedding ceremonies were allowed, the Morcha leaders said. The protesters staged dharnas in Jalandhar, Ludhiana's Ladhawal, Hoshiarpur and Ferozepur to vent their anguish over the non-release of Sikh prisoners.

They also took out marches on two-wheelers in cities. Shops at several places, including Sangrur, Ludhiana and Mohali, remained shut, barring medicine stores. Private schools remained shut on Friday as the Federation of Private Schools announced a holiday in view of the bandh call.

Mom run over by train while trying to save son from suicide

HANS NEWS SERVICE
BHADOHI

A 46-year-old woman was run over by a train as she tried to save her 20-year-old son attempting to die by suicide after she refused to give him money to buy liquor, police said on Friday.

The incident took place at the Indira Mill railway crossing in the Kotwali area of Bhadohi late Thursday evening, they said.

The deceased has been identified as Shiv Kumari. Her son, Vishal Rajbhar, was admitted to the district hospital with injuries and later referred to the BHU Trauma Centre in Varanasi, police said.

Kotwali SHO Shailesh Kumar Rai said Kumari, a resident of Chakbhundhar



village, had gone to a private nursing home in the city to meet her elder daughter Pushpa Rajbhar, who recently gave birth to a boy. Vishal accompanied her.

Vishal, who had already consumed alcohol, asked his mother for money at the nursing home. When she refused, an argument broke out between the two.

Vishal then threatened to jump in front of a train and

rushed out of the nursing home, with his mother following him.

Quoting eyewitnesses, Rai said Vishal stood on the railway track with a train approaching. However, Kumari reached there and pushed her son away from the tracks, but got hit by the train herself in the process.

She died on the spot, while Vishal was left injured in the incident, police said.

MP CM orders suspension of cop amid charges of coercion, fraud

HANS NEWS SERVICE
BHOPAL/KATNI

MADHYA Pradesh Chief Minister Mohan Yadav on Friday ordered immediate suspension of Katni City Superintendent of Police (SP) Neha Pachisia after a case was registered against her for allegedly indulging in coercion and fraud for purchasing land in the district. CM Yadav directed the state Chief Secretary to issue immediate suspension orders.

The CM made it clear that negligence, pressure or abuse of power at any level will not be tolerated in matters related to law and order. A fair investigation and strict action against the culprits will be ensured, an official said.

The Madhya Pradesh High Court recently dismissed



CSP Pachisia's petition and denied her interim relief, after which the police department also took a strict legal stance against her, the official said. Katni's Superintendent of Police Abhinav Vishwakarma said, "Based on a complaint from the Bho-

pal Vigilance Branch and the instructions of the Jabalpur Zone, a case was registered against the CSP and other accused at the Kuthla police station in Katni on charges of fraud, coercion, and criminal conspiracy." The entire matter relates

to a transaction involving land owned by one Ramesh Lodhi that falls under the Kuthla police station limits. A departmental investigation found that the actual value of this land, according to government guidelines, was Rs 82,86,930. But by allegedly abusing the police machinery and her position, the CSP coerced the Lodhi family to sell the land at only Rs 18,20,000 in the name of Maruf Ahmed Hanafi. The documents showed a payment of Rs 15 lakh by cheque and Rs 3.20 lakh in cash, the official said.

An in-depth investigation conducted by Jabalpur's Additional Superintendent of Police (ASP) Anu Beniwal found that Hanafi, in whose name the land was bought, did not have funds in his bank for the purchase.

Three workers, including a Nepali killed in mishap

HANS NEWS SERVICE
MATHURA

THREE workers, including a Nepali national, were killed and several injured when the shuttering of a multi-storey building where construction was underway collapsed in Vrindavan here on Friday, police said. Shuttering is a temporary support structure used to hold wet concrete in place until it hardens and gains enough strength to support itself. The incident occurred around 7 am at the Omaxe Mall construction site in the Rukmani Vihar area under the Vrindavan Kotwali police station limits when workers were pouring concrete for a projecting slab on the fourth floor, Omaxe General Manager R K Jain said.

Several workers were trapped under the debris after the shuttering collapsed, triggering panic at the site. Police and fire brigade personnel, with the help of locals, launched a rescue operation and pulled out the injured workers before shifting them to different hospitals.

One of the deceased, identified as Shivram (42), a Nepali national, died on the spot. Two other workers, whose identities are yet to be ascertained, succumbed to their injuries during treatment at the district hospital, police said. Dr Bhudev Prasad, in-charge of the Rapid Response Team of the Chief Medical Officer's (CMO) office, said the two unidentified deceased workers were aged around 35-40. Another worker, Dildar Singh (40), a resident of West Bengal, was admitted to a hospital in Vrindavan in critical condition, he said. Several other workers are undergoing treatment at different hospitals.

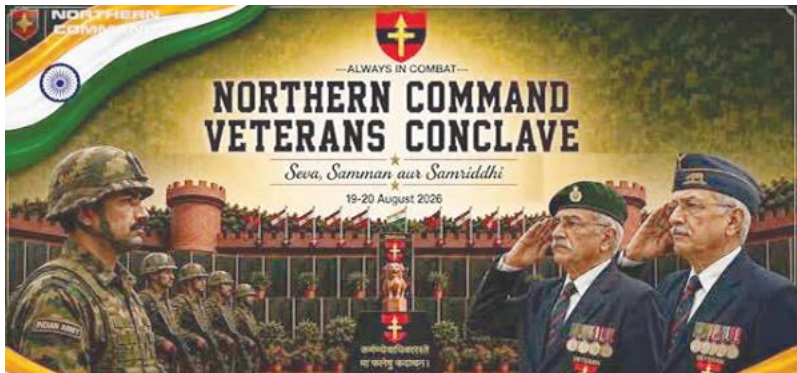
Northern command hosts veterans' conclave

HANS NEWS SERVICE
JAMMU

THE Northern Command of the Indian Army hosted a veterans' conclave bringing together key stakeholders from various wings of central government and formations across the union territories of Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh to strengthen welfare and rehabilitation measures for veterans, officials said.

The conclave involving stakeholders from the department of ex-servicemen welfare, Ministry of Defence, adjutant general's branch of the Army headquarters, the Jammu and Kashmir government and formations across UTs of J&K and Ladakh, focused on contemporary challenges faced by veterans, Veer Naris and dependents, with deliberations covering healthcare delivery, outreach and awareness, skill development and institutional support, they said.

The participants in two days conclave



on August 19 to 20 also discussed measures to enhance coordination among various departments and streamline administrative procedures to ensure more efficient delivery of welfare schemes and services to the veteran community.

Addressing the stakeholders, Army Commander, Northern Command, Lt Gen Pratik Sharma, called for a collabo-

orative approach involving all concerned agencies at every level to ensure the well-being of the veteran fraternity.

Secretary, Department of Ex-Servicemen Welfare, Ministry of Defence, Sukriti Likhri, who attended the conclave virtually, reiterated the government's commitment towards the welfare of veterans across J&K and Ladakh.

Man held for filming women in washroom

HANS NEWS SERVICE
BHADOHI

A 32-year-old man was arrested here for allegedly recording videos and photographs of female students at a digital library through a hole in a washroom wall, police said on Friday. The accused, identified as Ravi Shankar Gupta, was arrested after library operator Bharthari Bind lodged a complaint at the Gyanpur police station late Thursday night, SHO Sacchidanand Pandey said.

According to the police, Bind has been running the library for several years in a building owned by Gupta's father near the Lal Nagar toll plaza on National Highway 19.

The washroom used by female students was adjacent to a room belonging to the building owner's family. "On Thursday afternoon, some students noticed a small hole in the washroom wall and alerted others.

They allegedly looked through the hole and saw Gupta in the adjoining room," Pandey said. The students allegedly took his mobile



phone and found a large number of objectionable photographs and videos of female students stored in its gallery, police said.

The mobile phone has been seized and sent for forensic examination to determine whether the videos were shared or uploaded on social media platforms or websites, they said. A case has been registered under relevant sections of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita and the Information Technology Act, they added.

UP, Japan's Yamanashi begin a new era of industrial partnership: Yogi

HANS NEWS SERVICE
LUCKNOW

UTTAR Pradesh and Japan's Yamanashi province have begun a new era of partnership, with discussions between the two sides now translating into a "strong business partnership" and new investment opportunities, Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath said on Friday.

Addressing the Uttar Pradesh-Japan Investment Summit 2026 here in the

presence of Yamanashi Governor Kotaro Nagasaki, Deputy Governor Junichi Ishidera and a Japanese delegation of senior officials and industry representatives, Adityanath began his address by greeting the guests in Japanese, saying, "Konichiwa minasan" (hello/namaste).

"Only a few days ago, we took a resolve on Japanese soil. Today, here in Lucknow, we are seeing that resolve take concrete shape.

'Only a few days ago, we took a resolve on Japanese soil. Today, here in Lucknow, we are seeing that resolve take concrete shape. Our discussions in Japan are now transforming into a strong business partnership and creating new opportunities for investment, industry and employment in UP

Our discussions in Japan are now transforming into a strong business partnership and creating new opportunities for investment, industry and employment in Uttar Pradesh," he said.

Adityanath thanked Nagasaki and his team for their role in initiating a new chapter in ties between Uttar Pradesh and Yamanashi, saying the partnership would also strengthen

India-Japan relations.

The chief minister said Japan had demonstrated to the world that despite limited resources, discipline, will-power, high quality standards, innovation and a "nation first" approach could overcome any challenge. He said Japan had established itself as a major economic and industrial power, with a global reputation in automobiles, electronics, robotics, high-quality manufacturing, cleanliness and

collective responsibility.

Referring to Japanese concepts such as "Kaizen", "Monozukuri" and "Wa" (social harmony), Adityanath said these values were reflected in the country's administration, industry, education and social life. He cited Japan's Shinkansen bullet train as an example of the country's approach, saying its technical efficiency, punctuality, safety and reliability reflected an emphasis on precision and speed.



LG puts Delhi departments on deadline to cut red tape

PURNA SINGH
NEW DELHI

DELHI'S drive to cut red tape has entered a deadline-driven phase, with Lieutenant Governor Taranjit Singh Sandhu directing departments to speed up pending reforms and ensure their benefits are felt by citizens and businesses.

Reviewing the deregulation and compliance reform exercise on Friday, Sandhu

said success should not be measured merely by the number of "priority areas" marked completed on government portals. The real test, he said, was whether traders face fewer forms, entrepreneurs make fewer visits to government offices and citizens get faster approvals.

The meeting, following the previous review on July

29, was attended by Chief Secretary Rajiv Verma, the MCD Commissioner, DDA Vice Chairman and senior officials from the Education, Urban Development, Tourism and Health departments.

Sandhu directed departments to formally notify pending reforms at the earliest instead of allowing them

to remain confined to files and inter-departmental correspondence.

The review came a day after the unveiling of the Master Plan for Delhi-2047, which officials said has paved the way for completing the remaining Phase-I reforms.

Of 23 priority areas under Phase-I, 13 have been imple-

mented, four have become redundant following the new labour codes and six remain pending. These include flexible zoning norms, road-width requirements for rural industries, changes in building regulations and third-party building approvals and inspections.

Phase-II has also gathered momentum. Seven prior-

ity reforms had been fully implemented by August 20, including removal of duplicate MCD trade licences, permanent registration for shops and commercial establishments and electricity connections of up to 200 kW without physical inspection.

Another 18 reforms are at advanced stages.

The Delhi Ease of Doing



Business Bill, 2026, revised following Cabinet directions, is expected to come before the Cabinet soon. The Delhi Right of Citizens

to Time-Bound Delivery of Services Bill, 2026, has already been passed by the Assembly and awaits final notification.

Taranjit Singh Sandhu says reforms must translate into faster approvals, fewer office visits

6 get lifer for kidnapping makeup artist for ransom

HANS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI

A Delhi court has sentenced six men to life imprisonment for kidnapping a 23-year-old makeup artist for ransom in 2016, and imposing a fine of Rs 50,000 on each of them. Principal District and Sessions Judge Pankaj Gupta was hearing arguments on the quantum of sentence against Wasim Ansari, Deepak alias Deepu, Vinod Kumar, Nasir Ali, Neeraj Sharma and Rizwan, who were convicted of criminal conspiracy and kidnapping for ransom. In an order dated August 17, the court said, "Keeping in view all the facts and circumstances of the case and the mitigating circumstances as mentioned above, all the convicts are sentenced to undergo rigorous imprisonment for life (each) and pay a fine of Rs.50,000 (each)".

The case relates to the abduction of Abhishek Khetrpal, a makeup artist,



who was kidnapped near the Radisson Blu Hotel in Dwarka on October 20, 2016. He was kept in captivity for about three days before being rescued from a house in Uttar Pradesh on October 23.

According to the prosecution, Khetrpal had gone to meet a person who was posing as a prospective client when he was overpowered and taken away. The accused allegedly demanded Rs 2 crore from his mother for his release.

The court had relied on

Khetrpal's testimony, including his identification of the accused, as well as evidence relating to mobile phone numbers and recovery of his belongings. The six were convicted under Indian Penal Code (IPC) Sections 120B and 364A read with Section 120B. They were, however, acquitted of charges relating to administering a stupefying substance and destruction of evidence. During sentencing, the prosecution sought maximum punishment, describing the offences as grave.

Ageing Delhi colonies to get a chance to rebuild

HANS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI

OLD government colonies, ageing housing societies and planned residential neighbourhoods in Delhi could get a chance to rebuild under a "regeneration" plan envisioned in the Master Plan for Delhi 2047 (MPD-2047).

The plan proposes a minimum area of 3,000 square metres for such projects, with plots allowed to be merged or reconstituted. MPD-2047 states that those taking up redevelopment of these old and dilapidated residences could get construction rights of up to 1.5 times the base Floor Area Ratio (FAR), broadly allowing more built-up space than currently permitted.

The provision would allow residents to come together and redevelop ageing prop-

The provision would allow residents to come together and redevelop ageing properties with more living space, wider roads and better civic amenities, according to the plan prepared by the Delhi Development Authority



erties with more living space, wider roads and better civic amenities, according to the plan prepared by the Delhi Development Authority (DDA).

For government and employer housing, including staff quarters of public sector units, regeneration could be taken up as group housing projects, with some development norms relaxed subject to central government's

approval. In group housing societies, including Cooperative Group Housing Society plots and DDA colonies, resident welfare associations, societies or federations would have to take up the redevelopment collectively.

Plotted residential colonies, including cooperative house-building, resettlement and rehabilitation colonies, could also be redeveloped through schemes under rules to be notified. New road plans would have to be

approved before redevelopment begins.

Residents may also have to give up some land for road widening, in return for additional FAR credit on the remaining plots. The projects would also be required to provide modern infrastructure, including water-reuse systems, decentralised sewage treatment, waste segregation, renewable energy, multi-level parking and wider internal roads.

The provision, however, would not cover areas such as urban villages, unauthorised colonies, slums, the Ridge, Yamuna floodplain, land pooling and low-density areas, ASI- or NMA-protected zones, Lutyens' and Civil Lines Bungalow Zones, Connaught Place and its extension, and Transit Oriented Development areas.

IndiGo faces booking system glitches again

HANS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI

THE country's largest airline IndiGo's ticket booking system briefly faced issues on August 21, Friday, and people were unable to access online services. On Wednesday also, the airline's booking system had experienced issues.

"We are currently experiencing intermittent issues with our core reservation platform, which may make it difficult for some customers to access our online services," IndiGo said in a message on its website on Friday.

Teams are working on priority along with the partner to resolve the issue as quickly as possible, IndiGo said and regretted the inconvenience. An official said the issues have been



resolved and the system is functioning normally now. The airline is using the Navitaire reservation system.

IndiGo operates around 2,200 flights daily connecting various domestic and international destinations. In July, the carrier flew 80.82 lakh passengers on domestic routes, and the market share stood at 67.4 per cent.

Over 2K industrial units inspected in 7 months

HANS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI

THE Delhi government has inspected 2,011 industrial units till July this year as part of its pollution-control drive, with 106 units found violating environmental norms, officials said on Friday. Environmental compensation has been imposed on 44 units, while closure orders have been issued against 33 factories for non-compliance, they added.

The inspections were carried out under the campaign led by Chief Minister Rekha Gupta to strengthen monitoring of industrial pollution and ensure compliance with prescribed environmental standards. Of the units inspected, 106 were found to be non-compliant with environmental



norms, while 78 were found operating without a valid Consent to Operate (CTO) from the Delhi Pollution Control Committee (DPCC), CM Gupta said.

Action is also being taken against other units in accordance with relevant environmental laws and regulations, she added. "Our objective

is not merely to take action, but to ensure effective control over pollution at its source," Gupta said.

According to the government, its pollution-control campaign is not restricted to industrial emissions and includes action against road dust, vehicular emissions, construction and demolition activities, waste burning and other sources of pollution. It has also strengthened on-ground monitoring of industrial emissions to identify violations and take timely action, according to a statement.

Gupta said citizens also have an important role to play in the fight against pollution and urged them to report industrial pollution, open burning of waste, dust pollution, illegal dumping and other activities harmful to the environment.

Building collapses during demolition; 1 dead, 3 injured

HANS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI

A labourer was killed, and three others were injured when a two-storey building collapsed during demolition work carried out by a private contractor in the Karol Bagh area at 11:15 am on Friday, officials said.

The incident occurred on Pyare Lal Road in Regarpura, central Delhi, where labourers were demolishing an old structure. According to the preliminary enquiry, the building owners had hired a private contractor to carry out the demolition work.

Police said in a statement that the owner had not taken permission from the concerned agency to pull down the structure. Police said the building suddenly collapsed during the demolition, trapping the labourers working at the site.

After being informed by local residents, officials said police and fire service personnel rushed to the spot and launched rescue operations. Police said one of the labourers, Sheikh Shamshad, sustained critical injuries and later succumbed. His body was shifted to the mortuary at Lady Hardinge Medical College (LHMC) Hospital.

BJP goons attacked CJP volunteers: Kejriwal

HANS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI

AAM Aadmi Party national convener Arvind Kejriwal on Friday accused the BJP of attacking CJP volunteers when they were on a visit to a Rajasthan village.

Responding to a post of Ashutosh Ranka, co-convenor of Cockroach Janta Party (CJP), Kejriwal said that "BJP goons" attacked the CJP volunteers. "What's going on in the country? BJP's goons have brutally



attacked CJP's volunteers. They beat them up, tore their clothes, and smashed

the car windows," Kejriwal said in a post on X.

Kejriwal further questioned whether it was to prevent them from raising their voices for children's good education. He also alleged that the BJP wanted to keep the children illiterate.

A scuffle broke out at a village in Rajasthan when villagers, allegedly accompanied by BJP workers, put up barricades and forcibly pushed back a CJP team that had gone there to inspect a

government school as part of its "School Thik Karo" campaign.

Videos of the incident showed a large number of people engaging in a heated exchange with the CJP team, pushing and shoving its members as they tried to enter the village.

Some clips also showed smashed windows of cars, believed to belong to the visiting CJP team. Ranka alleged that the CJP team was attacked on the orders of Rajasthan Education Minister Madan Dilawar.

Rtd colonel cheated of Rs 15.5L in digital arrest scam; four held

HANS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI

A retired Indian Army colonel was allegedly cheated of Rs 15.50 lakh in a "digital arrest" cyber-fraud in which fraudsters impersonated police and enforcement officials, an officer said on Friday.

The Delhi Police said that they have arrested four people, accused of facilitating the racket by supplying mule bank accounts to cyber-fraud syndicates linked to operators in Cambodia and UAE/ Dubai. The accused were



arrested from Punjab and Rajasthan, and four mobile phones and six SIM cards allegedly used in the commission of cyber offences were recovered, police said on Friday.

According to police, the beneficiary bank account into which the retired colonel transferred the money has

been linked to 17 complaints registered on the National Cyber Crime Reporting Portal (NCRP) across multiple states and Union territories.

The complaints involve fraudulent transactions running into crores of rupees, indicating that the account was allegedly being used as part of a wider cyber-fraud network, police said. "The case came to light after the retired colonel, a resident of Munirka Enclave, filed a complaint through the NCRP alleging that he had been cheated of Rs 15.50 lakh," a senior police officer said.

FLU ALARM IN CAPITAL AS H1N1 CASES CLIMB TO 1,777

Union Health Minister says JP Nadda govt has stepped up surveillance; 246 dengue, 80 malaria cases also reported

PURNA SINGH
NEW DELHI

DELHI has intensified disease surveillance as H1N1 cases climbed to 1,777 this year, even as dengue, malaria and chikungunya remain under close watch. The government has assured that hospitals have adequate beds, doctors, medicines and essential equipment to deal with the situation.

A high-level review

chaired by Union Health Minister J.P. Nadda on Friday assessed the Capital's preparedness for influenza and mosquito-borne diseases. Delhi Health Minister Dr Pankaj Kumar Singh presented the latest figures and measures being taken.

Delhi has reported 2,392 Influenza-A cases in 2026 so far, including 1,777 H1N1 cases, 37 H1 cases, 138 H3 cases and 440 cases in other categories.

Singh said there was no shortage of hospital beds, medicines or medical equipment and facilities could be expanded if required. The focus was on early detection, immediate treatment and continuous surveillance, he said.

The Delhi State Health Mission is monitoring influenza-like illness, severe acute respiratory infections and confirmed influenza cases daily through the In-

tegrated Disease Surveillance Programme. Hospitals and district health authorities have been issued protocols covering screening, treatment, ventilator management, mask use and home-based care.

Residents have been advised to maintain respiratory hygiene, wear masks in crowded places, wash hands regularly and avoid close contact with people suffering from respiratory illnesses.

Meanwhile, Delhi has recorded 246 dengue cases, 80 malaria cases and 19 chikungunya cases, with no deaths reported from the three mosquito-borne diseases.

Local bodies have visited over 2.38 crore houses, while spraying has been conducted in around 3.20 lakh houses. Mosquito breeding was detected at 91,217 locations, leading to 74,591 notices and 6,724 cases being registered.

Delhi has 35 sentinel sur-

veillance hospitals, apex referral laboratories at AIIMS and NCDC and a malaria reference laboratory at MAMC. Hospitals have been directed to maintain adequate stocks of diagnostic kits, medicines, fluids, blood products and beds.

Singh urged residents not to panic, saying the government was closely monitoring the situation and would strengthen arrangements wherever necessary.



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Build upon the success of Southern Zonal Council meeting

THE 31st meeting of the Southern Zonal Council in Mahabalipuram, under Union Home Minister Amit Shah, can be called successful to the extent that it has paved the way for further negotiations to thrash out interstate and federal issues. A major upshot was the assent of the two Telugu states to sort out the matters of the division. "Regarding issues concerning the division of assets and liabilities between Andhra Pradesh and Telangana, both states agreed to resolve these matters in consultation with the Ministry of Home Affairs," a Central government release said. By and large, regional water disputes, parliamentary delimitation, and more devolution of federal funds dominated the meeting, which was attended

by Chief Ministers of Tamil Nadu C Joseph Vijay, N Chandrababu Naidu (Andhra Pradesh along with, Deputy CM Bhatti Vikramarka Mallu), Karnataka's D K Shivakumar and Kerala's V D Satheesan, Lieutenant Governors of Puducherry K Kailashnathan and Andaman & Nicobar Islands Admiral D K Joshi (Retd.), and Lakshadweep Administrator Praful Patel. There was near unanimity about delimitation and on retaining the current proportion of southern states in the Lok Sabha, albeit with shades of difference. While Shivakumar urged the council to accept the 1971 census as the basis for delimitation and continue with the Lok Sabha's existing strength of 543 seats for

the next 25 years, Vijay insisted on an unambiguous legislative assurance from the Union government for their continuation of their percentage of representation in Parliament. Unsurprisingly, the two other Congress-ruled states Karnataka and Kerala, supported Shivakumar's stand. Sharing of river waters, however, was a divisive issue among southern states. Shivakumar elaborated upon the benefits of the Mekedatu dam on the Cauvery not just for his own state but also for farmers in Tamil Nadu and Puducherry. It may be recalled that last month Vijay had sought Prime Minister Narendra Modi's intervention to ensure that no statutory or administrative approval was granted to the Mekedatu project unless it was con-

sistent with the Cauvery Water Disputes Tribunal's 2007 award and the Supreme Court's 2018 judgment. Satheesan also spoke about the said Mullaperiyar dam, which is resisted by Tamil Nadu. Vijay didn't appear adamant on the delimitation and river matters, but the Opposition in his state, led by DMK, is not slamming him for not protecting the interests of the state. This is a problem not just with Tamil Nadu but other states as well. When regionalism and sentimentalism blend, the concoction is often toxic. Even reasonable agreements are dubbed as 'sellout'. The Central government emphasised this very point. Shah said that protecting the interests of one's state is not wrong, but

if this results in states being deprived of water for years while it simply flows into the sea, then no actual interest is being served. He also said that linking major rivers, from the Brahmaputra to the Kaveri and Godavari, could ensure that India faces no water shortage for the next 100 years. Besides, the proposed interlinking would create multiple waterways that can provide a cost-effective and fuel-saving transportation system. Such interstate and Centre-state interactions should increase in frequency. They will not just make our federal structure stronger and more resilient but also give a boost to economic development and national integration. Moreover, this will help keep toxic regionalism in check.

Gemini K Maniam, Coimbatore

Janaki deserved Dada Saheb Phalke

THE oldest living Telugu actress Sowcar Janaki, who breathed her last in Chennai on Friday, was born as Sankaramanchi Janaki. After the success of Telugu film "Shavukaru" (1950), she starred in popular hits like "Rojulu Maarayi", "Kanya Sulkam", "Dr Chakravarthi" and "Alam Chellelu" to name a few. It is a pity that the prestigious Dada Saheb Phalke was never conferred on her despite an extraordinary career.

Seshagiri Row Karry, Hyderabad-89

Corporal punishment has no place in society

THE tragic death of a six-year-old UKG student inside the classroom of a private school in Visakhapatnam after he was allegedly subjected to corporal punishment and harassment by the teacher deserves denunciation. It is a profound moral failure of our educational environment. Corporal punishment has no place in modern society. When the safety of a classroom is compromised, the trust of every parent is broken. The authorities must file a case against the culpable teacher and the complicit school management, ensuring that they are brought before the law swiftly.

Ranganathan Sivakumar, Chennai-210

Tragic death of UKG student

THE gruesome death of a six-year-old Upper Kindergarten student in a private school in Visakhapatnam sent shock waves across the state on Thursday. The boy was allegedly slapped and striped for not completing his homework. It has become a fad for private and corporate schools to give massive homework to even LKG and UKG kids. The victim belonged to a lower middle class family, and the father is a catering master. Many private schools engage the services of Anglo-Indian and Malayali teachers, who hardly have any professional training in child psychology. There is a compelling need to do away with burdening KG students with homework.

Pratapa Reddy Yaramala, Tiruvuru (AP)

Tech must 'mentor' new investors

WITH reference to "Tech should empower retail investors to avoid risks", (THI, Aug 21), digital investing has brought many first-time participants into the market, including those with limited financial knowledge. Brokerage applications should provide plain-language explanations, regional-language support and easy access to human assistance for decisions. Fraud prevention also deserves attention, particularly when fake investment advice circulates through messaging platforms. Technology will empower retail investors when it makes good decisions easier, mistakes less costly and fraudulent practices harder to execute.

K Sakunthala, Coimbatore-641016

Investors need grievance mechanism

WITH reference to "Tech should empower retail investors to avoid risks", (THI, Aug 21). Investors need a grievance mechanism. Brokers should maintain transparent records of orders, system alerts and execution times so disputes can be examined independently. A time-bound compensation framework may be considered for proven technological failures. Investors remain responsible for decisions they knowingly make. As trading grows, accountability must keep pace, accordingly. Investor confidence will be stronger when every participant knows where the responsibility lies when something goes wrong.

Durga Arunkumar, The Nilgiris-643101

Come up with regulatory framework

THE editorial "Tech should empower retail investors to avoid risks" rightly highlights the growing reliance of retail investors on tech-driven trading platforms. Easy digital onboarding, demat accounts and mobile applications have widened market participation, but convenience should not come at the cost of informed decision-making. Losses from futures and options show the need for investor education and risk awareness. SEBI and brokerage firms should ensure that tools, artificial intelligence and automated trading do not encourage speculative behaviour or create information asymmetry. Technology must empower investors, not expose them to manipulation, which can be achieved with a regulatory framework.

A C Vineeth Kumar, Thrissur-680651

thehansreader@gmail.com



ADB to provide Rs 1,750 cr for 500 KPS schools

BENGALURU: The ADB and the Karnataka government on Friday signed an agreement under which the multilateral agency will provide Rs 1,750 crore assistance for developing 500 government schools across the state as KPS.

The agreement was signed at Vidhana Soudha in the presence of Chief Minister D K Shivakumar and School Education and Literacy Minister Madhu Bangarappa. Under the project, the state government plans to invest Rs 2,500 crore over the next four years, till 2029-30, for developing the 500 Karnataka Public Schools (KPS). While the Asian Development Bank (ADB) will provide Rs 1,750 crore, the state government will contribute Rs 750 crore. Schools with the potential to attract a larger number of students are being selected for upgradation as KPS institutions, with the objective of enabling each school to cater to at least 1,200 students.

Read more at
<https://epaper.thehansindia.com>

Gen Z needs mentors, not political manipulators



FROM VOTE BANKS TO GEN Z: POLITICS WITHOUT PRINCIPLES

POLITICAL parties in India seem to believe that when you cannot convince the people, confuse them. That perhaps explains the contradictions in their positions on almost every issue. Whether it is Gen Z or Vande Mataram, their arguments often have neither head nor tail. To have a head or tail, however, you need a body—and that is precisely what appears to be missing from much of our political discourse.

Political parties seem to be in a hurry to chant the Gen Z mantra in the hope of attracting votes. It apparently does not matter to them whether Gen Z is moving in the right direction or heading down the wrong path. If we must hand over a country to Gen Z to rebuild, it means the generations before them have already destroyed it. The real responsibility should be to hand over a country ready to move forward, not one that needs to be rebuilt first.

It is shocking to see Gen Baby Boomers (61–80) and Gen X (45–61) constantly invoke Gen Z while forgetting that their real responsibility is to mentor, guide, and prepare the younger generation to take over the reins of the country. Instead, for the sake of a few votes, they support—or pretend to support—young people even when they violate the law. Worse, some of these older generations themselves violate the law and then shamelessly defend their actions.

For cheap publicity, some Gen X politicians and ac-

tivists indulge in theatrics, claim to speak for Gen Z and even make objectionable remarks against the Army. They seem to believe that invoking "Gen Z" gives them a licence to justify anything and everything. What is more disturbing is the manner the opposition parties attempt to defend such behaviour by linking it to unrelated political issues.

Take the recent incident in Ladakh. A woman tourist, apparently from Gen X, objected to a road blockade by Army personnel at a check post, questioning the manner in which the security personnel were handling the situation. She was heard shouting, "We are Gen Z," and saying that such behaviour would not be tolerated. She also reminded the personnel that they were paid from taxpayers' money.

This is not the first time that irresponsible remarks have been made against the Army. Far more objectionable comments were reportedly made during the politically charged agitation against the NEET paper-leak issue at Jantar Mantar on July 20. Those making such statements need to remember one basic fact: they can protest freely because the Army and other security forces protect the country's borders.

The Ladakh woman later apologised, apparently fearing legal consequences, saying frustration had driven her to behave that way. But an apology after crossing the line does not erase the act. It raises a larger question about character-building, parenting, and respect for the law. Increasingly, there appears to be a belief among sections of the younger generation that wealth, influence, or the lan-



Political parties appear increasingly willing to chase Gen Z votes rather than guide the generation that will inherit India. From defending irresponsible behaviour to politicising Vande Mataram, contradictions abound. The larger question is whether young Indians are being taught to respect the law, democratic institutions and national values—or to follow political convenience.

guage of "freedom" can place them above accountability.

Political parties, driven by electoral calculations, refuse to call a spade a spade. Instead, they try to defend the indefensible when the offender happens to belong to a constituency they hope to attract.

The same contradiction is visible in the opposition's stand on Vande Mataram. The Congress Working Committee's 1937 decision to restrict the song did not resolve the political issue then, yet some leaders continue to invoke that position today despite Parliament having taken a fresh position on the matter.

Having a difference of opinion with a law is perfectly legitimate. But declaring that one will not follow a law passed by Parliament raises a far more serious question. If lawmakers themselves refuse to follow the law, what message are they sending to Gen

Z? Do laws need to be obeyed only when one agrees with them? Does Parliament have value only when it does what a particular political party wants?

It was particularly unfortunate to hear Rahul Gandhi speak of singing "hamara version" of Vande Mataram. Once Parliament has prescribed a particular form, there cannot be competing political versions of the national song simply to suit political convenience. The issue has also been unnecessarily communalised. I have interacted with several Muslims in both the Telugu states and Gujarat in recent times, and none expressed objection to singing the full version of Vande Mataram. The Congress and its allies, which have raised such a hue and cry, should explain whether their objection is genuinely about religious sentiment or about electoral calculations.

The Congress's position

also raises questions about consistency. Karnataka's state song contains references to figures including Lord Rama, Lord Krishna, Sage Kapila, Sage Patanjali, Sri Ramanuja, Guru Nanak, Swami Vivekananda and Gautama Buddha. Will the Congress, in keeping with its 1937 position, demand changes to that song? The River Krishna is mentioned in the state songs of both Andhra Pradesh and Telangana. Will those references also be removed?

It is time to stop selectively invoking the 1937 resolution. Congress leaders often point out that Mahatma Gandhi, Sardar Patel, Rabindranath Tagore, Subhas Chandra Bose, and Jawaharlal Nehru accepted the decision to omit certain stanzas. But history is more complicated than that. Bose, for instance, was not initially in favour of the truncated version and accepted the decision under pressure. Several other prominent leaders like C Rajagopalachari, H V Kamath (1912–1982), a distinguished freedom fighter, journalist, parliamentarian and constitutionalist, and Ramananda Chatterjee expressed reservations.

Why, then, should one 1937 decision be treated as sacrosanct nearly nine decades later? During the freedom struggle, Vande Mataram was sung in its original form despite objections from the Muslim League. The Congress's later decision was essentially a political compromise of its time. Circumstances have changed. India has changed. Parliament has changed. Why should political parties remain trapped in a 90-year-old political calculation?

If opposition parties

genuinely believe that a law passed by Parliament is unconstitutional or wrong, they have every right to challenge it before the Supreme Court. That is the democratic way. Acting as though they are above Parliament or the Constitution is not.

The larger irony is that parties that constantly claim to be defenders of the Constitution sometimes hesitate to support provisions or reforms that are also rooted in the constitutional framework. If constitutional principles are to be respected, they cannot be selectively invoked only when politically convenient.

Political parties must understand that before being members of a community, a political constituency, or a generation, every citizen is an Indian. If someone does not wish to sing Vande Mataram, that is a personal choice. But there should be no attempt to prevent others from singing the full version, nor should its rendering be disrupted, as was reportedly seen at the AICC office in New Delhi.

And this brings us back to Gen Z—the generation that supposedly wants reforms in everything.

Here is the question they should ask themselves: Do we want to inherit a politics that teaches us to respect the law, debate it, and change it democratically? Or do we want a politics that teaches us to reject every rule that we dislike?

Do we want to be progressive or regressive?

The answer will determine not merely how Gen Z votes, but what kind of India it eventually inherits—and what kind of India it chooses to build.

(The author is former Chief Editor of The Hans India)

Beginning of the end for archaic political psychosis

SATYAPAL MENON

PREDICTABLE are the ways that a dispensation under siege reacts to a backlash over its incapacities, improprieties, incapacities and insouciance. The Indian government - read as ruling political establishment at the Centre - has expectedly unleashed its proxy propaganda and vindictive blitzkrieg to transform the narrative related to Cockroach Janta Party (CJP) initiated upsurge against NEET scandal. Not unexpectedly, the fabrication division of the establishment is working overtime to manufacture disinformation against the non-violent and innovative agitation by the proactive youth of the country.

After succumbing to the demand of the youth and beating a hasty and clumsy retreat - consequent to the failure of suppressing the agitation through coercion and intimidation - the ruling political establishment - the National Democratic Alliance, specifically the BJP - is now in a retaliation mode. The latest reports indicate investigations into the antecedents of youth leaders and their linkages to political parties. Inevitably, the target and objective of the propaganda machinery of the establishment, and its machinations, is to create a narrative against political parties that are inimical to



its own agendas. News reports reflect that the besieged government is desperately attempting to portray the agitating youth as desperadoes sponsored and funded by political parties. To obfuscate the truth, stories are being planted to create the impression that the agitation was pre-planned and contrived and not a spontaneous response of anger and frustration.

Such interpretations and claims are convenient for the government, since the touted reason that it is politically sponsored - is more convenient than the latter cause and effect - that it is spontaneous and simultaneous outburst by the youth

of the country. It is not difficult to fathom the psychology of archaic mindset and dogmatic politicians holding the country's reins. It is not in tune with the needs, aspirations and ambitions of the youth in the country. It also reveals an irrational mindset, which views youth as malcontents and attempts to decimate dissent and discontent. While the ruling party is on a denial mode - see no truth, hear no truth, avoid inconvenient truth - underestimating and undermining the undercurrents could prove to be counterproductive.

Threats by the government to investigate 'money trails', and imputa-

It is not difficult to fathom the psychology of archaic mindset and dogmatic politicians holding the country's reins. It is not in tune with the needs, aspirations and ambitions of the youth in the country. It also reveals an irrational mindset, which views youth as malcontents and attempts to decimate dissent and discontent.

tion of political funding, will eventually prove to be ridiculous and superfluous, since there is nothing illegal in providing monetary support to an apolitical outfit for its fight against the NEET deception. In the aftermath of the agitation that shook and activated the conscience of the nation - specifically the youth - there were also reports pointing to devious means to muzzle and muffle the heightening clamour through pressure tactics. Despite successive defeats and depletion of its arsenal to subdue and stifle the agitation, the truth seems to be too bitter and unpalatable for the ruling party. According to reports, those who had displayed banners displaying critical and satirical

slogans against the government are being targetted and singled out for special treatment. Such vindictive actions are reflective of an incorrigible psychosis, impenetrable to reform. The perpetrators are perhaps nursing delusions that the uprising by the youth can be uprooted and ended through coercive tactics.

On the contrary, this could be the beginning of the end for oppressive and suppressive regimes. And, consequently, such an end will usher in the beginning and dawn of a new and reinvigorated era for the young generation and steered by the young generation.

(The writer is a senior journalist and media educator)

Rs 221.67 cr health infra projects on anvil in state

- Tenders called for 12 projects to strengthen healthcare, AYUSH and medical education
- Six 50-bed integrated AYUSH hospitals and two medical colleges are among the key projects
- Chinturu CHC to be upgraded to a 100-bed hospital; new OPD block planned at Kakinada GGH

HANS NEWS SERVICE
AMARAVATI

THE state government has initiated the tender process for 12 infrastructure projects worth an estimated Rs 221.67 crore to strengthen healthcare services, AYUSH facilities and medical education across the state.

Health, medical and family welfare minister Y Satya Kumar Yadav said in a statement here on Friday that the projects include the construction of six integrated AYUSH multi-specialty hospitals, two

medical colleges and additional facilities at existing institutions and infrastructure development at government hospitals.

Of the 12 works, 10 are related to the AYUSH sector, while two projects pertain to allopathic medical services, the Minister said.

Under the National AYUSH Mission (NAM), six 50-bed integrated AYUSH hospitals will be established at Tekkal in Srikakulam district at a cost of Rs 9.98 crore, Rampachodavaram in Polavaram district for Rs



10.57 crore, Nandigama in NTR district for ₹10.52 crore, Tenali in Guntur district for Rs 10.50 crore, Giddalur in Markapuram district for ₹10.58 crore and Tirupati district for Rs 9.99 crore.

The government will also construct a Government Unani Medical College at Proddatur in Kadapa district at an estimated cost of Rs 49 crore. Another Government Ayurvedic Medical College at

Dharmavaram in Sri Sathya Sai district will be established with an investment of Rs 49 crore.

At the Visakhapatnam Institute of Medical Sciences (VIMS), a first floor will be constructed above the existing ground floor of the Government Naturopathy and Yoga College at a cost of Rs 3.37 crore. An additional floor and facilities for the clinical department will also

be developed at the 50-bed Integrated AYUSH Hospital in the same campus at a cost of Rs 3.04 crore.

In the allopathic healthcare sector, the 50-bed Community Health Centre at Chinturu will be upgraded into a 100-bed Area Hospital at an estimated cost of Rs 21.99 crore. A new Out-Patient Department (OPD) block will also be constructed at the Government General Hospital, Kakinada, at a cost of Rs 27.13 crore.

The Andhra Pradesh Medical Services and Infrastructure Development Corporation (APMSIDC) has initiated the tender process through e-procurement for the proposed works.

Satya Kumar Yadav said the projects reflect the coalition government's commitment to strengthening medical infrastructure and expanding access to quality healthcare and medical education across Andhra Pradesh.



Picture for representational purpose only

Search for missing fishermen intensifies

- Five ships, aircraft have been pressed into the operation
- Alerts sent to Myanmar, Port Blair and Bangladesh coast

HANS NEWS SERVICE
AMARAVATI

SEARCH operations for the seven Andhra Pradesh fishermen missing at sea continued on Friday, with the Indian Coast Guard deploying five ships, two Dornier aircraft and a helicopter to locate their boat.

Agriculture minister K Atchannaidu said the State government was maintaining constant coordination with the Coast Guard and Navy and would pursue every possible avenue to trace the fishermen and bring them back safely.

Atchannaidu said officials had spoken to Coast Guard Assistant Commanding Officer Ranjit Kumar to review the latest position. Coast

Guard officials informed them that an extensive search was continuing at sea, though the missing boat had not yet been located.

Information about the vessel has been shared with Coast Guard authorities in Myanmar, Port Blair and coastal areas bordering Bangladesh, with instructions to remain alert for any sighting or information regarding the boat.

The minister said the search would continue without interruption. Coast Guard officials had also assured the State that the officer taking charge after August 24 would continue the operation until the fishermen were traced. He reassured the families that the government was closely monitoring the search and coordinating with all available agencies.

He appealed to the families to remain courageous and not lose hope, assuring them that the search would continue through every possible avenue until the missing boat and fishermen are located.

TDP slams 11 YSRCP MLAs for skipping Assembly

- Chief whip Anjaneyulu accuses YSRCP MLAs of avoiding the Assembly for fear of facing the govt
- Says MLAs drawing salaries must attend the House and raise public issues on behalf of voters

HANS NEWS SERVICE
AMARAVATI

GOVERNMENT chief whip and Vinukonda MLA G V Anjaneyulu strongly criticised 11 YSRCP MLAs for staying away from the Assembly sessions, alleging that they lacked the courage to face the House.

Questioning why elected representatives did not attend the Assembly to discuss public issues, Anjaneyulu said it



was unfair for MLAs to draw salaries while neglecting their responsibilities towards the people. He alleged that the YSRCP MLAs had "run away" from the Assembly because they were afraid to face the government. Speaking to the media at party headquarters in Mangalagiri, he criticised them for failing to come to the Assembly, which he described as a temple of democracy, and speak on behalf of the people. He said the four-day Assembly session witnessed meaningful discussions and continued for 25 hours and 15 minutes. A total of 103 members participated in the proceedings. Had the 11 YSRCP MLAs attended, they too

would have had an opportunity to raise public issues, he said. Anjaneyulu also took a dig at the YSRCP leadership over the DSC recruitment issue. He said Minister Nara Lokesh's presentation of facts in the Assembly had left YSRCP leaders embarrassed. He described it as ironic that a person who could not distinguish between the APPSC and DSC had served as Chief Minister for five years.

He alleged that YSRCP leaders were staying away to avoid answering questions over alleged irregularities in the APPSC during the previous government. He also accused them of creating disruptions in the Legislative Council. Anjaneyulu urged YSRCP MLAs to attend the House and participate in constructive debates on public issues, stressing that elected representatives have a responsibility to present their views before the Assembly.

BC empowerment possible only with TDP: Ravichandra

NELLORE: TDP senior leader, party district president and MLC Beeda Ravichandra asserted that the development and political empowerment of Backward Classes (BCs) is possible only under the TDP. Welcoming the state government's decision to provide 34 per cent reservation for BCs in rural areas and 33.3 per cent in urban areas, Ravichandra described it as a historic step. Addressing a press conference at the TDP office here on Friday, he said the decision was not merely about reservations but was aimed at ensuring social dignity and political empowerment for BC communities. Ravichandra said the TDP deserved credit for politically empowering BCs and challenged the YSRCP to a debate on its contribution to the community. He recalled that former Chief Minister and TDP founder N T Rama Rao had introduced reservations for BCs,

describing it as a pioneering initiative in the country. He said Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu and Education Minister Nara Lokesh were continuing NTR's legacy.

He noted that BC leaders had headed the TDP's State unit during the past 12 years. Referring to the Deputy Chief Minister's post, he said Pawan Kalyan was given the position based on the collective decision of the alliance partners. He alleged that the five Deputy Chief Ministers appointed by the previous YSRCP government had little real power. Ravichandra accused the YSRCP of obstructing BC reservations and alleged that nearly 16,800 BC leaders lost positions during its rule. He also claimed that around 70,000 backlog posts remained unfilled. He thanked Chandrababu Naidu for initiating the latest reservation measures.

Need to build strong talent ecosystem stressed

CII HR Future Bridge Summit 2026 calls for stronger Industry-Academia-Government collaboration to create a future-ready talent ecosystem



HANS NEWS SERVICE
VIJAYAWADA

THE future of India's workforce will depend not merely on technological advancement but on the ability of industry, academia, government and society to work together to build a strong and future-ready talent ecosystem, said Dr Narayana Bharat Gupta, commissioner of higher education, Andhra Pradesh.

Addressing the CII Vijayawada HR Future Bridge Summit 2026 held here on Friday, Dr Gupta said India is witnessing an unprecedented transformation in the nature of work, driven by artificial intelligence, automation, digitisation and emerging technologies. While technology can automate processes and enhance productivity, people will continue to be central to innovation, trust, organisational culture and leadership.

Quoting the World Economic Forum's Future of Jobs Report, he noted that significant changes are expected in the global employment landscape by 2030, with millions of jobs being created even as several existing roles and skills undergo transformation. "The future does not belong to the biggest organisations; it belongs to those who learn quickly," he said. Narendra Kumar Saranam, chairman of CII Andhra Pradesh in his address said that talent competitiveness is economic competitiveness. For Andhra Pradesh, the quality of our talent ecosystem will influence investment, innovation, productivity, entrepreneurship and the ability of our youth to participate confidently in national and global opportunities, he lamented.

NORTHERN RAILWAY
E-NOTICE INVITING TENDER
For and on behalf of President of India, Sr. Divisional Electrical Engineer (RSO), Northern Railway, Delhi Division, New Delhi invites 'E-Tender' in prescribed tender form for the following work.

1	Name of the work with its location	Comprehensive Multi-Utility Services for Line Box Handling Lookout Glass & Cab cleaning, and Supply & Filling of Silica Sand at DLI, PNP & KKDE under Sr.DEE/RSO/DLI for a period of two years.
2	Approx. Tender Value (Rs.)	Rs. 3,03,44,820.00/- (including GST)
3	E.M.D (Rs.)	Rs. 6,06,900.00/- Note:-Online payment mode available on IREPS website.
4	Date & Time of tender opening (immediately when tender submission ends)	08.09.2026 at 11:00 hrs.
5	Website particulars where complete details of tender documents can be seen	www.ireps.gov.in

TENDER NOTICE No.: 230-Elect-RSO-RT2-2026-27, Dt.: 17.08.2026 2918/2026
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INTRODUCTION OF REGULAR RUN OF GORAKHPUR JN.-DELHI JN.-GORAKHPUR JN. AMRIT BHARAT EXPRESS TRAIN
For the convenience of rail passengers, it has been decided to introduce the regular run of Train No. 05057/05058 Gorakhpur Jn.-Delhi Jn.-Gorakhpur Jn. Special as per the details mentioned below:-

15095/15096 Gorakhpur Jn.-Delhi Jn.-Gorakhpur Jn. Amrit Bharat Express (Weekly)					
Train No. 15095		STATIONS	Train No. 15096		
ARR.	DEP.		ARR.	DEP.	
---	22:45	Gorakhpur Jn.	06:30	---	
23:21	23:23	Khalilabad	04:56	04:58	
23:51	23:54	Basti	04:28	04:31	
01:40	01:50	Gonda Jn.	02:50	02:55	
02:42	02:44	Burhwal Jn.	01:40	01:42	
04:40	04:50	Sitapur Jn.	00:02	00:12	
07:48	07:50	Bareilly	18:39	18:41	
09:03	09:08	Moradabad	17:18	17:23	
11:42	11:44	Ghaziabad	14:52	14:54	
12:50	---	Delhi Jn.	---	14:10	

Days of run : 15095 Ex. Gorakhpur Jn. from 27.08.2026 (every Thursday) and 15096 Ex. Delhi Jn. from 28.08.2026 (every Friday).
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ONAM FESTIVAL SPECIAL TRAIN-2026
In order to clear extra rush of passengers during Onam Festival, Northern Railway has decided to run following Festival Special Train as per schedule given below:-

04080/04079 H. Nizamuddin - Thiruvananthapuram Central - H. Nizamuddin Reserved Superfast Special Express Train				02 Trips	
TRAIN NO. 04080		STATIONS	TRAIN NO. 04079		
ARR.	DEP.		ARR.	DEP.	
---	13:35	H. Nizamuddin Jn.	06:40	---	
16:55	17:00	Mathura Jn.	03:10	03:15	
22:30	22:40	Kota Jn.	22:05	22:15	
02:10	02:20	Ratlam Jn.	18:55	19:05	
05:55	06:00	Vadodara Jn.	15:25	15:30	
07:43	07:45	Udhna Jn.	13:43	13:45	
11:10	11:15	Vasai Road	10:55	11:00	
12:50	12:55	Panvel	09:20	09:25	
14:25	14:30	Roha	08:10	08:20	
18:25	18:30	Ratnagiri	04:05	04:10	
21:28	21:30	Thivim	00:11	00:13	
23:10	23:20	Madgaon Jn.	23:10	23:20	
00:23	00:25	Karwar	21:33	21:35	
01:23	01:25	Kumta	20:35	20:37	
02:43	02:45	Mookambika Road Byndoor	19:23	19:25	
03:25	03:27	Kundapura	18:48	18:50	
04:08	04:10	Udupi	18:18	18:20	
05:50	05:55	Mangaluru Jn.	16:40	16:50	
06:33	06:35	Kasaragod	15:25	15:27	
07:43	07:45	Kannur	14:13	14:15	
08:58	09:00	Kozhikode	12:48	12:50	
10:30	10:35	Shoranur Jn.	11:25	11:30	
11:13	11:15	Thrissur	10:28	10:30	
12:03	12:05	Aluva	09:33	09:35	
12:25	12:35	Ernakulam Town	09:00	09:10	
13:25	13:27	Kottayam	07:43	07:45	
14:03	14:05	Chengannur	07:05	07:07	
14:25	14:27	Kayamkulam	06:43	06:45	
15:08	15:10	Kollam Jn	06:08	06:10	
15:33	15:35	Varkala Sivagiri	05:40	05:42	
17:00	---	Thiruvananthapuram Central	---	05:00	

Days of Run : 04080 Ex. Hazrat Nizamuddin Jn. on 23.08.2026 and 04079 Ex. Thiruvananthapuram Central on 27.08.2026
Accommodation : AC 3 Tier, Sleeper & General.

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SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE

Civil Supplies gets ‘commando shield’ against defaulting rice millers

HANS NEWS SERVICE
HYDERABAD

IN a decisive move to safeguard the state's paddy procurement and public distribution system, the Telangana State Civil Supplies Department on Friday inducted 28 highly trained police personnel from the elite Greyhounds and OCTOPUS units into its Enforcement and Vigilance wing to crack down on defaulting rice millers.

Commissioner of Civil Supplies M Stephen Raveendra chaired a high-level briefing at Civil Supplies Bhavan to formally welcome the newly attached personnel and outline their strategic mandate. Recognising that public distribution and civil supplies operations are a new domain for the tactical units, the Commis-

sioner said the personnel had already undergone a specialised three-day training programme tailored to departmental protocols. The personnel were also trained at the Telangana Police Academy in various legal aspects relating to essential commodities and enforcement procedures.

During the briefing, Raveendra highlighted the scale of the department's operations and the state's record-breaking paddy procurement during the KMS 2025-26 season. He said Telangana had successfully procured 154 lakh metric tonnes (LMT) of paddy during the procurement cycle.

He noted that the State government had spent around Rs 40,000 crore during the last procurement season to support the farming community and ensure smooth procure-

28 personnel from Greyhounds and OCTOPUS inducted into Civil Supplies Enforcement and Vigilance wing to curb stock diversion

ment operations.

The newly deputised personnel, leveraging their expertise in tactical operations, intelligence gathering and surprise inspections,

will function as special task teams under the Enforcement and Vigilance wing.

The teams will be deployed across the state to conduct intensive field

inspections of rice mills identified as defaulting and verify compliance with government regulations. Their deployment is aimed at strengthening enforcement

mechanisms and preventing the misappropriation of government-owned paddy and rice stocks. The Commissioner issued a stern warning that the department would follow a strict zero-tolerance policy towards misappropriation, diversion of stocks and other operational violations.

He said criminal cases would be registered immediately against millers found violating government regulations and that stringent legal action would be initiated against those responsible.

The deployment of the specialised personnel is expected to strengthen the Civil Supplies Department's enforcement capabilities and ensure greater accountability among rice millers involved in the state's procurement and public distribution operations.



We're really happy that we converted this win into this semifinal (BWF World Championships) and getting a medal, but it's not stopping yet. There are matches coming tomorrow also.

- Treesa Jolly

BWF World Championships

Treesa-Gayatri duo stuns world No. 4, to enter semis

India assured of first medal in women's doubles in 15 years

NEW DELHI

INDIA'S women's doubles duo of Treesa Jolly and Gayatri Gopichand have staged an upset at the BWF World Championships after handing a shock loss to the world no. 4 Chinese pair of Ji Yifan and Zhang Shuxian to enter the semifinals, confirming a medal for the country.

The Indians, coming from game down, registered a 16-21, 21-15, 21-13 win over the Chinese to become the second-ever pair to win a BWF World Championships medal in women's doubles. In 2011, Jwala Gutta and Ashwini Ponnappa won bronze, securing India's second-ever World Championships medal -- 28 years after the country's maiden medal in 1983 (Prakash Padukone's men's singles bronze).

The Indian duo looked vulnerable early on as Jia and Zhang raced to a 6-2 lead and kept their advantage through the opening game. Treesa and Gayatri gradually found their attacking rhythm, using their powerful smashes and sharper exchanges at the net to close the gap to 8-9.

The recovery, however, was not enough to prevent the Chinese to head into the breather with 11-8 advantage and eventually sealing the opening game 21-16.

The response in the second game was immediate. The Indians refused to allow their opponents the same control, matching them in



Satwik-Chirag pair loses in quarters

NEW DELHI: Star Indian men's doubles pair Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty's dream of winning a third medal at the BWF World Championships ended with a straight-game loss to China's world No. 3 Liang Wei Keng and Wang Chang in the quarterfinal here on Friday.

The world No. 5 Indians, who have won bronze medals at the 2022 and 2025 editions, lacked the required sharpness and crashed to an 18-21 9-21 loss in just 36 minutes against Wang and Liang, the Paris Olympics silver medalists.

The Indians had lost nine times and won four against the Chinese world No. 3 pair.

the longer rallies while defending under pressure as they earned a slender 11-10 advantage at the interval.

From there, Treesa and Gayatri grew increasingly assertive. The Indians opened a 17-14 lead before closing out the game 21-15 to force a decider.

In the decider, after an even start at 4-4, Treesa found the breakthrough with a powerful smash, and the Indians suddenly surged. Treesa's attack continued to cause damage for

the Chinese, and the Indians entered the interval with a commanding 11-5 lead.

After the change of sides, Jia and Zhang briefly attempted to revive their challenge, but the Indian earned three straight points to restore their momentum.

At 18-9, the Indians were within touching distance. A review after Zhang's shot was called out did little to alter the outcome, and two further errors from Chinese handed Treesa and Gayatri the decisive points.

U20 Wrestling Worlds

Kajal wins 2nd title in row; Tanu, Savita grab silver

BRATISLAVA (SLOVAKIA): Kajal Dhochak won her second consecutive U20 World title while Tanu Sharma and Savita settled for silver medals at the U20 Wrestling World Championship here.

Kajal, 18, won the 76kg title with a commanding 7-0 victory over China's Jingru Sun in the final. She had won the U20 World title in the 72kg last year.

Kajal is already graduating to the senior level, winning a gold medal at the Ranking Series event in Mongolia in June this year apart from winning a gold at the Budapest event in July. She also won the U20 Asian Championship in Pattaya.

In the 72kg category, Tanu put up a resilient fight in the gold medal match against Japan's Chisato Yoshida before losing 3-5.



In the 62kg division, Savita faced a formidable opponent in Japan's Sakura Onishi in the gold medal bout and lost by technical superiority (2-12).

Mansi Lather is in gold contention in 68kg event. She is up against China's Chenling Song in the final while Komal will fight it out with Spain Rosa Molina Rodriguez in the 59kg repechage round.

None of India's Greco Roman wrestler won a medal. The men's freestyle competition will begin later Friday and conclude on Sunday.

Hyderabad to host TPL season 8 from Dec 8-13

HYDERABAD: Tennis Premier League season 8 will be staged from December 8 to 13, 2026, at the LB Tennis Stadium in Hyderabad under the auspices of the All India Tennis Association and with the support of the Government of Telangana.

Eight franchise teams will compete in TPL's signature 25-point format, where every point matters, with the action live-streamed on JioHotstar, allowing fans across the country to follow the league as some of the world's top-ranked international players go head-to-head alongside India's leading tennis stars. The League will also see the presence of tennis icons Leander Paes and Sania Mirza, along with Bollywood personalities and team co-owners Rakul Preet Singh and Sonali Bendre Behl, who will be cheering on and supporting their respective teams.

For TPL, Hyderabad is more than just a new venue. It marks



the league's move into new markets, expanding its audience and building a stronger national footprint for professional tennis, with the TPL App already connecting the league to more than 400 affiliated academies across the country.

Hyderabad, with its strong sporting culture and growing tennis community, will provide the backdrop for Season 8 at the LB Tennis Stadium, one of India's largest dedicated tennis venues.

The stadium will host six days of high-intensity action as eight franchise teams -- GS

Delhi Aces, Hyderabad Strikers, Lucknow Blazers, Gurgaon Grand Slammers, Gujarat Panthers, Rajasthan Rangers, Kolkata Thunder Blades and Mumbai Royals compete in TPL's exciting 25-point format.

Sharing his excitement on the announcement, Kunal Thakkur, Co-Founder, Tennis Premier League, said "Season 8 is a landmark chapter for TPL, not just because we're bringing world-class tennis to Hyderabad for the first time, but because it's the first season where fans will see our partnership with Kia India come alive.

Khelo India Scheme a gamechanger: Jwala Gutta

HANS NEWS SERVICE HYDERABAD

TWO-time Olympian (2012 London and 2016 Rio) and former world championships medallist Jwala Gutta has described the revamped Khelo India Scheme (KIS) as a "gamechanger" with the potential to transform sports in India.

Speaking to the media on Friday, Gutta said, "I am a government product myself and without its support I would not have achieved whatever I have as a player. In its new avatar, the Khelo India Scheme looks extremely promising. With its thrust on grassroots development and sustainability, parents will feel very secure to send their

children to play a sport." She added, "The government has always been serious about boosting sports, but this will have a far-reaching impact and the reach will be enormous. I am happy to be associated with the scheme."

The 2026-31 scheme has an outlay of ₹29,054 crore, an eight-fold increase over the previous allocation, and aims to support 10 times more athletes. Its key focus areas include grassroots development, scientific talent identification, coaching, academics, infrastructure and sports technology.

S Hima Bindu, SAI deputy director, outlined the scheme's key pillars and its potential impact on Telangana. "The grassroots to Olym-



Jwala Gutta, former badminton world doubles champion and Olympian, Dr A Sonibala Devi, Vice-Chairperson & Managing Director of Sports Authority of Telangana, Vishnu Sudhakaran, Regional Director of Sports Authority of India, Bengaluru and S Hima Bindu Deputy Director, SAI during a media interaction on the revamped Khelo India Scheme in Hyderabad on Friday.

(Photo: Srinivas Setty)

pic excellence pathway has been well thought through. The scheme addresses gaps in the system and the formation of a coaches' board will help uplift the way a child plays sport. The academy structure will be bolstered

and there are adequate funds to boost infrastructure and sports technology," she said.

Telangana already has 33 notified Khelo India Centres, supporting more than 601 athletes through Past Champion Athletes.

Bikash selected for World Masters Athletics C'ships

HYDERABAD

BIKASH Karar, Chairman of Athletic Coaching

Academy, Hyderabad and a master athlete, has been selected to represent India at the World Masters Athletics Championships in Daegu, South Korea, from August 22 to September 3, 2026. Competing in the 50+ age group, he will participate in the 200m, 400m and 400m hurdles. Karar is trained by Prof. Rajesh Kumar, Senior Professor and Head, Department of Physical Education, Osmania University. He has previously represented India at Masters Championships in Finland, the US, France and Brazil.



SC grants freedom to 105-yr-old murder convict

NEW DELHI

A 105-year old murder convict will now be able to live as a free man after the Supreme Court on Friday, closed the case against him and waived the remaining period of his life sentence, taking into account his advanced age.

Born in 1920 in West Bengal's Malda district, Rasik Chandra Mondal was convicted in 1994 in the murder case and was in jail till November 29, 2024, when the top court granted him bail.

On Friday, a bench comprising Chief Justice Surya Kant and justices Joymyla Bagchi and V Mohana said that, having regard to the age of the petitioner, it was closing the case and waiving the remaining sentence, if any, in the matter.

Even if the life sentence is not over, he will not be taken back in custody, the CJI said and made the interim bail order of 2024 absolute and final.

"As an interim order, we direct that the petitioner,



Rasik Chandra Mondal, will be released on interim bail/parole during the pendency of the present writ petition, on terms and conditions to be fixed by the trial court," the court had said earlier. Mondal had age-related health issues, it had noted.

In 2018, the Calcutta high court dismissed Mondal's appeal challenging his conviction in the murder case. Later, he moved the apex court, which also dismissed his plea.

In 2020, Mondal, then 99 years old, moved a plea seeking premature release, citing his advanced age and age-related ailments. In May 2021, the apex court had issued notice to the West Bengal government in the matter.

22 Indians aboard two ships hijacked by pirates

NEW DELHI

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

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

"As reported by Recruitment and Placement Service Licence (RPSL) agency - S K S Krishni Marine Services



(Opc) Private Limited, six armed pirates are presently onboard the vessel and have taken control of the vessel," he said.

He said the RPSL has been advised to submit the incident report and subsequent periodic updates through the e-Navik online marine casualty reporting system for examination and record.

Another Cameroon-flagged cargo ship, LUTUF, with six Indians among its 10 crew members was hijacked

by pirates off Somalia's Puntland coast on August 17, the official said.

"The vessel is reported to have been boarded by eight pirates, armed with AK-47 type weapons and operating from two skiffs. "The crew initially mustered in the citadel. However, the pirates gained access and subsequently brought them to the bridge. The vessel is currently under pirate control. No injuries have been reported thus far," he said. (PTI)

Child killed in leopard attack in Rajasthan

JAIPUR: A three-year-old boy was killed after a leopard attacked him in Rajasthan's Sawai Madhopur district, forest officials said Friday.

Deputy Conservator of Forests of Ranthambore Tiger Reserve Manas Singh said the child, Dilkhush Bairwa, was playing in the courtyard of his house on Thursday when the leopard dragged him towards the forest.

Following the incident, the child's family members and villagers launched a search operation. A forest department team also joined the search after being alerted, the official said. The child was eventually found in an injured condition on a hill, Singh said. He was rushed to the district hospital, where doctors declared him dead, the official said.

The incident triggered anger among villagers, who later reached the Phalodi range office and staged a protest.

During the protest, a motorcycle kept at the range office was set on fire, officials said.

RSS chief to visit US, Canada, UK for centenary outreach

VISAKHAPATNAM

RSS chief Mohan Bhagwat will visit the US, Canada and Britain as part of the Sangh's centenary-year global outreach programme, a senior Sangh functionary said on Friday.

Addressing a press conference after the three-day all India coordination meeting here, RSS Sah Sarkaryawah CR Mukunda said the foreign visit has three main objectives - presenting a factual and positive perspective on India, Hindu society and the RSS, conveying the message of 'Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam' and increasing dialogue with mainstream society on the interests and rights of Hindus and people of Indian origin.

"Bhagwat will visit the US, Canada and Britain as part of the Sangh's centenary-year global outreach programme," Mukunda said.

He said Bhagwat would participate in the Universal Oneness programme in New York and community leader-



ship programmes in Toronto and London. The visit would also seek to address misconceptions and misinformation about India, Hindu society and the RSS prevalent in various parts of the world, Mukunda said.

The RSS chief would convey the message of global unity and Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam given by India's sages and seers, he said. The outreach would also focus on dialogue with mainstream society in the three countries on the interests and rights of Hindus and people of Indian origin living around the world, he added.

Rashtrapati Bhavan does U-turn on B'desh PM's visit

NEW DELHI: A fresh communicate from the Rashtrapati Bhavan stated that the "press release issued on the subject 'No Change of Guard Ceremony this Saturday', which was issued on August 21, 2026, stands withdrawn." This came an hour after the President's house had announced the cancellation of the weekly ceremony for the full rehearsal of the welcome planned for the visiting Bangladesh Prime Minister. The withdrawn communicate had read: "The Change of Guard Ceremony at the Forecourt of Rashtrapati Bhavan will not take place this Saturday (August 22, 2026) due to the full rehearsal for the ceremonial welcome of the Prime Minister of Bangladesh."

Musk pitches Starlink for rural India amidst stalled launch

NEW DELHI

EVEN as the Elon Musk owned Starlink tries to unlock a stalled launch in India, the satellite internet service provider has again made a pitch as a public-service solution with particular focus on rural India. "Starlink would help the least served in India, especially in rural areas," wrote Elon Musk, in a post on X, earlier today. Starlink awaits final regulatory clearance from the Indian government, which would allow it to flip the switch on commercial operations in India.

Musk has a point. The latest Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) data points to a flat growth for



mobile and broadband connections in rural regions. In June 2026, urban India added 4.36 million subscribers (0.55% growth), while rural India added just 0.62 million subscribers (0.11% growth).

Secondly, rural tele-density of 60.89% at the end of June, compares unfavourably to 153.43% in urban areas, indicating that roughly 40% of the rural population still lacks individual mobile or fixed-line connectivity.

13-YR-OLD BOY RESCUED FROM BONDED LABOUR

MUMBAI: A 13-year-old boy was rescued from alleged bonded labour at a farm in Maharashtra's Jalna district, officials have said. Following inputs received by the District Legal Services Authority and the Child Helpline 1098, a raid was conducted at Chincholi village of Bhokardan tehsil on Wednesday, they said. According to officials, the boy told the authorities that he had been working at the farm for around one-and-a-half years, performing agricultural tasks, grazing goats, feeding and watering cattle and cleaning cow dung. The boy was allegedly forced to work at the farm against a Rs 40,000 advance taken by his father from the farm owner.

Parents die trying to stop son from suicide

MUMBAI

A couple and their 19-year-old son fell to their deaths from a hill while the parents attempted to stop the teenager from committing suicide in Maharashtra's Chhatrapati Sambhajnagar district on Friday, police said.

The tragedy unfolded in the Tisgaon area under Waluj MIDC in the afternoon, an official said. According to the police, Kunal Chandgude (19) went up the hill around 10 am, allegedly intending to commit suicide following a dispute with his parents about wanting a mobile phone. The parents, Murlidhar (48) and Sangita Chandgude, residents of the Zalta Phata area of Chhatrapati Sambhajnagar, arrived there to stop him.

An official said police and villagers tried to convince Kunal not to jump, and the fire brigade was also called in, and they tried to place a net below. But the teen kept changing his position. Even as his father tried to console and



convince him, Kunal jumped, and the father went after him, falling to his death. Horrified, the mother also jumped off the hill and died, the official said. The bodies were recovered by the police and were sent for further formalities, he added.

Nadda reviews country's H1N1 preparedness

NEW DELHI: Union Minister for Health and Family Welfare JP Nadda on Friday reviewed the prevailing situation and preparedness for H1N1 Influenza in the country with particular focus on the national capital. Delhi Health Minister D Panjaj Kumar Singh was also present in the meeting. According to a release, the Union Health Minister reviewed the national surveillance and epidemiological situation, IILI and SARI trends, testing and laboratory surveillance, and preparedness of healthcare facilities to manage seasonal influenza cases. Nadda emphasised the need for continued vigilance, robust surveillance and proactive preparedness, with close monitoring of influenza trends.

A crorepati, but still a middle-class homebuyer

In Hyderabad, ₹1 crore is increasingly the price of a new home rather than a luxury purchase

SRIKANTH GODAVARTHI
HYDERABAD

A few years ago, being a crorepati was a big deal. It still is for many. But Hyderabad's real estate prices have changed the meaning of that milestone, at least when it comes to buying a home.

Today, Rs 1 crore is no longer necessarily a luxury-home budget. In many established parts of the city, it is increasingly the money a middle-class buyer may need for a decent new apartment. Even with Rs 1 crore in hand, buyers may still have to make choices on size, location and amenities.

For those with a lower budget, the Rs 50-75 lakh segment has not disappeared. But it has increasingly moved towards emerging and peripheral areas.

"In Hyderabad, a new 2-BHK in the affordable to mid segment would typically start at around Rs 70-75 lakh in emerging locations, while in established and well-connected micro-markets, prices are increasingly closer to Rs 80 lakh to Rs 1 crore and above," said N Jaideep Reddy, President, Credai Hyderabad. "The Rs 1 crore to Rs 1.5 crore range has become increasingly common, particularly in the western corridor, where land values and development costs are significantly higher."

Where Rs 50-75 lakh still works

Reddy said buyers can still find new homes in this range in Bachupally, Kompally, Kapra, Medchal, Pocharam, Ghatkesar, Vijayawada Road near Ramoji Film City, Shamshabad, Kothur,



Patancheru and Mutangi, depending on the project and its stage of development. "In these markets, buyers can still find 2-BHK apartments, generally in the range of around 1,000-1,300 sq ft, although sizes vary considerably," he said. But the same budget buys less as the location gets closer to established employment centres. "In some projects, particularly closer to established employment corridors, the same budget may translate into a more compact 2-BHK or smaller configurations," Jaideep Reddy said. "The important point is that affordability at this price point increasingly depends on the buyer being flexible about location and distance from the established city centres."

Smaller homes, not cheaper homes

Rising costs are also changing the size and design of homes in the lower-ticket segment. "There has been a gradual shift towards more efficient and compact home configurations in the sub-Rs 75 lakh segment, largely reflecting the increase in land and construction costs,"

Jaideep Reddy said. "Developers are focusing on optimising layouts to provide functional homes within a particular price range rather than simply reducing specifications." There is no single figure for how much average home sizes have fallen over the past five years, he said, as the change varies across locations and projects. "However, the broader trend has been towards better space utilisation and more efficient layouts, with developers trying to balance apartment size, functionality and affordability."

A Rs 75-lakh home can become an Rs 85-lakh-plus purchase

The advertised price is only the starting point. Registration and government charges, parking where separately charged, maintenance or corpus deposits, amenity-related charges and interiors can push up the final bill. "The advertised price should not be treated as the final cost of ownership," Jaideep Reddy said. "For a property advertised at Rs 75 lakh, the final outlay can certainly cross Rs

80-85 lakh depending on the project, specifications, applicable taxes and the buyer's interior requirements." Once interiors are added, the actual amount can rise further, particularly for wardrobes, modular kitchens, lighting, electrical work and other basic fittings.

"Buyers should evaluate the total cost of acquisition rather than only the base apartment price," Reddy said.

Why Rs 1 crore is becoming common

The rise in land and construction costs is making low-ticket homes harder to deliver in established locations. "Land values have risen more sharply in established and high demand corridors such as Gachibowli, Financial District, Kokapet and Nanakramguda. Construction costs have also increased due to higher material, labour, logistics and other development related expenses," Reddy said. "There is no uniform proportion of land and construction costs that applies across Hyderabad. In established areas, land accounts

for a larger component of the overall project cost, while in emerging locations, construction and development costs form a relatively larger share."

Reddy said the shift towards higher-ticket homes is not simply developers chasing bigger margins. "There has been a visible shift in new residential supply towards higher ticket-size homes. However, this is not simply because developers are pursuing higher margins," he said. The Rs 50-75 lakh segment is increasingly being served through emerging locations, smaller configurations and projects by regional and local developers.

The EMI is only part of affordability

For a middle-class family working in HITEC City, Gachibowli or the Financial District, staying within Rs 50-75 lakh may mean moving farther away. Reddy said buyers may explore Bachupally, Kollur, parts of Tellapur, Kompally, Ghatkesar and Shamshabad, depending on the project and connectivity. But the lower



“The Rs 1 crore to Rs 1.5 crore range has become increasingly common, particularly in the western corridor, where land values and development costs are significantly higher”
-N Jaideep Reddy, President, Credai Hyderabad

purchase price can come with a higher daily cost. "A lower ticket size may come with a longer daily commute and higher transportation costs," Reddy said. "The overall affordability of a home should consequently be assessed by considering the EMI alongside the time and recurring cost involved in travelling to work." There is also no single income threshold for a Rs 75-lakh home.

"Affordability depends on the down payment, loan amount, interest rate, tenure and the buyer's existing financial commitments," Jaideep Reddy said.

"While incomes have grown, particularly across Hyderabad's technology, services and professional sectors, the pace of growth has varied across households."

For first-time buyers, he said, "building adequate savings for the down payment and maintaining a manageable EMI" is increasingly important.

What does affordable really mean?

Reddy believes a cheaper home is not automatically an affordable home. "A Rs 60-lakh home may be affordable relative to a Rs 1.5-crore home, but that does not automatically mean it is affordable for every middle-class household," he said. "The true affordability of a home is determined by a combination of its purchase price, apartment size, financing cost, registration and other charges, maintenance and, importantly, the cost and time involved in commuting." "What has changed is the geography and definition of affordability," Jaideep Reddy said. "A buyer with a Rs 50-75 lakh budget still has options, but may need to compromise on location, size or amenities." He said the longer-term answer is to increase housing supply across price points, improve connectivity between residential and employment centres, make land and development more efficient and reduce avoidable costs.

"Affordable housing should ultimately mean affordable ownership without an unsustainable EMI or an unreasonable daily commute," Reddy said. For Hyderabad's middle class, that is the new housing reality: Rs 50-75 lakh can still buy a new home, but Rs 1 crore is increasingly becoming the price of buying one without too many compromises.

Charminar BirlaNu's roofing solutions

HANS BUSINESS
HYDERABAD

CHARMINARBIRLANU, a high-quality fiber-cement and composite roofing solutions have announced that their products are being widely used across residential, commercial, and industrial structures

Vijay Lahoti, Business Head - Roofs, BirlaNu, said: "For decades, fibre cement roofing has traditionally been valued for its core attributes: strength and durability. Today, however, the category is undergoing a shift. Customers increasingly expect roofing solutions that combine long-term performance with lasting aesthetics.

Lahoti further said: "In India's residential and commercial markets, especially in high-rainfall regions—the ability to resist weathering, preserve surface finish, and minimize maintenance has become an important differentiator. These attributes are no longer optional; they are increasingly shaping specification and buying decisions."

According to the company: "The product also offers a smoother surface finish compared to conventional fibre cement options, a difference that is strikingly visible.

CORRIGENDUM

In the article titled "Modi Builders faces residents' ire over Silver Oak amenities, safety," published on August 15, Modi Properties was inadvertently mentioned as Modi Builders. The error is regretted.

BIZ BRIEFS

Dubai Chambers signs two MoUs

Dubai Chambers has signed two Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) during a high-level visit to Bengaluru to advance collaboration in Agentic AI, strengthen trade and investment between Dubai and India, and support business expansion. The MoU with NASSCOM establishes a framework for cooperation in Agentic AI and deeptech. It aims to support market access for Indian companies seeking to establish and expand in Dubai.

Active.in opens outlet

Active Green Products Pvt. Ltd., has inaugurated its second franchisee showroom in Andhra Pradesh at Seethammadhara, Visakhapatnam. Mudunuri Venkata Subba Raju, MD, Active Green Products, said: "For us, the showroom is not simply a place to display products. It is a space where customers can experience the quality, technology and possibilities of our solutions before they make an investment."

Danone unveils new flavours

Danone India has announced the launch of two new flavour sachets Vanilla and Chocolate, to its toddler nutrition drink, Dexogrow. Priyanka Verma, MD, Danone India, said: "Getting toddlers to enjoy something that's genuinely good for them can be a big battle for parents. With Vanilla and Chocolate flavours now part of the Dexogrow range, we want nutrition moments to feel less like a negotiation."

Centre rejects ethanol link to sugar price surge, blames millers

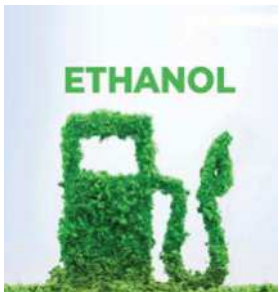
CENTRE SAYS AMPLE STOCKS ARE AVAILABLE AND WARNS AGAINST HOARDING, BLACK MARKETING AND UNJUSTIFIED EX-MILL PRICE HIKES

NEW DELHI

THE government on Friday rejected claims that diversion of sugar for ethanol production was driving a sharp rise in the price of the sweetener and instead blamed the industry for jacking up prices despite the country having sufficient stock to meet domestic demand.

The Centre said it has asked States to take action against hoarding and black marketing of the sweetener and also start preparing for early start of the crushing season by mills, by around October 15. It is also considering reducing the stock that dealers can currently hold.

Briefing the media on sugar availability and prices, Food Secretary Sanjeev Chopra said the government has taken precaution-



ary measures by allowing imports of 10 lakh tonnes of sugar by October 31 and imposing stock-holding limits on dealers as well as bulk consumers such as soft-drink and ice-cream makers.

He asserted that there are ample sugar stocks in the country despite a fall in production to 306 lakh tonnes for the 2025-26 marketing year (October-September), down from earlier estimates of 343 lakh tonnes. Annual domestic sugar demand is

around 280-285 lakh tonnes. The production has been affected by Red Rot and Top Borer disease in sugarcane, as well as waterlogging caused by excess rainfall, Chopra said.

Following the government's recent measures, the secretary said retail prices are expected to fall in the coming days. The all-India average retail price has shot up to Rs 56 per kg from Rs 48 per kg on July 20.

Chopra pointed out that ex-mill sugar prices have shot up to Rs 62 per kg from Rs 47-48 per kg in just about 7-10 days, and said this kind of hike is completely unjustified. On Friday, the secretary called representatives of the industry bodies ISMA and the National Federation of Cooperative Sugar Factories (NFSCF) and told them

that this sudden, sharp hike in ex-mill prices is "not acceptable". "It is incorrect to attribute the recent increase in sugar prices to diversion of sugar for ethanol production," Chopra said, adding that the diversification has improved the financial health of the sugar sector and also helped in timely payment to farmers. He said only 28 lakh tonnes of sugar have been diverted in the current 2025-26 marketing season. Only one-fourth of ethanol is now made from sugar and the rest from grains, mainly maize. "There has been this sharp increase in the prices of sugar in the recent past, and they have gone up from Rs 48 just about 15 days back to a level of Rs 56 now. It is important to clarify that this is not based on any fundamentals," Chopra said.

Gold, silver rally to multi-month highs on weak dollar

NEW DELHI

GOLD and silver prices surged to more than three-month high levels in the national capital on Friday, extending their gains for a second straight session as a weak US dollar and firm global trends drove investors towards precious metals.

The yellow metal of 99.9 per cent purity appreciated by Rs 1,200 to Rs 1,63,500 per 10 grams (inclusive of all taxes), up from the previous close of Rs 1,62,300 per 10 grams, according to local traders.

The precious metal was



last quoted around these levels on May 19, when it had stood at Rs 1,63,600 per 10 grams.

Silver also mirrored the bullish trend, jumping Rs 5,000 to Rs 2,50,000 per kilogram (inclusive of all

taxes), its highest level in 15 weeks. The white metal had settled at Rs 2,45,000 per kg on Thursday and gained Rs 15,000 over the last two sessions.

It was last seen near these levels on May 4, when the price was quoted at Rs 2,49,500 per kilogram.

"Gold extended its rally on Friday's session and is heading for its third consecutive weekly gain, while silver also remained strong, supported by a weaker US dollar and falling longer-term Treasury bond yields," Gaurav Garg, Head of Research at Lemonn Markets Desk, said.

Tata Motors raises prices as input costs, inflation bite

NEW DELHI: Tata Motors Passenger Vehicles Ltd will raise prices of its cars and SUVs by up to Rs 25,000 from September 1, 2026, citing rising input costs and sustained inflationary pressures.

The increase will cover the company's passenger vehicle portfolio, including internal combustion engine and electric models. The extent of the hike will vary across models and variants, the company said on Friday.

Tata Motors said it continues to absorb a significant portion of the increase in costs.

Govt rolls out ₹62,500-crore mobile manufacturing push

NEW DELHI: MOBILE phone companies, including electronics contract manufacturers, having a turnover of Rs 10,000 crore in FY26 will be eligible for benefits under the Mobile Phone Manufacturing Scheme, the government said on Friday.

According to the guidelines of the Rs 62,500-crore Mobile Phone Manufacturing Scheme (MPMS) issued on Friday, mobile phone companies, including electronic manufacturing services (EMS) firms with 51 per cent Indian ownership, having a turnover of Rs 1,000 crore in FY26 will also be eligible for participation in the scheme. The MPMS is aimed at pro-



viding support in the form of production-linked incentives for manufacturing mobile phones in India.

"Mobile Phone Manufacturing Scheme is open officially from today (Friday). It will be effective from April 1, 2026," Union Minister of Electronics and Information Technology Ashwini Vaishnaw said. Under the guidelines, any existing brand will be required to meet the minimum threshold sales of Rs 5,000 crore every year over

and above the total sales of FY26 to be eligible for benefits under the scheme. This means, threshold sales over and above the FY26 turnover will be Rs 5,000 crore for the ongoing 2026-27 fiscal year, Rs 10,000 crore for FY28, Rs 15,000 crore for FY29, Rs 20,000 crore for FY30, and Rs 25,000 crore for FY31. Any new brand will become eligible for benefits under the scheme only after achieving total annual sales of Rs 10,000 crore in India. The incentive amount will be eligible sales in a financial year multiplied by the incentive rates - 2.75 per cent in FY27 and FY28, 2.5 per cent in FY29 and FY30, and 2.25 per cent in FY31.

Up to 10% Chinese stake rule unlocks ₹4,896-cr FDI pipeline

NEW DELHI

THE decision to allow overseas companies with up to 10 per cent Chinese shareholding to invest in India under the automatic route has begun to yield results, with 29 FDI proposals worth Rs 4,895.65 crore reported so far, an official said.

The investments span sectors including information technology, artificial intelligence, information and communication, manufacturing, pharmaceuticals, data centres and transport services.

The proposals have been reported by investors or entities based in jurisdictions including Mauritius, the US, Korea, Japan, Singapore, Luxembourg and the Cayman Islands.

The Finance Ministry notified the changes under

FEMA on May 1, significantly easing the process for companies with limited Chinese or Hong Kong shareholding.

Under the revised framework, foreign companies having Chinese or Hong Kong shareholding of up to 10 per cent can invest in sectors where FDI is permitted under the automatic route, subject to applicable sectoral conditions.

The government said the move removes the requirement of prior approval in such cases, allowing investors to proceed through the automatic route while complying with reporting requirements. The reform is expected to provide greater certainty to investors, reduce transaction time and improve ease of doing business, the official said.

DGFT relaxes One Star Export House eligibility norms

NEW DELHI: The government on Friday relaxed the 'One Star Export House' eligibility condition for exporters by revising the specific international trade and financial performance norms in three consecutive fiscal years. Earlier, exporters were required to achieve specific export performance in all three preceding financial years to receive the 'Star Export House' status. Under the revised norms, export firms reporting the same in any two of the three preceding fiscals will be eligible to get this recognition. This change, however, does not apply to the gems and jewellery sector as that sector already has a separate two-year requirement under foreign trade policy (FTP) 2023. The directorate general of foreign trade (DGFT) has amended a provision of the FTP "to allow granting of One Star Export House status to applicants (other than for the Gems and Jewellery sector) who possess export performance in any two out of the three preceding financial years subject to other provisions...".



SUHAS SISTU

SOWCAR Janaki is a unique figure in Indian cinema history who managed to act in more than seven decades of cinema, performing in over 400 films. From her

debut in 1950 to her recent work in the 2023 Telugu film Anni Manchi Sakunamule, Sowcar Janaki maintained her popularity among moviegoers for many years. The actress was born in Rajahmundry and started

her career by accident. She got married at the age of 16 and was pregnant while preparing for her matriculation exams. Before becoming an actor, she worked as a radio artist at All India Radio in Madras. This job allowed her to develop her acting skills, specifically her speech. LV Prasad signed her to her first film, a Telugu-language Shavukaru. In the movie, she played the role of a moneylender's daughter, and thereafter, Sowcar became her screen name. Ever since her debut, Sowcar Janaki has starred in all the four languages of South

India. She made her debut in Tamil cinema in 1952 in the film Valayapathi and in Karnataka cinema in 1954 in the film Devakannika. She featured in the 1964 Malayalam film School Master, which marked her debut in Malayalam cinema. Right from her debut, Sowcar Janaki has starred in all south Indian language movies. By the late 1960s, she had become a star in all four South Indian film industries. She has acted with all the leading actors of her time. In her stardom journey, she has also played comic roles apart from the dramatic roles.

However, what stands out from her stardom journey is her association with the film director K Balachander. Many of his films had female leads in the most progressive roles for women. Sowcar Janaki acted in several of his pictures, including Thamarai Nenjam, Iru Kodugal, and other films. She acted in films like Cinema Paithiyam, Thee, Thillu Mullu, Vetri Vizha, which marked her new path. In addition to film work, in more than thirty plays, Sowcar Janaki played various roles. Moreover, in the 90s, she began appearing on

television. Even when she turned 80, she continued to act in films and take leading roles. According to rumors, her 400th film was the Tamil comedy Biskoth, in which she acted at the age of 88. In her last film Anni Manchi Sakunamule, Janaki played the role of a grandmother. She was awarded many prestigious awards, including Kalaimamani, Nandi

Awards, and lifetime achievement. She was awarded Padma Shri by the Government of India in 2022, having celebrated her 90th birthday. This legendary actress found her niche in the ever-changing Indian film industry. She acted in several Indian languages and remained popular. Moreover, she portrayed

an equal number of comic and serious roles. Sowcar Janaki starred in Indian films, especially south Indian movies, had a great theater career, and acted in television shows. Therefore, she created a memorable and successful career that made her famous worldwide. Now, as the actress is no more, We miss you Sowcar Janaki.

STARS PAY TRIBUTE

The veteran actress Sowcar Janaki demise led to an outpour of condolences from the South Indian film industry. Several leading stars paid tribute to the departed soul, recalling her legendary work and contribution to the film industry. Tamil Nadu chief minister and actor Vijay expressed his shock and grief over the news of Janaki's death. He further added that her contribution to the film industry over the past seven decades is legendary. He also talked about several

awards such as Padma Shri, Kalaimamani, and Nandi which were received by the actress. The legendary actor Kamal Haasan paid tribute to Janaki, saying that they have shared a long professional relationship, working together for almost four decades, starting with 'Paarthala Pasi Theerum'. He further called her an incredible talent in the south and worked closely with his guru K Balachander. On the other hand, Jr NTR and Chiranjeevi recounted their time spent with Janaki and

remembered her as one of the Indian cinema's legendary figures. The veteran actor's contribution to Indian cinema has been immense, with Chiranjeevi calling Janaki a natural. Radhika Sarathkumar, Prabhudeva, and Vishnu Manchu also paid emotional tributes to the late actress, calling her an extraordinary talent. Vishnu further expressed his grief in Telugu, referring to Janaki as a legendary personality whose work and elegance will inspire generations in the years to come.

'IRUMUDI' REVIEW: A powerful emotional film

SUHAS SISTU

AFTER a long interval, Mass Maharaja Ravi Teja is back with a film that prioritizes performances and emotional quotient over formulaic potboilers. Irumudi, a directorial venture from Shiva Nirvana, marks Ravi Teja's return to the big screen in style. Starring Priya Bhavani Shankar and Baby Nakshatra in prominent roles, the film combines a devotional angle with family drama and crime elements. More significantly, Irumudi delivers on its promise of being an entertaining showcase of the actor's prowess as a storyteller.

Story
Trinadh (Ravi Teja) is an Ayyappa Swamy devotee and owns a banana plantation in Polluru. He is deeply fond of his daughter Manemma. In fact, Manemma narrates every incident that occurs in her life to her father. But everything changes when she, along with other girls

from the village, goes to a nearby village for her studies. The developments lead Trinadh down a fateful path that eventually takes him on a rollercoaster ride of crime and family drama.

Performances
The highlight of Irumudi is undoubtedly Ravi Teja's performance. As the Mass Maharaja sheds off his larger than life image, the actor displays shades of a multi-talented hero that we have been seeing in rare screens in recent times. Ravi Teja's emotional

RATING: 4/5

range deserves immense applause as he manages to leave an indelible mark on the audiences' minds. The star's pairing with Baby Nakshatra is yet another strong aspect of the film, as both display realistic father-daughter bonding onscreen. Baby's

performance is indeed a standout as she manages to slip into the skin of her character and perform realistically throughout the film. In addition to Baby Nakshatra, Priya Bhavani Shankar, Sai Kumar, Ramesh Indira, and others have excelled in their respective roles.

Technicalities

Shiva Nirvana must be praised for delivering a film that does not veer towards commercialism. In fact, the Ninnu Kori director manages to keep the narrative engaging without deviating from the core theme. The film's emotional and intense sequences are beautifully portrayed, aided by GV

Prakash Kumar's music and background score. Similarly, cinematographer Vishnu Sharma captures the beauty of the locales, especially the hills of Sileru, to perfection. The other technical departments, including production design and editing, are equally impressive.

Analysis
The film's first-half runs on a slightly slower note. Also, the second half lacks in certain areas, which is apparent in the meandering narrative. Additionally, certain developments in the crime and mystery departments seem cliched and predictable. However, such drawbacks are negligible in the larger scheme of things. The father and daughter's equation is portrayed beautifully, as is the emotional quotient in the story. Irumudi is a feel-good film, which delivers what it promises to deliver. Ravi Teja is certainly back in the race with a stellar performance that has the potential to change the perception of him being only a mass entertainer.



A new singing talent hunt launched in Tamil Nadu



ASPIRING singers from Tamil Nadu are in for a great treat as Sony VIZHA and Sony LIV announced the launch of the first season of Tamil Idol. Music composer AR Rahman will be the super judge of the reality singing competition that will give vocal talents a chance to become playback and independent singers. Tamil Idol is a song competition that will enable young singers to gain exposure and help them make a mark in the playback and independent music industry. It will also enable the participants to perform alongside renowned music directors in a well-organized environment. The singing competition will commence in Velammal Vidyalaya Annexure, Mel Ayanambakkam, Chennai. Young vocal talents aged between 14 and 30 can audition for the reality singing competition that will offer a wide platform for budding singers to exhibit their singing prowess. Besides capturing the essence of the rich tradition and culture of Tamil music, Tamil Idol will also witness the evolution of music while showcasing the different styles of the young singers. The selected candidates will get an incredible opportunity to learn from the best in the business while performing on a big stage. Singers who wish to participate in the competition need to carry their original identity proof on the day of the audition and prepare their desired song repertoire. The young singing sensations can become playback singers if they give their best performance on the day of the final round.



Telugu cinema gets major boost with Telangana govt's new GO

THE Telangana Government's latest Government Order (GO) has been received well by many for its intent to promote and safeguard the film industry by creating a healthy ecosystem for the movie makers and workers. The new policy aims to create a regulated environment for premium films with enhanced ticket prices.

These price hikes will not be automatic and will have to be approved on a case-to-case basis by the government for eligible blockbuster films. As per the circular, multiplexes and single screen theaters will have to keep 25 percent of the total seats in all categories for cheaper fares in all locations.

Moreover, the policy will allow five shows daily for any big-ticket release, which would help first-time and smaller filmmakers utilize the free slots on the same day. The circular also proposes an idea for a welfare fund for cine workers. According to Active Telugu Film Producers Guild (ATFPG), the GO will motivate people to invest in films and take the Telugu film industry to greater heights.

'Dharmasthala Niyojakavargam' locks Sept 4 worldwide release

THE latest Telugu Political entertainer Dharmasthala Niyojakavargam is all set to release globally on September 4th. A press meet was organized recently to create awareness about the film which has a unique political entertainment theme.

The film 'Dharmasthala Niyojakavargam' is directed by Jai Jnana Prabha Thota and produced by Merum Bhaskar under the banner of Moving Dreams India Private Limited. The film stars Suman, Saikumar, Nataraj, Varun Sandesh and Vithika Sheru in lead roles.

The film promises to be political entertainer with an unique twist. The makers believe that the film will entertain the viewers with its theme and stellar cast on board. The film is all set to release across the Telugu states under PVR Cinemas Distribution.



NSV Productions' 'Village Stars' gets a grand launch

A Telugu entertainer named Village Stars' has launched in the presence of chief guest Sameer at the Venkateswara Veeranjanya Swamy Temple in Venkatagiri. The film which is set to mark the production house's debut in the Telugu film industry promises to present a different story line and a young energetic team.

Sameer who was the chief guest at the launch function wished the team all the best for their future projects. The actor also appreciated Narendra's work and said that they are going to see many more successful films from his team.

Starring as the lead pair is Narendra and Lilly Ballu.

The film also stars Srinivas, Syed Abzal, Vijay and others in crucial roles. Whereas, it is Narendra who is set to



make his directorial debut with this film, Nagoor NGR has been signed on for the story.

Narendra requested the people to support Village Stars movie. Hailing from Odisha, Lilly said that she is

elated to make her Telugu debut. She also thanked the viewers for giving her this wonderful opportunity. Jabardasth actor Vasu along with social activist Sampath and actor Radhakrishna also wished the team for their big debut.

Producer SKN launches 'Missing Meghana' teaser

THE teaser of the upcoming film 'Missing Meghana' was unveiled by the successful producer SKN, who added new momentum to the promotional race of the movie. The teaser offers an intriguing concept and has already received excellent feedback from the team and viewers.

The film is directed by Vachaspathi and produced by Panchumarthi Naresh Babu under the banners of First Copy Movies and KD & Co. It stars Ram Karthik,

Ammu Abhirami, Vaidika Senjalya, and Ankit Koyya in the lead roles and Goparaju Ramana, Vempe Kasi, Koushik, Mahipal, and others in the pivotal roles.

At the teaser launch, SKN appreciated the film's innovative concept, saying that modern viewers want fresh content and that Missing Meghana will gather more strength to become a big hit. The film's director, Vachaspathi, thanked the producer for believing in the project. He also thanked VV Vinayak for revealing

the title motion poster and Suresh Babu for releasing the first single, Pilla Pilla Pilla.

Meanwhile, Ram Kartik was delighted by the fabulous response to the promotional campaign, and music director RR Dhruvan noted that the viral song and teaser have already created a great buzz about the film. Sam K Naidu and Dhruvan have created beautiful cinematography and music for Missing Meghana, which will soon captivate the viewers.

