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Singapore-Bound Cargo Ship With 24 Crew Members Sinks Off Odisha Coast



Panama: A Panama-flagged cargo ship sank around 240 nautical miles off the Odisha coast on Saturday. The vessel, MV Ocean-Winner, had set sail from Odisha's Paradip Port at around 10.30 pm on 20 August, carrying 1,700 tonnes of

iron ore. The ship had 24 crew members on board: 20 from China, three from Myanmar and one from Bangladesh. It was on its way to Singapore, carrying a cargo of iron ore loaded from Odisha, according to officials. The Maritime Rescue

Coordination Centre in Sri Vijaya Puram received word at 11.48 am on 22 August that communication with the vessel had been lost. The alert, along with a request for search and rescue assistance, came from Victory Star Group

Co Ltd, the company operating the ship. The Indian Coast Guard and the Indian Navy have launched a joint rescue operation following the sinking. Coast Guard ships Varad and Anmol were sent to take part in the search and rescue effort, while a third vessel, Vijit, was also deployed from Sri Vijaya Puram to support the operation. A senior IPS officer told PTI, "We are not sure how many of the crew members have been rescued." He added that other ships in the area have also been alerted and asked to help with the rescue effort.

"NEW IDEAS, PERSPECTIVES"

PM Modi Meets Team BJP 3.0



New Delhi: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday met the newly appointed office-bearers of the BJP's national executive. Following the gather-

ing, PM Modi said such meetings are "all about new ideas and perspectives aimed at strengthening the party". "Organisational meetings are all about new

ideas and perspectives aimed at strengthening the Party and deepening connect with the people. Great interaction with fellow Party colleagues and the new organisational team," PM Modi said in an X post. This was the first time that the new team under BJP president Nitin Nabin had a meeting with the party chief and PM Modi after their appointment on August 17. BJP vice-presidents Ram Madhav and former Rajasthan chief minister Vasundhara Raje, general secretaries Smriti Irani, a former Union minister, former Tripura chief minister Biplab Deb, general secretary (organisation) B L Santhosh and treasurer and Union minister Piyush Goyal were among the attendees of

the meeting. Some office-bearers of the outgoing national executive also attended the meeting, according to a report. Earlier today, the BJP announced a one-month-long nationwide campaign called 'Seva Sankalp Abhiyan' to mark the completion of 25 years of PM Modi in public office as head of a government. "Every year, BJP organises 'Seva Pakhwada' in the country on the prime minister's birthday. This year, 7 October marks 25 years since Narendra Modi took oath as the Chief Minister of Gujarat. BJP has decided to launch a one-month-long 'Seva Sankalp Abhiyan'," said BJP National General Secretary Vinod Tawde.

India To Issue Summons To Hafiz Saeed In Pakistan Via Diplomatic Channels



New Delhi: The Indian government will send court summons for Pakistan-based terrorist leader Hafiz

Saeed to Islamabad via diplomatic channels in the Pahalgam terror attack case of 2025, sources have told.

The move is significant for the legal proceedings as India seeks to place on record that the accused was given sufficient opportunity to appear before a court and present their side. Next steps would include declaring him a Proclaimed Offender. Indian law permits investigation, trial, or judgment against a PO in their absence, as per Section 356 of the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita. The National Investigation Agency

(NIA) has named Hafiz Saeed as an accused in the conspiracy case related to the Pahalgam terror attack that killed 27 people at the tourist spot in Jammu and Kashmir. A special NIA court in Jammu has already issued a non-bailable warrant against him in this case. There is no extradition arrangement in place between India and Pakistan. India has already designated Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) founder Hafiz Saeed as a global and indi-

vidual terrorist under anti-terror laws, as did the US several years ago. An Interpol Red Corner Notice has also been issued against him. Pakistan claims Lahore-based Saeed, 76, is in custody following his conviction in terror-financing cases. But Indian agencies have long alleged that elements within Pakistan's security establishment have been attempting to shield terrorists like Saeed from sweeping international action by

showing they have acted against them. Summons for Saeed will be shared with Pakistan's foreign ministry via the Indian Ministry of External Affairs. The NIA has underlined his role as a leader of Lashkar-e-Taiba and another terror group called The Resistance Front (TRF). Following the non-bailable warrant, the process of officially serving court-issued summons in Pakistan is now being set in motion, sources said.

'Viksit Bharat' Can Be Achieved Only Through Youth: Goa CM Pramod Sawant

From Our Staff Reporter Vijayawada, August 22: Goa Chief Minister Pramod Sawant said that the youth of today are the beneficiaries of Viksit Bharat. Sawant participated in and addressed a youth conference organised by the Bharatiya Janata Yuva Morcha in Vijayawada. He said the question of whether young people should enter politics is a major issue and suggested that youth should enter politics after the age of 40. He stressed that experience and stability should come first, followed by politics.



ent in their conduct.

Youth Should Think About Politics: Madhav

BJP Andhra Pradesh president PVN Madhav said India should become a developed nation by 2047. He called upon people to work towards fulfilling the dreams of the freedom fighters and urged the youth to think about the country's politics. He said Prime Minister Narendra Modi's journey is an inspiration to everyone. Madhav said Modi has developed air, road and water

connectivity and promoted social development for weaker and underprivileged sections of society.

'Village Intelligence' Is Stronger Than AI: Sujana Chowdary

MLA Sujana Chowdary said today's youth are far ahead in every field. He said VI stands for "Village Intelligence" and is much stronger than AI.

He said HI (Human Intelligence) and PI (Political Intelligence) are also areas in which Indians excel. He noted that Prime Minister Modi has set the goal of transforming India into a fully developed nation by 2047. Chowdary urged students to consider becoming political leaders and said everyone should think about issues related to economic development. He advised young people to focus on healthy and constructive activities rather than pub culture.

Green Signal for Recruitment of 10,060 Government Jobs in AP

Amaravati, August 22: The Andhra Pradesh government has released the Job Calendar-2026 and issued GO MS No. 81 in this regard. The state government has given the green signal for the 2026 job calendar, announcing the recruitment of a total of 10,060 vacancies through direct recruitment in four phases. In Phase 1, notifications have already been issued for 1,523 posts. On September 15, notifications will be issued for 3,231 posts under Phase 2. On October 15, notifications will be issued for 2,311 posts under Phase 3 and 2,995 posts under Phase 4.

Recruitments will be conducted through the APPSC, Police Recruitment Board and DSC. In Phase 2, the government will fill 149 Group-1 posts, including posts of DSP, Deputy Collector and Municipal Commissioner. It will also recruit 542 Constables, 182 Sub-Inspectors (SIs) and 196 Assistant Statistical Officers. In Phase 3, recruitment will be undertaken for 200 Deputy Tahsildar posts. The government will also fill 400 Excise Constable posts, 224 Assistant Executive Engineer (AEE) posts in the Water Resources Department, and 629 AEE posts in power utilities. Under Phase 4, 2,991 teacher posts will be filled through the DSC. The government order stated that the recruitments will be carried out in accordance with the applicable reservation and roster system.

From Our Staff Reporter Amaravati, August 22:

State Information and Public Relations Minister K. Parthasarathy said the coalition government is working with the twin objectives of securing the future of the youth and promoting the development of the state. He said the coalition government is supporting young people by releasing a job calendar every year. He noted that officers selected through the APPSC play a crucial role in the administration of the state. Speaking to reporters in Amaravati on Saturday, Minister Parthasarathy hit back at the YSRCP's criticism of the Mega DSC conducted by the coalition government.

He lashed out at YSRCP leaders, alleging that they were making false accusations against the transparently conducted Mega DSC only to divert public attention from the irregularities

that occurred in the APPSC during the previous government. Taking a dig at the YSRCP leaders, he said the difference between a "guddli blow" and a "heart attack" was comparable to the difference between the APPSC under the previous YSRCP government and the Mega DSC conducted by the present coalition government. He said the "axe party" could make every possible effort, but had failed to prove even a single irregularity in the Mega DSC.

Parthasarathy sarcastically remarked that although the High Court had pointed out irregularities in the APPSC, former Chief Minister Jagan Mohan Reddy was behaving as though nothing had happened. He said the "axe party," which had filed hundreds of cases over the Mega DSC, had failed to submit even a single piece of evidence before the

court. He claimed that the High Court itself had reprimanded the party, observing that there was a conspiracy angle behind the cases being filed against the Mega DSC.

The minister explained that government examination answer sheets are normally kept in strong rooms under tight security. However, he alleged that during the YSRCP regime, APPSC examination answer sheets were kept at a private resort without adequate security. He further alleged that the answer sheets were evaluated by unqualified persons. He said the entire Group-1 examination process during the YSRCP government was conducted without approval from either the APPSC Chairman or the Commission. Minister Parthasarathy pointed out that under Rule 17, Clause 19, approval from the APPSC Chairman is mandatory for any process un-



dertaken by the Commission. He demanded that Y.S. Jagan explain why digital evaluation was introduced by disregarding long-standing rules and procedures.

He alleged that Jagan

Mohan Reddy was living under the misconception that people were innocent and would believe whatever he told them. Parthasarathy said the High Court itself had appointed a Special Investigation Team (SIT) to conduct a comprehensive probe into alleged irregularities in the APPSC. He also alleged that no minimum Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) had been prepared for digital correction and that all the answer sheets had been altered using whitener in violation of APPSC rules. The minister openly challenged the "axe party" leaders to participate in a public debate on the report submitted by the SIT appointed by the High Court. He urged the people to take note of the alleged irregularities committed by the YSRCP behind the claim of "pressing the button." He questioned YSRCP leaders as to why duplicate OMR sheets were created if the irregularities were not deliberate.

TDP Leaders Complain Over Alleged Social Media Campaign Against Minister Lokesh

From Our Staff Reporter Krishna District, August 22:

State Warehousing Corporation Chairman Ravi Venkateswara Rao, along with several TDP leaders, lodged a complaint at the Gudivada One Town Police Station alleging that the YSRCP was running a malicious campaign against Andhra Pradesh Education and IT Minister Nara Lokesh on social media. They urged the police to take legal action against those

spreading false information about the minister.

Speaking on the occasion, Chairman Ravi Venkateswara Rao strongly criticised YSRCP leaders. He alleged that the party was filled with leaders with criminal backgrounds and had now turned into an "axe party." He accused YSRCP leaders of indulging in lawlessness and destruction when they were in power and alleged that they were now trying to mislead the public through false

propaganda. Ravi criticised the YSRCP, saying that while Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu, Deputy Chief Minister Pawan Kalyan and Minister Nara Lokesh were leading the state on the path of development, the YSRCP was resorting to spreading lies.

Ravi said YSRCP leaders were unable to accept the revolutionary changes being brought to the education system under Minister Lokesh's

leadership and the efforts to provide quality education to children. He criticised YSRCP leaders for making irresponsible statements despite the government conducting the DSC recruitment process in a highly transparent manner. Ravi Venkateswara Rao alleged that the YSRCP had committed several irregularities during APPSC recruitment and said that the SIT had exposed them with evidence.

EDITORIAL

Suravaram Leaves an Indelible Mark on the Communist Movement

In the history of the Indian communist movement, some names remain etched in history not because of the positions they held, but because of the struggles they led. Comrade Suravaram Sudhakar Reddy was one such rare people's leader. Beginning his public life as a student movement activist, he spent his entire life fighting for the rights of workers, farmers, students, youth, the poor and marginalised sections, eventually rising to become the National General Secretary of the Communist Party of India (CPI). His life remains a political school for the present generation. Commitment to ideology, affection for the people, a simple lifestyle, a clear stand on issues and an uncompromising approach to struggles were the defining qualities of Suravaram Sudhakar Reddy. Political positions may come and go, but he proved through his life that only service to the people and the trust built through people's movements remain in history. Suravaram Sudhakar Reddy was born on March 25, 1942, in Kondravupalli village of the erstwhile Mahbubnagar district. His father, Suravaram Venkatrama Reddy, was a freedom fighter. From his childhood, he closely witnessed India's freedom struggle, social inequalities and the hardships faced by poor people. This environment nurtured his awareness of people's issues.

While pursuing his schooling in Kurnool, he began responding to students' problems. He participated in movements demanding basic facilities for students. His efforts to mobilise students and fight for basic educational facilities such as blackboards and chalk, even during his childhood, demonstrated the strength of his leadership qualities. The All India Students' Federation (AISF) laid the foundation for Suravaram Sudhakar Reddy's political career. He realised that students' issues should not be confined to college campuses but should be connected with broader social issues. In 1969, along with Chandrappa from Kerala, he organised a massive demonstration in front of Parliament demanding voting rights for 18-year-olds. He served as the National General Secretary of AISF twice and became its National President in 1970. In 1971, he was elected to the National Council of the Communist Party of India. Arrests and imprisonment during struggles for students' rights also became part of his political journey. He considered facing struggles without fear and making sacrifices for the public interest to be his political duty. In Telangana, he continuously fought on issues concerning farmers, workers, land, democratic rights and social justice. Instead of raising people's problems only during elections, he made it his political style to remain constantly among the people and fight for their causes. Suravaram Sudhakar Reddy was elected twice as a Member of Parliament from the Nalgonda Lok Sabha constituency. He first entered the Lok Sabha in 1998 and represented the people of Nalgonda again in 2004. For him, Parliament was not merely a political position; it was an opportunity to voice the problems of millions of ordinary people on a national platform. He raised issues concerning workers' rights, farmers, employment, social welfare and democratic rights in Parliament. The highest responsibility in Suravaram Sudhakar Reddy's political career was serving as the National General Secretary of the Communist Party of India. He was elected to the post in 2012 and served in the position for nearly seven years, until 2019. He succeeded A.B. Bardhan as the party's National General Secretary and worked to strengthen the party at the national level. Despite holding the top position in the CPI, he never displayed an air of authority. He maintained close relations with party workers, leaders of people's organisations and ordinary citizens. This earned him considerable affection among the people. Despite holding senior political positions, Suravaram Sudhakar Reddy lived a very simple personal life. He regarded political office as a responsibility rather than a means of exercising power. Another distinctive quality was that he maintained no personal animosity towards political opponents, expressing only ideological differences. As a result, he earned the respect of leaders across political parties.

The condolences expressed by leaders of various political parties following his death were a testament to the respect he commanded as a person. After battling illness for a long time, Suravaram Sudhakar Reddy passed away on the night of Friday, August 22, 2025, while undergoing treatment at a hospital in Hyderabad. The decision taken after his death was as inspiring as his life itself. In accordance with his wishes, his mortal remains were donated to Gandhi Medical College for medical research. A communist leader who dedicated his life to the people continued to serve humanity even after death by donating his body to medical science. It stands as a symbol of his humanitarian outlook.

Punjab's Bandi Singhs: A Cause Every Party Uses, Nobody Owns

Punjab saw another bandh this week. Roads blocked, slogans raised, the same old demand repeated once again: Release the Sikh prisoners, or Bandi Singhs. Markets stayed shut, buses stayed off the road, but the day passed off peacefully, with no untoward incident reported anywhere in the state. This has been going on for more than a decade now. Every few months, some party or the other picks up this issue, makes a big statement, holds a rally, writes a letter to Delhi. Then things go quiet again, until the next round. The truth is simple, even if nobody wants to say it out loud - every major party in Punjab has used this issue. Not one of them has actually closed the file when it had the power to do so. When this campaign started in 2013, the list of Sikh prisoners being demanded free ran to 119 names. More than a decade of releases, deaths and legal action later, that number has come down to around 21. The list has shrunk mostly on its own, case by case, not because any single government sat down and resolved it.

The Akali Dal: A Decade in Power, No Result

The Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD) ruled Punjab for 10 years, from 2007 to 2017, and was allied with the BJP at the Centre for most of that time. If any party had the means to push this through, it was the SAD. Though Punjab's former chief Minister Parkash Singh Badal wrote to several governments in 2014 seeking the release of 13 prisoners, formed a high-level committee in 2015, and Punjab also moved the Supreme Court. Waryam Singh's release was subsequently cleared. The issue only returned to SAD's speeches after it lost badly in the 2022 election. When the SAD had the chair, the file gathered dust. When it lost the chair, the file reopened as a slogan.

The BJP: A Notification, Half-Delivered

In 2019, the Centre government issued a formal notification, reportedly, for the release of eight Sikh prisoners, timed with Guru Nanak Dev Ji's 550th birth anniversary. Three of the eight were reportedly already out; three others were subsequently released, while Bhullar and Gurdeep Singh Khara re-



mained unresolved. That is six years of a decision sitting half-done. The BJP points out, fairly, that most of these convictions happened under Congress rule but that does not explain why its own notification has still not been fully carried out.

Congress: Loud in Opposition, Quiet in Government

The Indian National Congress ruled Punjab from 2017 to 2022 and did little concrete on this at the state level. Out of power now, leaders like Gurkirat Singh Kotli and Charanjit Singh Channi back the release at rallies. The twist: Kotli is Beant Singh's own grandson, while another Congress MP and Beant Singh grandson, Ravneet Singh Bittu, has publicly opposed releasing the men who killed his grandfather. Congress does not even speak with one voice inside its own family.

AAP: From Silence to a Sudden Push

The AAP has governed Punjab since 2022 and stayed largely non-committal for three years. That changed this August, when Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann personally sought parole for Jagtar Singh Hawara from the Punjab Governor Gulab Chand Kataria. With the 2027 election approaching and the Panthic vote up for grabs, a government finding sudden urgency now is hard to read as anything but timing, even the BJP's own Punjab unit has called it out as such.

Panthic Parties: Consistent,

But Not Free of Politics Either

The hardline Panthic groups that never held power have their own story. Simranjit Singh Mann's SAD (Amritsar) has raised this demand for decades and backed this week's bandh; Simranjit Singh Mann was detained during the Independence Day march. But a party that has never won power in Punjab can never be tested on whether it would actually deliver, forty years of demanding from the sidelines is not the same as holding the file. Akali Dal (Punjab Surjit), the newest entrant, broke away only last year under Giani Harpreet Singh, a former Akal Takht Jathedar now in full-time politics. Backing this bandh was one of his first moves as party chief, a fast way for a brand-new outfit to earn trust in a crowded field. The starkest case is that of Akali Dal (Waris Punjab De), around jailed MP Amritpal Singh. It has widened the definition itself, folding Amritpal's own 2023 arrest under the National Security Act in with 1980s-90s insurgency convictions but his NSA detention is legally different from the cases of prisoners serving sentences after conviction.

Of the 21, Who Actually Moves Votes and Where

Not all 21 names carry equal weight, and their pull is not spread evenly across Punjab either. Balwant Singh Rajoana carries the heaviest symbolic charge. Sentenced to death in 2007 for the Beant Singh killing, his hanging has never been

carried out. He belongs to Rajoana Kalan village in Ludhiana district, and the 2012 bandh over his proposed execution had an impact across Punjab, including Amritsar, Jalandhar, Ludhiana, Tarn Taran, Bathinda, Ropar and Patiala-not simply a Ludhiana-Moga-Muktsar phenomenon.. For a hardline Panthic audience, his name still carries the most weight, especially in this region. Jagtar Singh Hawara is the face of the present round, simply because he is the one Mann personally pursued this August. The movement's operational centre right now sits at the Qaumi Insaaf Morcha's permanent protest camp on the Chandigarh-Mohali border, which has become the physical headquarters of the whole campaign. Devinderpal Singh Bhullar is the case most known outside Punjab, since his conviction was for the 1993 Delhi bomb blast, giving it national reach for years. Delhi's Sentence Review Board considered his case in December 2025 and the rejection was formally communicated in February 2026. The clearest proof of how far this sympathy travels came from the 2024 Lok Sabha election, and it too has a geography. Amritpal Singh, contested from jail, won Khadoor Sahib-a Majha-belt seat around Tarn Taran and Amritsar - by nearly 1.97 lakh votes, the biggest margin in Punjab that year. Sarabjit Singh Khalsa won Faridkot, in the Malwa region, by about 70,000. Both victories demonstrated the continuing

electoral space for Panthic, anti-establishment politics outside Punjab's traditional parties. But it would be wrong to attribute those victories solely to the Bandi Singhs issue. Amritpal's campaign, for instance, also involved drugs, Sikh identity and opposition to the political establishment. But the same election showed the limit of this sentiment: Simranjit Singh Mann himself lost his own Sangrur in 2024, also in Malwa, that year. Sympathy for the Bandi Singhs clearly moves votes in specific pockets - Majha's Khadoor Sahib belt and Malwa's Ludhiana-Moga-Muktsar-Faridkot stretch above all - but it rewards particular names and moments, not whichever party shouts loudest.

A Pattern That Repeats Itself

The pattern is difficult to ignore. In opposition, parties demand action; in government, legal complications, jurisdiction and political caution slow them down. Then, as elections approach, the issue returns with fresh urgency. That does not make every intervention cynical or every concern insincere. But after more than a decade, Punjab still lacks a transparent, case-by-case process capable of bringing the matter to a conclusion. For the families, this is not an election issue; it is a decades-long wait. In 2027, voters may ask a simpler question: not who is making the promise now, but what they did when they had the power.

Manmohan Singh, Bachchans, And Other Secrets Of 10 Janpath: The Sonia Gandhi Story

Political memoirs are often written twice: first by memory, then by self-preservation. The best ones resist the temptation of the second. In this context, Sonia Gandhi's forthcoming memoir, titled Belonging: A Journey of Love and to be published by Alfred A. Knopf on November 10, comes with an unusual burden of expectation. At 544 pages, the memoir promises to travel from her childhood in post-war Italy and her meeting with Rajiv Gandhi in Cambridge to life inside India's first political family, the assassinations of Indira and Rajiv Gandhi, her reluctant entry into politics, and her years at the helm of the Congress. Sonia herself says she wants to reach the motivations, actions, and "very human failings" of a family about which much has been written. Few Indian politicians have wielded so much influence while revealing so little of themselves. Sonia has been the Congress president, Leader of the Opposition, UPA chairperson, National Advisory Council chairperson, and, for ten years, the political pole around which a coalition government revolved. Yet, we know surprisingly little about how she understood her own power. In the mouths and pens of others, Sonia Gandhi's story is usually compressed into one conve-

nient word: dynasty. But dynasty alone does not explain it. She did not grow up inside the Congress, inherit its political vocabulary, or possess unquestioned legitimacy within it. She entered that world through Rajiv Gandhi and, after losing him, had to negotiate it herself. Over the years, she had to fight, win, cajole, reconcile, absorb rebellion, and repeatedly act as matriarch to a party whose veterans were often older, more experienced, and more rooted in politics than she was. Belonging has an opportunity to tell us how she did it.

Before Politics Came Family

The early chapters may prove among the most revealing precisely because Sonia Gandhi was not born into politics. Politics came looking for her. The geographical arc itself is remarkable: from Orbassano, the comune near Turin where she grew up, to Cambridge; from marriage into the Nehru-Gandhi household to 1 Safdarjung Road, 10 Janpath, and eventually the very centre of Indian power. But the more interesting journey is psychological. At what point did a woman who fiercely guarded her private life begin to regard stewardship of the Congress almost as a familial obligation? She arrived in India as Sonia

Maino, married Rajiv in 1968, and entered a household where the private and the political were almost impossible to separate. The publisher's account makes clear that Sanjay Gandhi's death in the 1980 plane crash - and Rajiv's subsequent movement towards politics - will be central to the story. Sonia had herself written of resisting Rajiv's entry with extraordinary intensity, saying she had "fought like a tigress" for their family and their freedom. But Belonging can take us further. What exactly were Sonia's relations with Sanjay? How did she view his enormous influence over Indira Gandhi? Did she merely fear politics for Rajiv, or did she have reservations about the political culture he was inheriting?

The Bachchan Saga

And then there are the Bachchans. Amitabh Bachchan was not simply another celebrity friend of Rajiv Gandhi. The two families were once extremely close, and Amitabh entered electoral politics in 1984 as Rajiv's friend, winning Allahabad spectacularly. Yet, over time, the friendship disintegrated. What happened? Was the rupture political, financial, personal - or an accumulation of all three? A memoir called Belonging cannot entirely

avoid the story of people who once belonged almost to the family and then abruptly did not. Nor can an account of Sonia's political evolution easily bypass 1998-99. Her arrival at the top of the Congress was hardly a coronation without resistance. What did she really make of Sitaram Kesri and the circumstances in which she replaced him? Then came a much more personal challenge. In 1999, Sharad Pawar, PA Sangma, and Tariq Anwar questioned her suitability for the highest office on grounds of her foreign origin - from within the Congress itself. Sonia resigned as party president; the organisation rallied behind her; the rebels were expelled and went on to establish the NCP. It was a defining test of authority. How did she experience it: as humiliation, betrayal, political challenge, or proof that she had finally acquired a constituency of her own? Political memoirs by powerful women - from Golda Meir and Margaret Thatcher to Benazir Bhutto and, more recently, Jacinda Ardern - become historically valuable when they reveal the human calculations beneath public decisions. Sonia's life contains more than enough for a compelling personal narrative. The question is whether she will stop at that fascinat-

ing human story - or open the political files as well.

Rao, Natwar, And Trust

The most intriguing political relationship to revisit may well be Sonia Gandhi's with PV Narasimha Rao. Rao was no outsider to the Gandhi establishment. He had served Indira and Rajiv, and, after Rajiv's assassination, emerged as Congress President and Prime Minister. Yet Sonia and Rao went from a relationship of trust to an estrangement that became one of the defining internal conflicts of the Congress in the 1990s. Why? One answer has long centred on Sonia's dissatisfaction with the investigation into Rajiv Gandhi's assassination. Accounts from Congress figures say she felt the probe was moving too slowly and suspected that the full conspiracy had not been uncovered; she publicly expressed unhappiness in 1995. Her memoir should tell us what she actually believed.

The Rajiv assassination itself deserves a fuller reckoning. The LTTE's responsibility for the killing was established through investigation and trial, but Sonia's reported dissatisfaction went beyond the immediate perpetrators. What did she believe remained unresolved? Then comes Natwar Singh, another relationship where affection hardened into hostility.

Another 3,000 Teacher Posts to Be Filled This Year: Minister Lokesh



From Our Staff Reporter Vizianagaram, August 22: Andhra Pradesh Minister for Education, IT and Electronics Nara Lokesh announced that another 3,000 teacher posts will be filled through DSC this year. He said that after taking charge as Education Minister, the government introduced the “One Class–One Teacher” system in 10,000 schools across the state. He stated that 16,000 teacher posts have already been filled through DSC. Lokesh said his goal is to make Andhra Pradesh’s education system the number one in the country and called upon teachers, offi-

cials and public representatives to work together towards this objective. On Saturday, Minister Lokesh attended a teachers’ Cluster School Complex meeting at the Zilla Parishad Girls’ High School in D a s a n n a p e t a , Vizianagaram. On the occasion, he interacted with teachers across the state through a video conference. **Teachers Must Focus on Learning Outcomes** Minister Lokesh said the reforms introduced by the public government in the education sector have been completed and that teachers should now focus en-

tirely on learning outcomes. He said he would participate in the Cluster Complex meetings once every month to understand the field-level problems faced by teachers. He said the reforms had resulted in excellent outcomes last year, but stressed that this was only the first step. He directed teachers to focus on achieving 100 per cent results. He also advised teachers to use innovative programmes to teach students skills in a stress-free manner. **Idea for Reforms Came During Yuva Galam Padayatra** Lokesh said that during his Yuva Galam padayatra,

while travelling through Kurnool district, he had seen families migrating with their children in search of employment. “I noticed the shortage of teachers in schools. I decided then itself to introduce reforms in the education sector. Many of my close associates asked me why I had chosen the highly challenging Education Department. I am a person who believes that social change can be achieved only through education,” he said. He noted that students attending government schools, particularly in rural areas, come from diverse backgrounds and that

teachers have a responsibility to take special care of them. Lokesh said a tragic incident in Visakhapatnam, in which a private-school teacher allegedly assaulted a child who subsequently died, deeply disturbed him. “Teachers have the responsibility of protecting children like the apple of their eye,” he said. He observed that times have changed and students have begun questioning things. He said Cluster meetings are being conducted to promote critical and analytical thinking, assessment, curriculum changes and best practices. He said it was their responsibility to ensure guaran-



teed Foundational Literacy and Numeracy (FLN) for children and advised teachers should work towards achieving 100 per cent results. “My idea is that children should learn in a joyful environment filled with games and activities. Our thoughts and policies should be completely student-centric,” Lokesh said. He asked every teacher to record their suggestions on the LEAP app and focus on Creative Clubs, Leadership Clubs, Language Clubs, Maths and Science Clubs, Green Clubs, Sports Clubs and Anti-Drugs Clubs (Eagle Clubs). He also advised teachers to continuously improve their skills

Minister Nara Lokesh Slams YSRCP; Gives Key Instructions to TDP Cadre

From Our Staff Reporter Vizianagaram, August 22: Minister Nara Lokesh launched a scathing attack on the YSRCP during a TDP constituency-level cadre meeting. He mocked former Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy, saying that a person who does not

even know the difference between DSC and APPSC became the Chief Minister, which he said he could not understand. Lokesh criticised the YSRCP, referring to it as the “axe party,” and alleged that it says one thing and does another. He accused the previous

YSRCP government of filing illegal cases against many TDP leaders and workers and harassing them. He made it clear that all such illegal cases filed against TDP cadre would be withdrawn. Lokesh said the YSRCP was trying to return to power and called upon

all TDP workers to remain united. He remarked, “The Red Book will do its job.” Lokesh said the state would witness faster development only if the TDP remained in power for three consecutive terms. He urged every party worker to work hard with the goal of

ensuring the TDP’s victory in the local body elections. He called on party leaders and workers to work in coordination to further strengthen the party at the grassroots level. After the cadre meeting, Nara Lokesh presented certificates of appreciation to 100 TDP workers

who successfully implemented the “Future Guarantee” programme during 2023-24 and demonstrated outstanding performance. He said recognising and encouraging workers who work hard for the party would boost the morale and enthusiasm of the cadre.



Bamboo Products to Boost Tribal Women’s Income



Rampachodavaram, August 22: Polavaram District Collector K. Dinesh Kumar said steps are being taken to economically empower tribal women through bamboo-based products and plantations. Addressing a meeting with Forest, DRDA and ISB officials at the ITDA meeting hall on Saturday, the Collector directed

officials to promote bamboo products among women’s groups and provide proper marketing facilities. He said bamboo plantations would be taken up on about 3,500 acres, with around six lakh bamboo saplings to be distributed to 8,507 women farmers across 12 mandals. Officials were

asked to identify bamboo-rich areas in Chintur, Maredumilli and Rampachodavaram. The Collector also reviewed tourism development and directed officials to improve facilities such as toilets, drinking water, CCTV cameras and public announcement systems at major tourist spots.

Rampachodavaram Waterfalls would be developed as a pilot tourism destination, he said. Joint Collector Surapati Prashanth Kumar said the district administration would support tribal women in developing bamboo products and help them achieve sustainable incomes.

Cabin Crew To Police Officer To Extortion Accused: Madhya Pradesh Cop In Land Grab Row



She once served passengers thousands of feet above the ground as an Air India cabin crew. Then came a dramatic career switch. Neha Pachisia cracked the Madhya Pradesh Public Service Commission examination, joined the state police as a Deputy Superintendent of Police and rose to become City Superintendent of Police (CSP) in Katni. A decade after that celebrated transition, Pachisia now finds herself on the other side of a criminal case, accused of using the very police machinery she was entrusted with to protect citizens to allegedly pressure a murder accused’s family into selling land worth nearly Rs 83 lakh for just Rs 18.20 lakh. The allegations have triggered action at the highest level of the Madhya Pradesh government. Chief Minister Mohan Yadav on Friday directed Pachisia’s immediate suspension, two days after an FIR was registered against the serving officer and two private individuals at Katni’s Kutla police station. The officer will remain attached to the Police Head-

quarters in Bhopal during her suspension, while the Chief Minister has ordered a fair investigation and stringent action against anyone found responsible. At the heart of the case is a property belonging to Ramesh Lodhi and a staggering gap between what government records said it was worth and the price at which it was allegedly made to change hands. According to the police inquiry, the property’s value was Rs 82.86 lakh. Yet investigators allege that Lodhi’s family was pressured into selling it for only Rs 18.20 lakh to Maroof Ahmed Hanafi. So, a property officially valued at nearly Rs 83 lakh was allegedly sold for less than one-fourth of that amount. What turns an allegedly undervalued land deal into a far more serious case is the charge that police authority itself may have been used to make the transaction happen. Lodhi was in jail and facing investigation in a criminal case. Investigators are now examining allegations that the vulnerability of his family was exploited and official influ-

ence and police machinery were used to pressure them into executing the sale. The money trail has added another layer to the case. Registration records show that Rs 15 lakh of the Rs 18.20 lakh consideration was paid by cheque and Rs 3.20 lakh in cash. But when investigators examined purchaser Maroof Ahmed Hanafi’s finances, they allegedly found something striking: his bank account had a balance of just Rs 3,036 on July 11, 2025. Then, on April 15, 2026, the very day the property was registered, Rs 15 lakh suddenly arrived in Hanafi’s account. Investigators say Rs 10 lakh came from an entity called Shine Partners, while another Rs 5 lakh was transferred from the account of Kshitij Raj Barapatre, who has also been named as an accused. The inquiry allegedly uncovered another unusual link -- the bank accounts of Shine Partners and Barapatre were associated with the same PAN number. The trail did not end there. According to the inquiry report, Barapatre is believed to be a close associate, relative or

business partner of Pachisia. The FIR was registered on Wednesday following a complaint from the Bhopal Vigilance Branch and directions from Jabalpur Zone Inspector General Pramod Verma. An inquiry conducted by IPS Anu Beniwal had examined the land deal and the allegations surrounding it before the criminal case was registered. Katni Superintendent of Police Abhinay Vishwakarma confirmed that the case includes serious charges. “The case has been registered against the CSP and other accused on charges including fraud, coercion and criminal conspiracy,” he said. The family’s allegations go beyond the original registry. Ramesh Lodhi’s son Akash has alleged that when his father later attempted to have the disputed registry and transfer cancelled, the family was threatened. Investigators will now have to determine who issued those alleged threats, whether they were connected to the property transaction and whether any serving police personnel or official resources were used to exert pressure. Pachisia had also approached the Madhya Pradesh High Court seeking relief in connection with the matter. The latest departmental action followed the court’s refusal to grant her interim relief. Barely a month earlier, transport businessman Mahendra Jain had accused Pachisia of demanding Rs 30,000 after one of his trucks was stopped during vehicle checking on the night of July 21. Jain alleged that Rs 25,000 was collected in cash on the spot and that the remaining Rs 5,000 was to be sent through the driver the following day. According to his complaint, he was allegedly warned that the truck would otherwise be impounded and taken to the police station.

Polavaram to be Developed as a Major Tourist Destination



Rampachodavaram, August 22: Polavaram District Collector K. Dinesh Kumar said that steps are being taken to develop the district as a major tourist destination by promoting its natural beauty, forests,

waterfalls, water resources and historical places. Addressing the District Tourism Council meeting held at the ITDA meeting hall on Saturday, the Collector directed officials to develop trekking and adven-

ture tourism facilities, improve basic amenities and ensure tourist safety. He stressed the need for barricades, signboards, drinking water, toilets and waste bins at tourist spots. The Collector also called

for social media campaigns to promote tourist destinations and directed officials to prepare a comprehensive tourism development plan. He said tourism development would create more employment opportunities for local tribal youth. Joint Collector Surapati Prashanth Kumar said all tourist destinations in the district would be mapped and special measures would be taken to prevent accidents, particularly at waterfalls during the monsoon season. Officials from the Tourism, Forest, Revenue and other departments participated in the meeting.

'Fertiliser Franchise', Rs 3.5 Crores Orders: Bihar Gang Arrested For Scam



Telangana police have busted an interstate cybercrime gang and arrested five persons from Bihar who allegedly cheated victims across the country by offering fake fertiliser franchise opportunities and online loan services. According to police, the accused are suspected to be linked to 498 cybercrime complaints nationwide involving fraudulent transactions worth around Rs 3.5 crore. Around 90 complaints have been reported from Telangana, SP Akhila Mahajan said. The gang allegedly operated fake

websites and posed as representatives of a fertiliser company to lure victims with franchise offers. "After collecting Aadhaar, PAN, photographs and bank details from applicants, the accused allegedly demanded money under various pretexts, including registration, licence, service and franchise-transfer charges," the SP said. The case came to light after Akunuru Ganesh, a resident of Adilabad district, was allegedly cheated of Rs 3.85 lakh. According to police, the fraudsters contacted him through phone calls, WhatsApp

and email, offering a fertiliser franchise. After an initial registration payment of Rs 50,000, they allegedly extracted additional amounts through multiple transactions before becoming unreachable. A technical investigation led police to the cybercrime network operating from Bihar. Four of the accused are from Nawada district, while the fifth is from Nalanda district. Police seized 10 mobile phones and Rs 70,000 in cash. Investigators also traced around Rs 8 lakh in suspected fraud proceeds in bank accounts and stock market investments and

froze the funds. Police said the accused were also allegedly running a fake Bajaj loan scheme, targeting people searching online for loans and collecting personal documents before demanding various fees. "Cybercriminals are constantly changing their methods and using fake websites and online advertisements to target unsuspecting people," SP Akhil Mahajan said. He advised citizens to independently verify companies and websites before making payments. "Do not share Aadhaar, PAN, bank details or OTPs with unknown persons or unverified websites. People should immediately report suspected cyber fraud through the official cybercrime reporting channels," the SP added. The arrested accused were produced before a court and sent to judicial remand. Further investigation is underway.

Twist In Lucknow Double Murder-Suicide: Cops Probe Rs 1 Crore Alimony Demand

A new twist has emerged in the sensational double murder and suicide case that rocked Lucknow on Thursday. Manas Vajpayee, 38, had shot his wife Divya Mishra outside the ICICI bank in Gomti Nagar where she worked. Manas later also killed his sister before turning the gun on himself. Police sources have indicated that they are now investigating an alleged demand for Rs 1 crore by Divya Mishra as part of settlement of the divorce case. Manas and Divya had married 12 years ago and were living separately for over a year. Divya had filed for divorce last year and had allegedly demanded an alimony of Rs 1 crore. Police sources told NDTV that the investigators have recovered document pertaining to the divorce proceedings. These documents, as per sources, contain details of demands made by Divya Mishra as part of the settlement. The divorce case had come up in the local court just two days before the murder and the alimony demand had come up during the hearing, which escalated the dispute between



the estranged couple, sources said. The police are now investigating the financial dispute as the motive for the murder. Manas and Divya's relationship also allegedly deteriorated over his sister Shiva Vajpayee who was dealing with mental health issues. Shiva lived with the couple and Divya allegedly did not like that. The couple reportedly had regular fights over his sister's mental health. Divya's sister Pragya Mishra, who is a well-known YouTuber, had on Friday alleged that Manas used to beat Divya over

little issues such as a rotten tomato delivered by Blinkit. Calling Manas a "psycho", Pragya posted: "I knew the murderer used to be cruel to my sister. That's why she wanted to be separated from him. If a tomato ordered from Blinkit turned out to be bad, he would beat her over it." Pragya also questioned how Manas got access to revolvers with which he committed the crimes. On Thursday, Manas, who worked with the SBI bank, called Divya outside the ICICI bank where she worked, spoke to her for a few minutes, and then shot

her. Divya was rushed to the hospital, where she was declared brought dead, police said. The accused then returned home and killed his 28-year-old sister who was reportedly dealing with mental health issues. Minutes later, Manas killed himself. Before killing himself, Manas had put a WhatsApp status announcing that he had killed his wife and sister. "Today I killed my wife who cheated on me. Now I have to kill myself and my sister... her sister Pragya and Bharat know everything," read the WhatsApp status.

Adobe Techie Had A Fight With Wife. His In-Laws Thrashed Him To Death



New Delhi: A domestic fight at a home in Delhi ended in a tragedy when a 31-year-old software engineer died after he was allegedly beaten to death by his in-laws. The incident took place this morning when an argument broke out between the victim, Vinay Gupta, and his wife, Rekha, over giving

medicine to their child. During this time, Rekha left the house after contacting her family members, who later arrived at the couple's residence in Delhi's Nihal Vihar. Around 10 minutes later, she returned with her two brothers, sister-in-law, father and uncle, along with other family members.

Rekha, victims wife CCTV footage from the incident showed Rekha wearing a red suit and her sister-in-law in a blue suit. The footage also purportedly showed Rekha's two brothers, her father and another man in a car. Subsequently, they began assaulting Vinay. According to the victim's mother - who was living with the couple - she had stepped out to arrange water and refreshments for the visitors when the alleged assault began. When she returned, she found her son being attacked. She tried to intervene and called for help, pleading with them to stop, but the assault continued, his family members said.

The victim's family said his in-laws strangled him and inflicted blows and kicks on his chest. They alleged that the attack was a part of a pre-planned conspiracy, claiming that Rekha had switched off all the CCTV cameras in the house before the incident. Minutes after the assault,

Vinay's neighbour was carrying him on his shoulder to take him to the hospital. Rekha's family members were also seen standing behind him. Soon, the victim was taken to a hospital where doctors declared him dead.

Vinay used to work at Adobe - a Noida-based software company - and had an annual package of around Rs 60 lakh.

He had married Rekha around three-and-a-half years ago. The couple had twins - a boy and a girl - who were born around four-and-a-half months ago. At the Delhi home, Vinay and his wife lived on the third floor of the house, while his parents lived downstairs. According to his family, Rekha used to cook separately and alleged that her brother had earlier threatened to kill Vinay over minor disputes.

Police have arrested four people in connection with the case - Rekha, her two brothers and one sister-in-law.

'Poetic Justice': Bombay High Court Refuses Relief To Eatery Serving Banned Paneer



In a swift dose of "poetic justice," the Bombay High Court on Friday refused urgent relief to a Thane eatery facing regulatory action for serving banned analogue paneer, ruling that the establishment must now digest the same suffering it served to unsuspecting customers through "rotten" food.

Refusing to stay the suspension of the licence of 'Udupi Swaad', a bench of Acting Chief Justice Ravindra Ghuge and Justice Gautam Ankhad firmly turned down the restaurant's plea against the Maharashtra Food and Drug Administration (FDA). "You need to suffer first as you have made people suffer by eating this. This is poetic justice. We will take a different strict view this time," the bench said dismissing the hotel's contention that the FDA ought to have issued an improvement notice before taking action.

Earlier this month, the Maharashtra government banned the manufacture and sale of analogue or non-dairy paneer for one year over public health concerns and widespread violations of food safety norms. As per a govern-

ment order, offenders could face life imprisonment and a minimum fine of Rs 10 lakh in cases where consumption of unsafe food results in death.

Analogue paneer is a non-dairy substitute made using vegetable oils, starches, emulsifiers and other additives instead of milk fat. It is cheaper to produce than conventional paneer and generally contains lower protein levels.

The eatery had filed a petition in the HC against the August 11 order of the FDA suspending its licence after it was found that it had been serving customers the banned analogue paneer.

In its plea, the restaurant said the FDA ought to have

first issued them an improvement notice.

The court, which has time and again pulled up the FDA for its drastic action against eateries and hotels, on Friday, however, noted that the petitioner hotel needs to suffer.

The bench questioned the restaurant if it had mentioned clearly in its menu card that the paneer served in their dishes was analogue and not the actual paneer made from milk.

"You are making people eat something rotten by making them believe that it is paneer and you are saying improvement notice should be given to you? Why don't you advertise on your signboard that

original food is not available with us," it asked.

The petitioner restaurant assured the court that it would not use analogue paneer again.

The bench, however, did not relent and said a customer has the right to know what he or she is consuming.

"How can you serve something that they (customers) have not asked for? You should be penalised and all those customers should go to the consumer forum and seek damages and costs," the HC said.

The court directed the FDA to file its affidavit in reply and posted the matter for further hearing on September 7.

Ex Kerala BJP Leader's Life Term Suspended In Sexual Assault Case, Gets Bail

Kochi: Six years after the alleged sexual assault of a nine-year-old girl triggered one of Kerala's most controversial POCSO investigations, the Palathayi case has taken another major turn. The Kerala High Court has suspended the sentence of K Padmarajan and granted him bail, observing that the arguments raised by him require serious consideration. The case drew political attention due to Padmarajan being a former Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) local panchayat president. Earlier, Padmarajan was sentenced to imprisonment for the remainder of his natural life and fined Rs 1 lakh. He was also handed 20-year prison terms each under two POCSO offences, amounting to 40 years. He moved the Kerala High Court seeking suspension of the sentence while challenging his conviction. The court has now allowed the plea and granted him bail with strict conditions. Padmarajan was asked to execute a bond of Rs 1 lakh



with two sureties. He has also been barred from entering the revenue district where the survivor lives. The order adds another chapter to a case that has been marked by controversy and repeated changes in the investigation. The case began in January 2020 after police received a complaint that a nine-year-old girl had been sexually assaulted. Padmarajan was arrested following an investigation by Panur Police. The

probe soon became controversial after an investigating team concluded that POCSO charges would not stand. The Kerala government under the CPIM subsequently constituted a special investigation team to probe the case. A bloodstain recovered from a toilet at the school later emerged as a crucial piece of evidence cited by investigators. The investigation changed hands five times before the case reached

trial. Padmarajan had maintained that the allegations against him were fabricated. He had also made allegations against SDPI and other organisations while defending himself before the court.

The conviction had brought the long-running case to a decisive stage. The High Court's decision to suspend the sentence and release Padmarajan on bail has now reopened the legal battle, with his challenge to the conviction still to be decided.

Maharashtra To Let Retired Police Dogs Stay With Handlers At State Expense

In a major welfare policy shift for the state's canine unit, Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis on Saturday announced that retired police dogs will no longer be put up for adoption to third parties.

Instead, they will remain within the police department alongside their long-time handlers, with all ongoing living and medical expenses fully funded by the Home Department.

Fadnavis said a dog that has served the police force for 10 years should not be made to suffer after retirement. He emphasised that such animals should be cared for and allowed to spend the rest of their lives comfortably.

The decision addresses a long-standing issue regarding the



emotional and psychological health of service dogs. After completing 10 years of active duty, these animals were typically rehomed to external adopters.

The sudden separation from their handlers and established routines frequently caused severe mental distress, with many dogs experiencing trauma and refusing

food in their new environments. Canines will officially retire from operational duties after 10 years of service but will stay enrolled in the force to live out their remaining years. The policy ensures the strong bond forged between the dog and its handler during a decade of active service remains uninterrupted. The Maharashtra

Home Department will directly fund all post-retirement costs, including nutrition, healthcare, and daily living needs. By shifting from external adoption to full state-backed lifetime care, the initiative ensures that retired police dogs receive the comfort and familiar surroundings they require after completing their service.

"Unfair": Canada Suspends Trade Talks With Trump, To Pay 50% Tariffs

Washington: The United States imposed 50% tariffs on \$20 billion worth of Canadian products early Saturday, and Canada immediately said it would retaliate, after last-ditch negotiations failed to resolve the latest strain in already tense relations between the historic allies. President Donald Trump's import taxes will hit about 5% of what Canada ships to the United States every year, including products ranging from hockey sticks to tongue depressors. "Canada will match those tariffs dollar for dollar to protect our workers and businesses," Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney said in a statement. The retaliation escalates the trade conflict and calls into question the future of a North American trade pact between the United States, Canada and Mexico that is crucial to industry in all three countries. Canada sought concessions on Trump tariffs on steel, aluminum, autos and lumber

that the United States was unwilling to provide, a senior Trump administration official told reporters. "Tonight, Canada declined to finalize the trade deal under the terms agreed earlier this week. Despite the US offer to Canada to receive the best treatment of any major exporter to our market, new demands and walk-backs of other commitments by Canada have upended the careful balance reached in the past days," US Trade Representative Jamieson Greer said in a statement read to reporters on a press call shortly before midnight. Carney blamed Washington for the breakdown, saying "last-minute changes in the US proposed terms were unfair, uneconomic, and called into question the reliability of any deal." He said he had suspended negotiations and directed Canada's negotiating team to return to Ottawa. Carney said his government would announce additional support for Canadian workers

and businesses in the coming days. Greer said the US offer was "forward-looking" and included "a historic economic and national security partnership." No further talks have been planned. The breakdown in negotiations marked a sharp reversal from two days earlier, when officials from the two countries sounded as if they were headed toward a compromise. Carney said Canada's goal throughout the negotiations had been to secure the best possible agreement, "never a deal at any price or on any deadline." The political impact will likely be even bigger than the economic fallout. The countries sold each other \$880 billion worth of goods and services last year. The tariffs were initially supposed to kick in at 12:01 a.m. Wednesday. But Trump extended the deadline for three days to allow talks to continue, but the two countries still could not reach an agreement in time. The two

countries have wrangled for decades over trade, poking each other over sore spots like Canadian softwood lumber imports and US access to Canada's protected dairy market. Somehow, they still managed to remain friends, allies and trading partners. Canadian soldiers fought alongside Americans in Afghanistan after 9/11. The 5,525-mile US-Canada border is undefended, and nearly 330,000 people and \$2 billion worth of goods cross it every day; 800,000 Canadians live in the United States. Trump's approach to dealing with Canada marks an extraordinary departure from the traditionally cooperative relationship between the two countries. Trump has hit Canadian goods with tariffs - in a push to bring manufacturing back to the United States - and has repeatedly made inflammatory comments about turning Canada into America's 51st state. Carney said Canada had recognized that

"America has changed" and that the two countries would "not return to our old relationship." The Canadian public is fed up. A petition to expel the US ambassador, a Trump ally, has collected nearly 248,000 signatures since July 21. It accuses Ambassador Pete Hoekstra of having "normalized" Trump's talk of annexing Canada, among other things. The two countries had good reasons to find a compromise. Nearly 72% of Canada's goods exports last year went to the United States. And the Trump administration might be wary of imposing a hefty new tariff - paid by US importers who try to pass along the cost to consumers via higher prices - ahead of November's midterm elections. American voters are already frustrated with the high cost of living. "Canada likely wanted further sector-specific relief than the US was willing to offer, or Canada's concessions did not go far enough," said

Ryan Majerus, a partner at King & Spalding and a former US trade official. "Either way, I think both sides will be under immense pressure in the coming days to still find an off-ramp. But if Canada has agreed to also impose tariffs, the off-ramp may be even harder to find." Candace Laing, president and CEO of the Canadian Chamber of Commerce, called the tariffs "a body blow to North American competitiveness," warning they would raise costs for Americans while threatening Canadian customers, investment and small businesses. Trump has made tariffs the centerpiece of his second-term economic agenda. Last year, he imposed double-digit import taxes on almost every country, justifying them by declaring the longstanding US trade deficit a national emergency. The Supreme Court in February ruled that he'd overstepped his authority, striking down those tariffs and setting the stage for the

federal government to pay refunds to importers. So Trump has looked for other legal authority to justify tariffs. To hit Canada, he reached back to the Great Depression, invoking Section 338 of the Tariff Act of 1930 to threaten 50% tariffs on products that account for about 5% of Canadian exports to the United States. Nearly a century ago, with the US and world economies in collapse, Congress passed the 1930 tariff law, imposing taxes on imports from around the world. Known as the Smoot-Hawley tariffs after their congressional sponsors, they are notorious among economists and historians for limiting world commerce and making the Great Depression worse. Section 338, which has never been used before to impose tariffs, authorizes the president to slap import taxes of up to 50% on imports from countries that have discriminated against US businesses. No investigation is

required to justify the levies. Nor is there any limit on how long they can stay in place. The rift comes as the United States, Mexico and Canada are trying to renew a trade agreement that Trump negotiated in his first term and once praised as a triumph. The United States has begun formal talks with Mexico over revamping the US-Mexico-Canada Agreement (USMCA). But talks with Canada have not begun, and escalating trade conflict casts doubt on whether they will. "Canada told the Americans in advance that if these tariffs landed, it would stop negotiating and retaliate," said Barry Appleton, senior fellow at the Center for International Law at New York Law School. "The American trade representative said publicly he would not tolerate retaliation. Both sides have now committed themselves in public, which is how escalation stops being a choice."

Will Make Great Governor': JD Vance Backs Indian-American Vivek Ramaswamy



"US Vice-President JD Vance has endorsed Indian-American entrepreneur Vivek Ramaswamy for governor of Ohio, predicting that his fellow Republican would become the state's next chief executive. Vance offered the endorsement during a speech on Friday at the Cleveland-Cliffs steel plant in Middletown, his hometown in south-western Ohio. "We've also got, I believe, a great gubernatorial candidate, a great governor of Ohio, but also a

great next governor of Ohio, my friend, Vivek Ramaswamy," Vance said as he invited Ramaswamy to stand and acknowledge the audience. "But Vivek's going to make a great governor for the state of Ohio," he added. The vice-president also drew laughter by recounting an internet meme involving Ramaswamy and Vance's six-year-old son, who is also named Vivek. Vance said he took his son to a polling station when he returned to

Ohio to vote in the primary elections several weeks earlier. "So I brought my six year old little boy with me. We had a day of travel all over the country, actually," he said. "And I hold his hand into the polling booth and, you know, he votes for like, whether he prefers, you know, caramel apples or watermelon or something. They have some kid polling ballot to fill out." Vance said somebody subsequently posted online that he had brought "his son Vivek" to

vote and used artificial intelligence to create an image showing him walking hand-in-hand with Ramaswamy towards a polling location. "But I don't think that anybody needed to encourage Vivek to go to the polling location that day. When your name is on the ballot, nobody needs to make you go vote," Vance said. The endorsement came during a speech focused largely on manufacturing, trade and immigration policy. Vance appeared alongside political candidates and steelworkers as Cleveland-Cliffs announced a \$1 billion investment in its Middletown operations. The vice-president used his family's connection with the plant to frame the administration's manufacturing agenda. His grandfather worked there as a welder for nearly four decades when the facility operated as Armco Steel. Vance accused previous generations of political and business leaders of encouraging companies to

move production abroad while allowing foreign labour to replace American workers. "What we did is we told American corporations that if you wanted new workers, you got to start by training and hiring your own countrymen," he said. The remarks did not announce a new immigration regulation or specifically mention the H-1B skilled-worker visa programme. Ramaswamy entered Ohio politics after seeking the Republican presidential nomination in 2024. He later supported Donald Trump and became a prominent advocate of the President's "America First" platform. The son of immigrants from Kerala, Ramaswamy was born in Cincinnati, Ohio. He studied at Harvard University and Yale Law School before entering the biotechnology and financial sectors, and his gubernatorial campaign has further raised the profile of Indian Americans in Republican politics.

Apple Cuts Over 200 Jobs, Realigns Teams "To Evolve Business To Deliver Best"



Apple Inc. is cutting jobs across teams responsible for the Siri digital assistant and the Vision Pro headset, part of an effort to focus on new devices and artificial intelligence.

Apple is also laying off employees in its Intelligent Systems Experience, a team within its software engineering organization responsible for some of the AI features on its devices, according to people with knowledge of the matter. As part of the changes, the company is largely shutting down a Vision Pro team focused on gaming for the headset and reducing the size of a unit responsible for producing the device's immersive video content, said the people, who asked not to be identified because the personnel moves haven't been announced. Altogether, the cuts affect more than 200 people, with about 100 positions eliminated from the Vision Pro organization and another 100 from the Siri and software teams. In a statement, Apple acknowledged that it was realigning some teams "to evolve our business to deliver the best experiences for our users." "While we will create new roles as part of this change, it will also impact a limited number of existing roles," the com-

pany said. "We are grateful to these team members for their contributions, and we are committed to supporting them throughout their transition, including opportunities to apply for other roles at Apple." The Siri reshuffling is tied to an upcoming AI-infused version of the assistant, which is built on a new technical architecture. That shift requires a change in the necessary expertise, prompting the company to eliminate a small number of existing roles, reallocate resources and create new positions supporting the updated Siri. The changes to the Intelligent Systems Experience team reflect an effort to reorganize work on AI-powered capabilities. As more groups bring AI functions to apps, features and services, Apple is realigning teams to match priorities and accelerate development. The restructuring will eliminate some existing positions while creating new roles. The Vision Pro changes were described to employees as an effort to realign priorities based on how customers are using the device and to better direct resources toward other future products. Immersive video has been a key selling point for the Vision Pro since its launch. But pro-

ducing each 3D video requires multiple crews of Apple employees and contractors, and an episode in an immersive video series can cost several million dollars to film. Those expenses have strained the business given the limited number of active Vision Pro users. The Vision Pro was seen as a groundbreaking product when it launched in February 2024, but the cumbersome nature of the headset and its now-\$3,699 price have made it a hard sell. Apple isn't abandoning immersive video entirely. The company plans to produce a smaller number of videos in-house while encouraging third-party companies to develop content for the device. Although Apple has maintained a team focused on gaming features for the Vision Pro, the headset has gained limited traction among gamers. The company has told employees that the Vision Pro and its visionOS operating system aren't going away. In the near term, however, Apple is focused on launching smart glasses that wouldn't support immersive video or advanced gaming titles. The company is still considering a new Vision Pro model for release as early as the end of 2028, Bloomberg News has reported.

2 Children Killed In Ukrainian Strikes Day After Deadly Russian Mall Attack

A Ukrainian drone attack on Saturday hit a house in southern Russia, killing two children and injuring their parents, officials said, while at least nine people remained missing after a Russian attack on a Ukrainian shopping centre. Kyiv's forces also hit a warehouse of major e-commerce retailer Ozon, expanding its attacks on the sector after a month of strikes on facilities belonging to Russian online giant Wildberries. "This morning, civilian infrastructure and residential buildings in the Yeysk district came under a drone attack," said Veniamin Kondratyev, the governor of Russia's southern Krasnodar region. "As a result of yet another vile and cynical strike ... Two children were killed, and two adults are in the hospital," he added. A separate Ukrainian

drone attack on the central region of Samara killed one person, the local governor said. Fresh Russian strikes killed two people overnight -- one in Kyiv one in Zaporizhzhia, close to the front line -- Ukrainian officials said. In President Volodymyr Zelensky's home city of Kryvyi Rig, nine people were still missing after Russian drones smashed into a busy shopping centre on Friday afternoon, emergency services said. Sixteen people have been confirmed killed and more than 100 wounded. The set the mall ablaze and sent blood-covered victims running for the streets. Zelensky blasted a second drone strike around half an hour later as a "cynical and despicable" attempt to kill first responders. Mourners placed flowers and letters on



the grass outside the mall in a makeshift memorial on Saturday. An AFP reporter saw machinery piling up twisted and charred metal. Supermarket shelves stacked with products blackened from the fire were stacked up beneath a cratered ceiling and behind blown out

windows. The strikes marked the latest escalation in the four-and-a-half-year conflict. The United Nations reported that the civilian death count so far this year had risen to its highest level since the first months of the war. Kyiv has repeatedly appealed to allies for

additional support as Russia steps up its strikes, with Ukrainian forces struggling to intercept salvos of ballistic missiles. Leaders from Ukraine's allies are to hold video talks on Monday -- Ukraine's independence day -- to discuss their support for the country.

Swiss Tourist Jailed For Insulting Hindu Holiday In Bali On Instagram

A 26-year-old Swiss tourist was sentenced to prison for a year after he was found guilty of breaking Indonesian law after he violated a Hindu ritual and insulted it on Instagram. Luzian Andrin Zraggen, a construction worker from Switzerland, filmed a video that he posted to his Instagram story calling the empty beach during the holiday of Nyepi "crazy". He took a video of himself breaking the restrictions observed during the holiday and posted a caption with expletives, according to local media. "I made it to the beach. They didn't catch me. It's completely dark. Nobody out here. S*** crazy," he said on social media while recording. Zraggen was arrested after the video he shared caused anger among Balinese people on social media. Nyepi is an annual Balinese holiday, also known as the Day of Silence, when people maintain silence, fast and meditate. The island shuts down completely, and people are required to be home for 24 hours. Everyone in Bali is expected to respect the restrictions irrespective of their religion and tourists. The internet access is restricted, the island airport shuts down, and even the use of electricity is prohibited. "

SIM Card New Rules 2026: Biometric verification required for new connections and KYC changes



New Delhi:The Department of Telecommunications (DoT) has introduced new user identification requirements for telecom services under the Telecommunications (User Identification) Rules, 2026. The framework includes biometric verification for specified telecom processes, including obtaining a new SIM or mobile connection and making certain changes to user details. The rules are aimed at strengthening the verification of telecom users and reducing the risk of fake SIMs, identity theft and misuse of mobile connections. The framework also covers processes such as SIM replacement, business connections and re-verifi-

cation, subject to the prescribed requirements.

What changes will you get a new SIM?

Customers seeking a new SIM or mobile connection will have to undergo the prescribed user identification process, including biometric verification.

For customers using Aadhaar-based authentication, the process will use e-KYC. Customers who cannot use Aadhaar-based e-KYC will be covered under the prescribed D-KYC process.

The requirement is intended to help ensure that a mobile connection is issued against the verified identity of the person seeking it.

Will biometric verification be required for SIM replacement?

The new requirements are not limited to new mobile connections. Biometric verification will also apply to specified processes involving existing connections.

This includes SIM replacement and changes to certain user details, such as the customer's name, gender or date of birth, as prescribed under the new framework.

Customers may also have to undergo biometric authentication during the prescribed re-verification process.

What are the rules for business connections?

The user identification

requirements also apply to connections taken in the name of a business or institution. In such cases, the prescribed identification process is required for the person obtaining the registered connection as well as the end user who will use the connection, in accordance with the applicable requirements. The framework is intended to strengthen the identification of telecom users and reduce the scope for connections being obtained or used through false identities.

What happens if false documents are used?

The new framework also provides for action in cases involving false or incorrect identification information. If a connection has been obtained using fake documents, incorrect details or another person's identity, the matter is to be reported to the police as prescribed. A SIM or connection found to be in violation of the applicable requirements can also be subject to suspension or disconnection in accordance with the prescribed procedure.

How will customer data be handled?

The new system also sets requirements for handling

user and biometric information during the verification process. The Point of Sale (PoS) location where a SIM is sold is not permitted to store the user's or biometric data. The information is to be transmitted securely to the telecom service provider's system as prescribed. Customers may also receive an alert after the biometric process and be asked to confirm the transaction. This can help users know if a mobile connection is being issued in their name or if changes are being made to their details.

Why has the government introduced these rules?

The new user identification framework is aimed at strengthening the security of telecom networks and improving the verification of people using mobile connections. The rules are also intended to reduce the risk of fake SIMs, identity theft and misuse of telecom connections by strengthening the process through which users are identified and verified. The requirements cover new connections and specified changes or processes involving existing telecom connections, subject to the conditions and procedures prescribed under the 2026 rules.

Sugar Hoarding Crackdown: 10 govt teams to verify stocks as prices rise; states asked to step up action



New Delhi:Sugar Price

Rise: The government is set to intensify its crackdown on sugar hoarding and profiteering, with 10 central teams expected to visit states for physical verification of sugar stocks amid a sharp rise in domestic prices. The latest development comes after the government flagged speculation, hoarding and the creation of artificial scarcity as factors behind the recent increase in sugar prices. States have also been directed to accelerate action against entities found to be hoarding sugar or selling it at inflated prices. According to the latest government assessment, some sugar mills may be reporting sales only on paper while holding physical stocks, prompting authorities to step up stock verification.

Sugar price rise: A 'man-made crisis'

According to the latest government assessment, the recent rise in sugar prices is being viewed as a "man-made crisis", with concerns that some sugar mills may be reporting sales only on paper while withholding physical stocks from the market. Sugar prices have risen sharply in recent weeks. The government had earlier said that prices increased from Rs 48.18 per kg on July 20 to Rs 55.70 per kg on August 20, 2026. While the government has attributed the price rise to several factors, including lower-than-expected domestic production, festive-season demand, weather-related crop damage and tightening global supplies, it has also specifically flagged speculation and hoarding by sections of the industry. The government has maintained that the re-

cent price increase cannot be attributed to ethanol diversion, noting that the share of sugar diverted for ethanol has declined from around 12 per cent in 2022-23 to around 9 per cent in 2025-26.

Physical stock verification to intensify

The Centre and states are already carrying out physical verification of sugar stocks at mills. The latest move is expected to intensify these checks, with 10 central government teams set to visit states. The objective is to establish whether reported stocks match the actual physical inventory and identify instances where sugar is allegedly being withheld from the market to create an artificial shortage. States have also been asked to speed up enforcement and take action against those found indulging in hoarding or profiteering. The government has already imposed a 400-tonne stock limit on sugar dealers across the country from August 1 to November 30, 2026. From September 1, bulk consumers will also not be permitted to hold stocks exceeding 15 days of consumption.

Sugar availability expected to improve from September

Despite the lower-than-expected sugar production, the government has said that sufficient stocks are available to meet domestic demand until the beginning of the new crushing season in October. Around 35 lakh tonnes of sugar stock is expected to be available in September, providing some relief on the supply front. The government has also advised sugar mills and states to begin crushing early from October 15. Early crush-

ing is expected to result in more than 10 lakh tonnes of sugar production in October, compared with the usual 3-4 lakh tonnes. This additional production is expected to improve sugar availability during the festive season.

Duty-free sugar imports to add to supply

The Centre has also permitted the duty-free import of 10 lakh tonnes of raw sugar as a precautionary measure to augment domestic availability. The imported sugar stock is expected to arrive by October 15, further strengthening supplies ahead of the festive season.

Why sugar prices have risen?

The government had earlier estimated current-season sugar production at around 306 lakh tonnes (LMT), significantly below the initial estimate of around 343 LMT by sugarcane-growing states. Production has been affected by diseases such as Red Rot and Top Borer in sugarcane, along with waterlogging caused by excessive rainfall. At the global level, sugar supplies have also tightened. The government estimates a global sugar deficit of around 33 LMT for 2026-27, while international sugar prices rose from \$474 per tonne on June 30 to \$552 per tonne on August 20. However, the government has made it clear that domestic availability remains adequate and that it will act against practices that create an artificial shortage. With physical stock verification being stepped up and central teams set to visit states, the coming week could see increased scrutiny of sugar mills, dealers and traders suspected of hoarding or profiteering.

Rs 1,757 crore Symbiotec Pharmalab IPO: Subscription opens next week; all you need to know

New Delhi:Symbiotec Pharmalab IPO: The initial public offering (IPO) of Symbiotec Pharmalab Ltd is set to open for subscription next week on August 24, 2026 will remain open for subscription until August 27. The pharmaceutical and biotechnology company is looking to raise Rs 1,757 crore through the public issue. The Symbiotec Pharmalab IPO is a book-built issue comprising a fresh issue of 0.15 crore shares worth Rs 150 crore and an offer for sale (OFS) of 1.63 crore shares aggregating to Rs 1,607 crore.

Symbiotec Pharmalab IPO: Price band, lot size

The company has fixed the price band for the IPO at Rs 938 to Rs 988 per share. The lot size is 15 shares, meaning retail investors will need to invest a minimum of Rs 14,820 at the upper end of the price band. The IPO is expected to be listed on both the NSE and BSE. The basis of allotment is expected to be finalised on

August 28, while the tentative listing date is September 1, 2026.

Symbiotec Pharmalab IPO: Issue structure

Of the total issue size of Rs 1,757 crore, Rs 150 crore will come through the fresh issue, while Rs 1,607 crore will be raised through the OFS. The selling shareholders include Satwani Holdings LLP, a promoter selling shareholder, along with Rosewood Investments and India Business Excellence Fund – III, both investor selling shareholders. The IPO allocation has been structured with not more than 50 per cent of the net offer reserved for qualified institutional buyers (QIBs), not less than 35 per cent for retail investors and not less than 15 per cent for non-institutional investors (NIIs). JM Financial Ltd, Avendus Capital Private Ltd and Nomura Financial Advisory and Securities (India) Private Limited are the book-running lead managers to the issue.

While, MUFG Intime India



Pvt Ltd is the registrar of the issue.

Symbiotec Pharmalab IPO: How the IPO proceeds will be utilised?

The company plans to use the net proceeds from the fresh issue primarily towards the prepayment and/or repayment, in full or in part, of certain outstanding borrowings. The remaining proceeds will be used for general corporate purposes.

About Symbiotec Pharmalab
Incorporated in 2002,

Symbiotec Pharmalab is engaged in the development and manufacturing of active pharmaceutical ingredients (APIs), nutritional ingredients and specialty products.

The company caters to domestic as well as international markets, including regulated and emerging markets. It has evolved from a lab-scale steroidal hormone API manufacturer into an industrial-scale, backwards-integrated manufacturing platform.

Symbiotec Pharmalab has approvals from regulatory bodies and organisations including the US FDA, EU-GMP and the Ministry of Food and Drug Safety, Korea. As of June 30, 2025, the company operated two industrial-scale API manufacturing facilities, with a maximum chemical synthesis capacity of 584.67 metric tonnes (MT) and fermentation capacity of 300 kilolitres.

EPFO Enrolment Campaign 2026: Special chance to add workers left out of PF coverage between 2009 and 2026



New Delhi:The Employees' Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO) has urged establishments to use the Employees' Enrolment Campaign, 2026 (EEC 2026) to enrol eligible employees who remained outside EPF coverage between April 1, 2009 and March 31, 2026.

The one-time campaign was notified with effect from June 29, 2026, and will remain open until October 31,

2026. It is aimed at facilitating voluntary compliance by employers and extending provident fund, pension and insurance benefits to eligible workers.

What is the Employees' Enrolment Campaign 2026?

EEC 2026 provides eligible employers with a special one-time opportunity to declare and enrol employees who were left out of EPF coverage during the speci-

fied period.

The campaign is intended to provide a structured mechanism for bringing eligible employees within the statutory social security framework. Employers have been encouraged to review their employment and wage records to identify eligible employees who may have remained outside EPF coverage.

Who can be enrolled under EEC 2026?

Under the campaign, eligible employers can declare and enrol employees who were left out of EPF coverage during the prescribed period. The employee must be alive and continuing in employment with the establishment on the date of declaration. Enrolment is subject to the conditions applicable under EEC 2026.

What relaxation is available under the campaign?

The campaign provides specified relaxations to facilitate the regularisation of past compliance. This includes waiver of the employee's share of contribution where it was not deducted earlier, subject to the conditions of the campaign.

How can employers enrol eligible workers?

Employers are required to complete the enrolment and remittance process through the prescribed online mechanism. A Face Authentication-based UAN is to be generated through the UMANG App for each em-

ployee declared under the campaign. Contributions are then to be remitted through the Electronic Challan-cum-Return (ECR).

The campaign is designed to benefit both establishments and workers by providing a structured route for bringing eligible employees into the statutory social security framework. Employers are encouraged to check their employment and wage records and identify employees who may qualify under the campaign. EPFO is undertaking awareness and outreach activities to explain the key features of EEC 2026 to employers, employees, establishments, contractors and other stakeholders. Ministries and departments of the Government of India, state governments and Union Territories, public sector undertakings, autonomous bodies and other organisations are also being encouraged to facilitate wider dissemination of the campaign among establishments and service providers under their administrative control.

Mutual Fund Strategy: What happens when you combine Rs 1 lakh lump sum with Rs 8,333 monthly SIP?

New Delhi:Mutual Fund

SIP and Lump Sum Investment Strategy: Financial planners often suggest using a mix of lump sum and SIP investments in mutual funds, especially for those who have savings from regular income and even get occasional windfalls -- such as salary bonuses or sale proceeds. Most experts say that combining an SIP with a lump sum may lead to a more balanced and risk-adjusted outcome for mutual fund investors. In this article, let's compare an SIP investment and a lump sum investment of Rs 1 lakh a year each, and compare their returns at 8 per cent, 10 per cent and 12 per cent over the long term, say 15 years. An important caveat to consider here is that these are calculations aimed at elaborating estimated outcomes at the three assumed annualised return rates. In reality, lump sum and SIP

returns may vary drastically in the same mutual fund scheme. First, the example: Rs 8,333 per month SIP and Rs 1,00,000 lump sum investment. In this example, the investor sets up a monthly SIP of Rs 8,333, which translates to approximately Rs 1 lakh per year, and a Rs 1 lakh one-time investment. Returns from both investments will be calculated over a period of 15 years. Mutual Fund Investment: Lump sum or SIP or both? Many money managers argue whether lump sum is better than SIP. While lump sum returns depend heavily on the timing of entry -- wherein buying low yields strong returns and vice versa, SIP averages purchase across fluctuating market prices, significantly reducing investment risk in the process.

When a hybrid approach may be handy

SIP for discipline and rupee-cost averaging: A regular monthly SIP helps in inculcating investing discipline and smoothening out market volatility over time, while ensuring that investors stay invested regardless of market levels, lump sum enables investors to channelise windfall gains and use corrections to book lower investment costs.

Adding a tactical lump sum layer to an overall investment portfolio comprising a core SIP for regular wealth creation is often seen as helpful, as it enables an investor to benefit from market dips or corrections without disturbing gradual investment growth.

Compounding -- or earnings on earnings -- enables intermittent returns arising to be reinvested in the initial principal, which leads to accelerated overall investment growth especially over longer periods.

Maheshwari community has a glorious and inspiring legacy of service, sacrifice and social commitment: Lok Sabha Speaker

Lok Sabha Speaker Shri Om Birla today congratulated the Maheshwari community of Jaipur for beginning a new and important chapter in its journey of service to humanity through the establishment of the Maheshwari Institute of Medical Sciences and Research Centre. Addressing the foundation stone laying ceremony of the institute, he said that the Maheshwari community has a glorious and deeply inspiring legacy of service, sacrifice, dedication, and social responsibility. It is a legacy that has enlightened society and inspired generations.

Referring to the community's historical contribution to the spread of education, Shri Birla said that in

1926, when India was under British rule and educational opportunities were extremely limited in both cities and villages, visionary members of the Maheshwari community fully understood the importance of education in building an enlightened, cultured, and progressive society. Despite limited resources and many daunting challenges, they demonstrated remarkable commitment and pooled their resources to establish schools and educational institutions.

Mr. Birla further stated that the Maheshwari community made a significant contribution to India's freedom movement and carried forward the immortal tradition of sacrifice and patri-

tism associated with revered Bhamashah. Even in the most challenging circumstances, the community remained steadfast in its commitment to public service. Where educational facilities were lacking, schools were established, and where accommodations were scarce for travelers from distant lands, dharamshalas were constructed to provide shelter and amenities.

The Speaker of the Lok Sabha said that the Maheshwari community's spirit of service has not been limited to any one area. From schools and educational institutions to hospitals, dispensaries, community centers, hostels, and scholarships, the Maheshwari community

has always worked with collectiveness and sensitivity to identify and address the needs and challenges facing society.

Referring to the unprecedented challenge posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, Mr. Birla said that India has drawn immense strength from its collective social consciousness and its ancient tradition of caring and helping each other. He said the eternal Indian ideal of collective responsibility, compassion and 'Vasudeva Kutumbkam' — meaning the whole world is one family — gives society the moral strength and tenacity to face and overcome extremely difficult situations.

Emphasizing that nation-building is a collective ef-

fort, Mr. Birla said that the responsibility of building a strong, prosperous, and resilient India does not lie solely with the government. Citizens, voluntary organizations, and social institutions also have an equally important role to play in this national responsibility. Contributions to society and the nation should not always be measured by economic criteria; hard work, dedication, professional competence, knowledge, and selfless service can also contribute significantly to nation-building.

Underlining the importance of the new medical institute, Mr. Birla said that quality medical education, research, innovation and health services have be-

come even more important in the present times. He stressed that the benefits of modern and quality health services should reach every section of the society, especially those living in remote villages and remote settlements.

He said that affordable, accessible and high quality medical facility should not be out of reach of any citizen.

Appreciating the commitment behind this project, Shri Birla said that Maheshwari Institute of Medical Sciences and Research Centre should strive to develop into a model charitable research institute, whose work and achievements can be-

come an example for the entire country to emulate. He said that the role of the institute should not be limited to medicine and treatment alone, but should also play a leading role in providing excellent medical and nursing education, advanced research, innovation and developing new solutions to the emerging healthcare needs of the society. He said that when society has a noble purpose and is supported by strong determination, lack of resources is never an obstacle. Mr. Birla said that the highest use of wealth lies in the welfare and upliftment of society, and that a person

receives the deepest and most lasting respect when his success and resources are dedicated to the wider public good. Mr. Birla extended his heartfelt congratulations and best wishes to the Maheshwari community and all those associated with this visionary initiative. He expressed confidence that the Maheshwari Institute of Medical Sciences and Research Center will become a lasting symbol of service and compassion and will make a significant contribution to providing quality, affordable, and accessible healthcare to the people of Rajasthan and across the country.

Union Home Minister Shri Amit Shah reviewed the security of Siliguri Corridor today



Union Home Minister Shri Amit Shah today reviewed the security of the Siliguri Corridor. The meeting was attended by the Chief Secretary and DGP of West Bengal, besides senior officials from the Ministry of Home Affairs, Ministry of Road Transport and Highways, Army, BSF, SSB and RPF, other central ministries, and various departments of the state government. Held in the presence of the Chief Minister of West Bengal, the Standing Focus Group on Siliguri Corridor (SFG-SC) of the Multi-Agency Centre (MAC) made a presentation on the progress made so far and its recommendations to further strengthen the security of the corridor. During the meeting, the Union Home Minister reviewed the status of all ongoing infrastructure projects in the Siliguri Corridor, which are crucial to its security. He also discussed PIO activities, demographic changes, illegal im-



migration, and border issues.

At the meeting, Union Home Minister Shri Amit Shah emphasized the concept of a "four-pronged approach" to border security and directed all agencies to implement it in full spirit. Emphasizing the importance of infrastructure projects in the corridor, Shri Shah directed all agencies present to complete all pending work within the stipulated timeframe.

The Union Home Minister directed all agencies present at the meeting to increase their presence by opening more facilities along the corridor. He also reviewed the security of all vital installations along the corridor and directed all necessary steps to ensure their safety. He also directed that the Siliguri Corridor be kept encroachment-free. He stressed the need to take all necessary steps to prevent infiltration into the Siliguri

Corridor.

Union Home Minister Shri Amit Shah suggested the Chief Minister of West Bengal to consider the possibility of opening more Sainik Schools in North Bengal. He also asked the Chief Minister to work towards increasing the number of Senior NCC Cadets in North Bengal. He also urged the state government to strengthen the Civil Defense and Home Guards system in the Siliguri Corridor.

The first Steering Committee meeting of the 57th IFFI was held under the chairmanship of Dr. L. Murugan to review the preparations for the festival



The first meeting of the Steering Committee of the 57th International Film Festival of India (IFFI) was held on 21 August 2026 at Kartavya Bhawan-2, New Delhi under the chairmanship of Dr. L. Murugan, Minister of State for Information and Broadcasting, to review the preparations for the upcoming edition of the festival and deliberate on measures to further strengthen its position as a world-class international film festival.

The 57th International Film Festival of India (IFFI) is scheduled to be held in Goa from 20 to 28 November 2026.

Addressing the gathering, Dr. L. Murugan outlined his vision for the 57th edition of IFFI, emphasizing greater opportunities for young students, emerging filmmakers, and the unsung heroes of the Indian film industry. He said that IFFI should provide a platform for young talent to showcase their creativity, learn from established filmmakers, and connect with the global film community, while also strengthening its international reach by bringing outstanding films and leading creative talent from around the world to India.

Dr. Murugan emphasized that the Minis-

try, under the leadership of Shri Ashwini Vaishnav, is taking new initiatives to boost India's Orange Economy and strengthen the country's creative industries, thereby creating opportunities for talent, innovation and global collaboration.

Dr. Murugan emphasized the need to expand opportunities for masterclasses, structured dialogues with established filmmakers, and meaningful mentorship for young and emerging talent.

He also highlighted the importance of showcasing the diversity and strength of Indian cinema, as well as strengthening opportunities for international collaboration and professional exchange.

Acknowledging the crucial role of the Government of Goa in the growth and continued success of IFFI, the Minister paid tribute to the legacy of the late Shri Manohar Parrikar, former Chief Minister of Goa, whose vision played a key role in transforming Goa into a globally recognized destination for international cinema. He also appreciated the continued support and efforts of the Honorable Chief Minister of Goa, Shri Pramod Sawant, towards making IFFI a truly world-class cul-

tural event.

Speaking at the event, Shri Chanchal Kumar, Secretary, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, emphasized that IFFI should be used as a major platform to promote India's growing creative economy and strengthen collaboration between the Indian and international creative communities.

He also stressed the importance of ensuring a high-quality and seamless experience for filmmakers, cinephiles, delegates, and guests attending the festival.

Mr. Prakash Magdum, Managing Director, NFDC, gave a presentation on the preparations and various initiatives being undertaken for the 57th IFFI. Mr. Ashutosh Gowariker, Festival Director, IFFI, welcomed the recommendations of the Steering Committee and emphasized the importance of strengthening the Masterclasses, expanding opportunities for young filmmakers, selecting outstanding films from India and abroad, and the participation of leading filmmakers and creative personalities from India and around the world.

The Secretary, Information and Public Relations, Government of Goa apprised the Committee about the preparations being

made by the State Government and assured that all necessary efforts will be made to ensure timely completion of all the necessary activities and smooth arrangements for the 57th International Film Festival of India (IFFI).

The Steering Committee members placed special emphasis on expanding IFFI's international reach, with special efforts being made to select outstanding films from around the world and invite leading filmmakers, artists, and creative professionals from various countries. The Festival is envisioned not only as a celebration of cinema, but also as an important platform for creative exchange, collaboration, and the promotion of India's growing creative economy.

The Steering Committee emphasized the importance of close and continuous coordination between the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, NFDC, the Government of Goa and all relevant stakeholders for the successful organization of the festival. The Committee expressed confidence that the 57th IFFI will further strengthen its position as a leading international platform for cinema, creativity, cultural exchange and global collaboration, as well as provide Indian filmmakers and creative professionals with greater opportunities to meaningfully engage with the world. The meeting was attended by Shri Chanchal Kumar, Secretary, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting; Shri Ashutosh Gowariker, renowned filmmaker and Festival Director, IFFI; Shri Prakash Magdum, Managing Director, National Film Development Corporation (NFDC); Secretary, IPR, Government of Goa; and eminent Steering Committee members Ms. Bhavana Kher, Ram Sampath, Aparna Purohit, Prerna Singh, Namita, Suhasini Maniratnam, Abhishek Jain, Santosh Sivan, Gaurav Banerjee, Aditya Bhatt, Prashant Chothani, and Dharam Gulati.

Official visit of Minister of Petroleum and Natural Gas Shri Hardeep Singh Puri to Mauritius

Union Minister of Petroleum and Natural Gas Shri Hardeep Singh Puri paid an official visit to the Republic of Mauritius on 20-21 August 2026. The Minister met with His Excellency Dr. Navinchandra Ramgoolam, Prime Minister of Mauritius, on August 20. In his presence, India and Mauritius signed a Government to Government Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for cooperation in the oil and gas sector, as well as a long-term sales and purchase agreement between Indian Oil Corporation Limited (IOCL) and the State Trading Corporation (STC) of Mauritius for the supply of petroleum products. Under the agreement, IOCL will supply Mauritius' entire import requirement of Motor Spirit (MS), High Speed Diesel (HSD), and Aviation Turbine Fuel (ATF).

The MoU on Oil and Gas Cooperation institutional-

izes a long-standing energy partnership between the two countries. This includes the supply of petroleum products, training and capacity building for Mauritian officials, and biofuel cooperation. This five-year agreement between IOCL and STC guarantees long-term supplies to Mauritius, providing the country with security of supply and protection against price fluctuations. This is the first long-term supply agreement entered into by an Indian public sector oil marketing company outside South Asia in recent years.

During the visit, the Minister held useful bilateral meetings with the Honourable Patrick Gervais Assirvaden, Minister of Energy and Public Utilities, the Honourable John Michael Tzon Saw Yung Sik Yuen, Minister of Commerce and Consumer Protection, and the Honourable Dhananjay Ramphul, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional

Integration and International Trade. He attended the foundation stone laying ceremony of India Oil (Mauritius) Limited's 27.5 TMT bunker marine fuel storage facility at Mer Rouge, Port Louis.

India's growing role as a reliable energy partner India has emerged as a major global refining hub, with 23 refineries producing 267 MMT of refined petroleum products annually, making it a net exporter of refined products. India already meets the petroleum demand of Nepal and Bhutan and also supplies significant quantities to other countries in the region and beyond. Even during the ongoing crisis in West Asia, India has met its supply commitments to Nepal and Bhutan, making it a reliable energy security provider for the region. The agreement with Mauritius establishes India as a major fuel supplier to that country and strengthens India's strategic and economic

presence in the Indian Ocean region.

The MoU also promotes cooperation in the field of biofuels. The MoU also provides for cooperation in the field of biofuels through the exchange of knowledge, research, and training.

Mauritius is a founding member of the Global Biofuels Alliance (GBA), an initiative initiated by India and launched during India's G20 presidency. The GBA Secretariat, under its Country Engagement Programme, in collaboration with the Ministry of Energy and Public Utilities of Mauritius, has developed a Biofuels Country Perspective Policy Framework for the country. Minister Puri and the Honourable Patrick Gervais Assirvaden jointly witnessed the launch of the Biofuels Country Scenario Policy Framework on August 21. This is a starting point for Mauritius to explore the potential of its energy transition through biofuels.

Vishwambhara OST: Thunderous Spiritual Chants!



While the brand-new Vishwambhara poster establishes the visual mood, the newly released OST gives that world a voice of its own. The makers chose Megastar Chiranjeevi's birthday to present the thunderous musical score composed by Gowra Hari. The track is built around scale and atmosphere. Deep, resonant chants create an unmistakable spiritual presence, while pounding drums and sweeping brass arrangements steadily increase the intensity. What begins as a restrained and brooding composition eventually erupts into a peak, making the music feel tailor-made for a pivotal spiritual moment. Gowra Hari, who has earned recognition through projects including Hanu-Man and Mirai, brings a distinctly cinematic approach to the OST. The composition reinforces the sense of mythology, mystery and power associated with the film. That same mood dominates the birthday poster. Chiranjeevi is presented in an uncompromising avatar, with a beard, fierce expression and sharply focused eyes. A towering Trishul occupies the foreground, giving the frame a strong spiritual identity.

Directed by Vassishta and produced by UV Creations, Vishwambhara has been mounted with extensive production design and ambitious VFX. Several leading visual effects companies are involved in bringing its fantasy setting and CG-heavy sequences to life. The makers will soon announce the film's release date.

Local or Non-Local, Baby Nakshatra Nailed It!

Local or non-local? This question has become quite a matter of late in Tollywood. There is a constant debate on whether non-local should be cast in the roles where Telugu and local actors fit in. This practice became so evident that filmmakers are choosing non locals even for some side roles. Mass Maharaja Ravi Teja's Irumudi is in the news for this. Before the film's release many wondered why Baby Nakshatra was chosen for Ravi Teja's daughter Manemma aka Mani Kanta role at a time a local girl could have been chosen. But after the release all such talk and arguments vanished. Nakshatra totally nailed in her character in the movie. Be it emotions or expressions during critical scenes, Nakshatra proved she is the best suit for the character. Director Shiva Nirvana beforehand saw the potential in Nakshatra and picked her. If we see Majili, Shiva picked a North girl that too suiting her North mother connection. Shiva is known for picking artists that breathe life into the characters. It's once again proved with Irumudi.



Salman Khan And Sanjay Dutt Couldn't Save 7 Dogs!

7 Dogs has recorded a shockingly low opening in India, with Day 1 collections estimated at under 10 lakh. The international action thriller stars Egyptian actors Karim Abdel Aziz and Ahmed Ezz in the lead, alongside Monica Bellucci and Giancarlo Esposito. The film follows Interpol agent Khalid and former criminal Ghali as they join forces to take down the dangerous 7 Dogs crime syndicate. The gang is connected to a lethal new drug that threatens to spread across the region. The film has been mounted on a large international scale and is directed by Adil El Arbi and Bilall Fallah, the duo behind Bad Boys for Life and Bad Boys: Ride or Die. The project also features a strong international ensemble. For Indian audiences, Salman Khan and Sanjay Dutt were among the biggest attractions. However, their appearances are relatively brief, with the two stars playing supporting cameo roles rather than leading the film. Their presence nevertheless generated considerable attention around the Indian release. Yet, despite the reunion of Salman Khan and Sanjay Dutt and the presence of several international stars, 7 Dogs has failed to translate that star power into theatrical footfalls. The sub Rs 10 lakh opening is particularly surprising given the scale of the project. The film now needs a major turnaround over the weekend to show any improvement at the Indian box office. For a movie carrying Salman Khan and Sanjay Dutt in its Indian promotional appeal, this extremely low opening is certainly a disappointing start.



Rakul Nails Every Single Look On the Cover



Rakul Preet Singh has proved once again why she is called the Queen of Style, gracing the cover of HT City Showstoppers' August 2026 edition in a jaw-dropping ivory lace gown with an oversized bow-shaped cape sleeve, paired with statement drop earrings and a sleek bun. While several new-gen and popular heroines have struggled to crack big magazine covers, Rakul continues to own this space effortlessly, proving her fashion game is a league of its own. The photoshoot also saw her serve multiple looks, a sage green fringe and sequin gown with puffed sleeves and a thigh-high slit, a fiery red one-shoulder gown with floral embroidery and a bold thigh slit, a silver-blue crystal-embellished halter gown, and a chic all-black winter look with emerald green stockings and a cream handbag. Each outfit showed off a different side of her style range, from glamorous and bold to classy and edgy. Rakul is set to appear in Nitesh Tiwari's ambitious two-part epic Ramayana, where she takes on the complex mythological role of Surpanakha, Ravana's sister. With her cover shoot buzz and this big-ticket project on the horizon, Rakul Preet Singh's 2026 is clearly shaping up to be a landmark year.

Irumudi Success, Deverakonda Fans Feeling Low!



Ravi Teja had delivered a Blockbuster after Six Failures in a row. His Irumudi is likely to be the actor's first 100 Crore Grosser and a huge money-spinner to all parties involved. Many on Social Media are happy to see Ravi Teja coming back to form. This season seems to be a season of comebacks. Suriya made a comeback with Veerabhadhrudu and Vishwanath and Sons and Samantha registered a success with Maa Inti Bangaram. Lenin also became the first hit of Akhil after a long wait. Varun Tej also got a relief with Korean Kanakaraju. And now, Ravi Teja with Irumudi. At this juncture, Vijay Deverakonda is feeling left out. Fans are unhappy that Vijay is missing out. Ranabali was supposed to release on September 11th, but the movie got postponed indefinitely. There is no proper update about his other film, Rowdy Janardhana, as well. They are in a sense of despair waiting for that hit after a long time. In this season, audiences are giving good openings without considering the form of the actors if the content is decent. They feel Vijay is unlucky to have missed out this season.