

BRS Wanted BCs To Rear Sheep: CM Revanth

From Our Staff Reporter
Hyderabad, August 18

Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy accused the previous BRS regime of keeping the Backward Classes communities away from education by encouraging them to pursue traditional caste-based professions. In contrast, he said, the Congress government was improving their educational standards, besides supporting caste-based professions.

"Unlike the previous government which asked people to rear buffaloes and sheep, stitch footwear, or catch fish while ensuring KCR's family remained at the helm of affairs, we are encouraging education, besides ensuring that caste-based professions flourish," the Chief Minister said.

"I reiterate that children from these communities should pursue education, become doctors, lawyers, and IAS officers, and play a part in rebuilding Telangana. We can change our children's destinies, as there is greater awareness today," Revanth Reddy said, after unveiling a statue of Sardar Sarvai Papanna Goud at an event held at Tank Bund here on Tues-

day. The state marked the birth anniversary of Sardar Pappanna, who fought the Mughals and briefly ruled from Golconda Fort.

Revanth Reddy reiterated that the Congress was working for social justice, while the BRS only looked at "family justice." He urged the Goud community to consider the Congress government their own. "We will win 117 seats in the Assembly elections if you affirm that this is your government," Revanth Reddy said, addressing the BC community.

"When KCR became Chief Minister, he appointed his son KTR as working president. When Revanth Reddy became Chief Minister, Mahesh Goud became state Congress president. When KCR was Chief Minister, Harish Rao and KTR became key figures. When Revanth Reddy became Chief Minister, Ponnam, Vakiti, Seethakka, and Konda Surekha became ministers," Revanth Reddy pointed out, highlighting what he called the difference in approach between him and former chief minister K. Chandrashekar Rao.

"When KCR was CM, he made his daughter an



MP and an MLC. I appointed the granddaughter of the heroic Chakali Iamma and Srikanthachari's mother Shankamma as members of the Telangana State Women's Commission. KCR's approach is based on family interests; mine is based on social justice. KCR represents the justice of the feudal lords (doralu), whereas ours is social justice," Revanth Reddy said.

The Chief Minister reiterated his allegation that top leaders from the BRS were engaged in 'black magic'. "They are performing occult rituals, hoping for drought and losses for farmers. How can they stoop so low just to get back to power," Revanth Reddy asked. "Those who practice black magic deserve to be tied to trees and thrashed."

Consider Central Govt. Employees' Children As Local Candidates For MBBS, BDS Admissions: HC

From Our Staff Reporter
Hyderabad, August 18

The Telangana High Court has directed the state government and the health university to treat children of Central government employees, corporations and public sector undertakings, who were compelled to pursue their education outside Telangana due to their parents' postings, on par with children of state government employees for the purpose of local candidature in MBBS and BDS admissions.

A division bench comprising Chief Justice Aparesh Kumar Singh and Justice G.M. Mohiuddin directed the government to expeditiously finalise and issue the necessary clarification or formal amendment to GO Ms. No. 150 to incorporate this category within the ambit of the exception under the proviso to Rule 3(a).

The court directed that, pending a formal amendment, the rule be read as including the children of Central employees on the terms applicable to children of state government employees.

The bench issued the direction while disposing of a writ petition filed by Kodimela Samhitha, who challenged her exclusion from the benefit of the local candidate exception under the Telangana Medical and Dental Colleges Admission Rules, 2017, as amended by GO Ms. No. 150 dated September 8, 2025.

The petitioner, a Hyderabad native, had qualified NEET-UG 2026 and sought admission in the MBBS/BDS course. Her father, an Employees' State Insurance Corporation (ESIC) employee under the Union ministry of labour, was transferred from Hyderabad to Tirupati in December 2016 and returned to Hyderabad in May 2024. Consequently, she completed Classes V to X and her Intermediate education in Tirupati.

During the admissions process for MBBS/ BDS, the petitioner was not treated as a 'local candidate' as

she did not fall within any of the four categories specified in the proviso to Rule 3(a)(iii), as her father was an employee of a Central government corporation.

The state government, following Supreme Court directions till September 2025 regarding local candidature, framed the proviso to Rule 3(a)(iii), which had



confined the exception to categories of employees having a direct nexus with the state government and excluded the Central employees.

The petitioner contended that the rule was discriminatory as it recognised children of certain state government employees, Telangana-cadre All India Service officers, defence personnel and employees of Telangana government corporations, but excluded similarly placed children of Central government employees.

Advocate-General A. Sudershan Reddy representing the state, informed the court that the issue was under consideration and assured the court that an appropriate clarification or amendment would be issued to extend the benefit to children of Central employees.

Taking note of the assurance, the court said there was no justifiable reason to exclude Central employees and their children from the exception. The court directed the Kaloji Narayana Rao University of Health Sciences to treat Samhitha as a local candidate and permit her to participate in the ongoing MBBS/BDS counselling for 2026-27.



CJP protests: SC to set up high-powered panel to probe police excesses against students

New Delhi, August 18

The Supreme Court on Tuesday said it would set up a high-powered committee consisting of a retired top court judge, a former high court chief justice, an ex-CBI Director, a former DGP and others to examine allegations of police excesses during the CJP-led student protest last month.

Asking for suggestions from different parties on other members to be included in the proposed high-powered committee by this evening, a Bench d by Chief Justice of India Surya Kant said an order to this effect would be released on Wednesday.

The Bench said it would direct the handing over of video footage and CCTV recordings of the violence during the July 20 Parliament march in the national capital to the panel for examination even as the Delhi Police denied using excessive force during the protest.

The panel would examine video footage and CCTV recordings of the violence and the police response during the march and recommend measures to the top court.

The panel will also examine complaints by female protesters who were allegedly molested.

Alleging that 'history-sheeters' infiltrated July 20 protest in which 240 cops injured, Solicitor General Tushar Mehta told the Bench that except for 2,873 individuals, who have grave cases involving grievous offences of murder rape, abductions etc, the cases against others can be quashed.

"FIRs against student protestors must be quashed. How to do... your Lordships can decide. Anti-social elements who infiltrated (the protest) have to be probed," Mehta told the Bench which also included Justice Joymalya Bagchi and Justice V Mohana.

On behalf of a petitioner opposing the withdrawal of cases against protesters, advocate Rizwan Ahmed said the students should file affidavits expressing remorse before cases against them were withdrawn. Under the BNSS, there were only two categories of protests — lawful and unlawful, and since the July 20 Parliament march was unlawful, the protesters cannot escape liability, he argued.

Rizwan's arguments were opposed by senior advocates Menaka Guruswamy, Gopal Sankaranarayanan, N Hariharan and Shadan Farasat. And advocate Vrida Grover. Referring to the Delhi

Alleging that 'history-sheeters' infiltrated July 20 protest in which 240 cops injured, Solicitor General Tushar Mehta told the Bench that except for 2,873 individuals, who have grave cases involving grievous offences of murder rape, abductions etc, the cases against others can be quashed.

Police affidavit, Sankaranarayanan said they have admitted that officers in plainclothes and without name tags used force against protesters.

The top court, however, stressed the impact of the criminal cases on students, noting that they have a future ahead of them and a constitutionally protected right to protest under Article 19. "It's a question of the life and future of innocent students... they have legitimate expectations from the system," the CJl noted.

"Criminality has to be seen with the object and purpose for which students gathered there. Let's not forget their right under Article 19. So long as you don't violate the law and raise your voice peacefully, those cases are completely distinguishable from cases of hardened criminals," CJl Kant said.

The Delhi Police have strongly defended the use of force during the "Chalo Sansad" protest here on July 20, alleging the agitation was hijacked by "anti-social elements" and "history-sheeters", resulting in a breakdown of law and order that left more than 240 police personnel injured. They said 92 of the people present at the site were involved in more than 10 criminal cases, of whom 47 were "history-sheeters".

An affidavit filed by Deputy Commissioner of Police Sachin Sharma of the New Delhi district in response to petitions alleging excessive use of force against protesters said Delhi Police were willing to have their actions examined by a court-appointed panel.

US Has No Planned Talks With Iran: Trump

Washington: President Donald Trump on Tuesday said the US has no planned talks with Iran but insisted the Strait of Hormuz remains "open and operating," despite limited traffic and a reported strike on a ship exiting the waterway

Trump wrote on social media that a US blockade there remains "in full force and effect," and asserted that all water mines have been removed.



Gang war in Nanded leaves 3 dead, victim hunted down inside ward



According to the police, the clash stemmed from an ongoing feud between two gangs vying for dominance in the city. According to the police, the clash stemmed from an ongoing feud between two gangs vying for dominance in the city. In a shocking escalation of gang rivalry in Nanded, three members from two rival groups were killed after a violent clash in the early hours of Friday, with one of the victims later murdered inside a hospital. Police have arrested six accused so far and launched a wider manhunt. According to the police, the clash stemmed from an ongoing feud between two gangs vying for dominance in the city. All the accused and deceased have criminal backgrounds, with several having prior police records and some previously extorted from the district.

“Two FIRs have been registered against members of both gangs under charges of murder and other relevant sections of the BNS. Six accused have been arrested so far, and further investigation is underway. Forensic evidence has been collected,” said Santosh

Bengal BJP files complaint with EC over TMC MP Kalyan Banerjee’s ‘derogatory’ remarks against Amit Shah

The West Bengal unit of the BJP filed a complaint with the Chief Electoral Officer (CEO) Sunday, seeking urgent action against Trinamool Congress (TMC) MP Kalyan Banerjee for allegedly making “derogatory, provocative, and hateful” statements against Union Home Minister Amit Shah. The BJP alleged that Banerjee’s remarks constitute a gross violation of the Model Code of Conduct (MCC) in place ahead of the West Bengal Assembly elections. Accompanying the complaint was a video clip in which the TMC leader is reportedly seen and heard making the alleged comments during a public address.

In its letter to the CEO, a copy of which is with The Indian Express, the BJP claimed that the statements were part of a “coordinated strategy” by the TMC leadership to fuel hostility, fear, polarisation and hatred. “The statement is made calculatedly to demean, provoke and incite hostility, creating tension, animosity and polarisation within the electoral environment. The subject statement is not an isolated incident, but a part of a continuing and escalating pattern of provocative and intimidatory rhetoric by TMC leadership and its functionaries,” it said. “The repetitive, frequent, similar statements by TMC functionaries targeting the BJP leadership and party strongly indicate the TMC leadership’s intent to tarnish the BJP’s reputation,” the letter added. The BJP’s letter alleged that Banerjee’s statements were made under the command,

How a boy who sold flowers at dawn to afford school became the voice for thousands of teachers as a top Mumbai lawyer



The Teachers’ Association for Non-Aided Polytechnics (TAFNAP) recently honoured Senior Advocate Suresh Pakale with a Lifetime Achievement Award, presented by former Chief Justice of India Dhananjaya Y Chandrachud.

A boy who once aspired to become a chartered accountant, today stands as a senior advocate in the Bombay High Court, marking over four decades in law. Suresh Pakale never planned to become a lawyer. Growing up in Pedhe Parshuram, a small village in Rathnagiri’s Khed taluka, he dreamed of becoming a chartered accountant. Life, as it often does, had other plans. Pakale’s early years were marked by hardship and resilience. At the time, school was held in a temple, and he studied there. Later, he enrolled in a Zilla Parishad school, where irregular teaching and a missing bridge over the Vashishti River made attending classes a daily challenge. To support his family, he sold flower garlands and lotus flowers before school each morning. A turning point came when a dedicated teacher, Samant Guruji, revived the school’s faltering environment and reignited the students’ will to learn. Pakale eventually moved to Mumbai in search of better opportunities. In 1978, he joined the National Insurance Company. While working there, he turned to law not by grand design, but by circumstance. Balancing a full-time job with studies, he completed his LLB in 1980 and LLM in 1982. He began his legal career under labour lawyer A J Deshmukh, navigating financial pressures alongside professional ones. By 1985, he had shifted to the Bombay High Court, and within two years, he was handling significant cases, mentored by eminent figures including Dr Y V Chandrachud and K K Singhvi. What followed was a four-decade career defined by fighting for the underdog and winning.

In the 1980s, Pakale took on one of the most conse-

Tambe, Police Inspector at Bhagyanagar Police Station. The incident took place around 1:30 am in the E-Square area on Canal Road near a D-Mart outlet. Members of the two gangs—led by Arijit Singh Chavan and Sai Singh Deepak Singh Grehwal alias Sai Lala—came face-to-face after Chavan exited a late-night film screening.

Police said Chavan was associated with a gang previously run by Sada Deshmukh, who died a few years ago. Acting on information that Chavan was at the theatre with minimal support, members of Sai Lala’s gang—including Avez Mohammad, Arbaaz Mohammad Farooq, and Sayyed Avez Sayyed Khalil—waited outside armed with knives and swords, avoiding entering the premises due to CCTV surveillance. As Chavan and his associates stepped out, they were attacked. In the ensuing clash, Chavan and Arbaaz were killed on the spot. Khalil sustained critical injuries, while one of Chavan’s associates was injured and another managed to escape. Bystanders rushed the injured to the Government Medical College and Hospital (GMCH), where Chavan and Arbaaz were declared dead on arrival. Khalil was admitted in critical condition. In a further escalation, police said Chavan’s father and brother, upon learning that Khalil was being treated at the same hospital, allegedly entered the facility armed with knives. They located Khalil and fatally attacked him inside the hospital premises. Police teams reached both the crime scene and the hospital, recorded statements from witnesses and family members, and registered two separate FIRs against members of both gangs. Six individuals have been arrested, and efforts are ongoing to apprehend others involved in the case.



direction, and tacit approval of party leadership, reflecting a systemic disregard for the MCC. The Bengal BJP has urged the Election Commission to hold Banerjee guilty of violating the MCC, direct the immediate removal and censorship of the video content from all public platforms, issue a strict restraining order against Banerjee and other TMC functionaries to prevent further inflammatory speeches, and initiate appropriate criminal proceedings under applicable laws. The escalating war of words comes as West Bengal prepares for a high-stakes election. On March 15, the Election Commission of India announced that the state will vote in two phases on April 23 and April 29. The results are scheduled to be declared on May

quential cases of his career. Between 1983 and 1989, nearly 70,000 teachers across Maharashtra had been appointed on an ad hoc basis through local selection committees, bypassing the legally mandated selection board process. When the government formalised six regional selection boards in February 1989 and began replacing these teachers with newly selected candidates, thousands of livelihoods were at risk. Pakale began with a case involving 54 teachers, secured a stay, and soon found teachers from across the state knocking on his door. The Bombay High Court’s Division Bench eventually directed the government to issue a single general order rather than address each case individually. The resulting government resolution extended relief to all affected teachers – approximately 70,000 people.

Around the same time, he represented 153 teachers, mostly from SC, ST, and backward communities, who had been appointed under a government scheme to address a teacher shortage in Pune’s remote tribal and hilly areas. The scheme allowed 12th-pass candidates to teach while completing their DEd qualification within five years. Within months, all 153 were terminated. Pakale challenged the terminations before the Bombay High Court, which ruled in their favour, ordering reinstatement and allowing them time to complete their qualifications. Many of those teachers have since retired from long and stable careers. Perhaps his most dramatic case involved around 950 teacher candidates in Pune who had scored below the cutoff in a selection board examination and been denied appointments. Pakale filed petitions on their behalf in batches before Chief Justice T K Thakker and Justice Y V Chandrachud, securing orders in their favour – orders that the authorities refused to implement.

When Pakale filed a contempt petition, he received an anonymous phone call, wherein a person introduced himself as from one of the highest political offices, suggesting he was misleading poor people, as even the top-most authorities could not grant such appointments. His response was measured, “I am not giving the appointments. These are being granted under the orders of the High Court.” He stood firm. The matter went to the Supreme Court, where he prevailed, and all 950 candidates finally received their appointment orders. Behind this steady professional life stands his wife, Aruna, whom he married in 1985. “She is a homemaker and a constant source of support throughout my demanding career. My daughter, Gargi, is based in the United States, where she works in a finance company, and my son, Saurabh, is also a lawyer,” said Pakale.

EC suspends sector assistant in Bengal’s Panihati over video of ‘involvement in BJP campaign’



The Election Commission (EC) has suspended a sector assistant for the Panihati Assembly constituency following allegations that he helped prepare campaign materials for the BJP. The action against the official, Atanu Chakraborty, was triggered by a social media post featuring a video clip that purportedly showed him helping to prepare BJP campaign materials. The video was highlighted by TMC candidate Kunal Ghosh, who posted it online just hours before the EC’s intervention. Chakraborty is an assistant teacher at Choudhurypara Prathamik Vidyalaya.

According to a notification issued by the returning officer, Chakraborty’s alleged close association with a political party and his participation in campaigning con-

A ‘shadow developer’ and Rs 47 crore: The explosive probe shaking Himachal’s top bureaucracy

A 25-page investigative report by SDM Solan, Poonam Bansal, has triggered a political and administrative firestorm in Himachal Pradesh. The report alleges a massive circumvention of Section 118 of the HP Tenancy and Land Reforms Act, 1972, involving a multi-core gated housing project named Chester Hills. The controversy has escalated into a standoff between field officers and the state’s top brass, with allegations of corruption reaching the office of the Acting Chief Secretary. Registered with the HP Real Estate Regulatory Authority (RERA) in 2019, Chester Hills is a luxury housing brand located in Solan. While the project is promoted by NG Estate (partners Sudershan Singla and Megh Raj), the legal “promoter” on record is Hans Raj Thakur, a Himachali agriculturist from Mandi. The probe focuses specifically on Chester Hills-2 and Chester Hills-4, which comprise 228 flats. The core of the dispute is whether Thakur is a genuine developer or merely a “front” for non-agriculturist real estate players. The allegations: A “benami” arrangement?

In August 2025, local resident Rajiv Shandil and an Allottees Association filed complaints alleging Section 118 violations Using a local agriculturist to bypass the ban on non-locals buying agricultural land. He also alleged that non-agriculturist partners (Aditya Singla and Arpit Kumar Garg) exercise actual financial and administrative control over the project. Marketing and sale proceeds flow to non-agriculturist entities despite the land being in Thakur’s name, he claimed. The findings: ‘A structured device to evade the law’

SDM Poonam Bansal’s report, submitted on November 13, 2025, highlights several red flags discovered during field inspections and revenue audits: The shadow developer: While the title remains with Hans Raj Thakur, the report concludes that “substantive control, development, and marketing” are handled by the non-agriculturist firm Chester Hills. Disproportionate assets: Between 2015 and 2023, Thakur and his family acquired 275 bighas of prime land in Solan and Kasauli. The project value is estimated at Rs 47.09 crore, a figure the SDM noted is wildly inconsistent with Thakur’s modest income tax returns (ITRs). Cancellation tactic: A Joint Development Agreement (JDA) between the parties was abruptly cancelled in January 2025, replaced by a General Power of Attorney (GPA). The SDM termed this a “colourable device” intended to mask the illegal transfer of proprietary rights.

Maharashtra’s new app can spot suspicious boats in seconds



Police, Navy and IIT Madras deploy Marine Domain Awareness system to track 32,000 vessels and plug surveillance gaps along the 877-km coastline

In a push to strengthen coastal security, the Maharashtra Police, in collaboration with the Indian Navy and the Indian Institute of Technology Madras, have rolled out a mobile application, Marine Domain Awareness (MDA) to track suspicious vessels along the state’s coastline from Palghar to Sindhudurg.

The initiative aims to plug critical gaps in the existing surveillance system, which relies heavily on the Automatic Identification System (AIS). While AIS effectively tracks large commercial ships, it struggles to monitor smaller vessels such as fishing and passenger boats that often operate without identification systems. The MDA application, developed by a professor at IIT Madras, seeks

stitute a “serious violation” of the Representation of the People Act 1951. Authorities said such actions represent a gross dereliction of duty and compromise the impartiality required of election personnel. Besides being immediately relieved of his responsibilities as a sector assistant, Chakraborty has been suspended and served a show-cause notice, requiring him to explain within 24 hours why further penal action should not be initiated against him. During the suspension period, he is prohibited from leaving his headquarters without prior permission and must remain available for the ongoing inquiry.

“This action has been taken in the interest of maintaining the integrity, neutrality, and transparency of the electoral process and to ensure the conduct of free and fair elections,” the notification stated. The Panihati constituency has emerged as a key battleground in the 2026 West Bengal elections, primarily due to the BJP’s decision to field the mother of the victim of the RG Kar Medical College rape and murder. She has framed her campaign as a quest for justice for her daughter, vowing to challenge the ruling TMC on its record regarding institutional accountability and the handling of the 2024 protests over the incident. The TMC has nominated Tirthankar Ghosh, son of the outgoing MLA and veteran leader Nirmal Ghosh, aiming to retain its stronghold. The CPM has fielded Kalatan Dasgupta, seeking to reclaim the Left’s traditional influence in this industrial belt.



Financial links: The probe found that Sudershan Singla (NG Estate) acted as a guarantor for an Rs 8 crore loan taken by Thakur in 2017, further proving a deep financial nexus. Under Section 118, only “Himachali agriculturists” can own agricultural land in the state. Non-agriculturists require stringent government permission for specific projects. The SDM’s report argues that by using Thakur as a “benami” owner, the developers bypassed the need for these state-level clearances. The report’s recommendations, which include the state taking over (vesting) the land and referring the case to the Income Tax Department and enforcement authorities, were met with immediate resistance from the top.

Acting Chief Secretary Sanjay Gupta issued a letter setting aside the SDM’s recommendations. He termed the probe “violative of the law” and argued that acting on it would “hurt the interests of (local) agriculturists” who had rightfully taken bank loans. On March 24, 2026, Advocate Vinay Sharma filed a police complaint against Gupta, alleging he was shielding the developers and preventing the Solan Deputy Commissioner from filing an FIR. Gupta has denied the allegations, telling The Indian Express that he was not the RERA Chairman at the time the permissions were granted. He claims he is the victim of a “bureaucratic lobby” trying to derail his service extension by dragging his name into the scandal. The matter has now turned into a major political tool. BJP and CPI(M) MLAs have demanded a Special Investigation Team (SIT) and the intervention of Chief Minister Sukhu. Meanwhile, the original complainants have reportedly withdrawn their pleas, adding another layer of mystery to the ongoing investigation into one of Himachal’s largest land-use scandals.

to address this gap. With nearly 32,000 boats including around 28,000 fishing vessels and 4,000 passenger boats operating along Maharashtra’s 877-km coastline, authorities have long faced challenges in distinguishing between Indian and potentially suspicious vessels.

Under the new system, mobile phones equipped with the MDA application will be distributed to fishermen and passenger boat operators for onboard use. During its pilot phase, the app was tested on 100 fishing boats over a month within Indian waters and was found to be highly effective in tracking movement patterns. Vessel activity will be monitored through a central control room at the Mahim Sagari Police Station, with additional control rooms planned across seven coastal districts to enable real-time monitoring and faster emergency response.

Inspector General of Police Rajiv Jain, heading Maharashtra’s coastal security, said, “The system would significantly enhance surveillance and response capabilities.” The project has proven successful during trials, and work is underway to expand server capacity,” Jain said, adding that discussions are ongoing with the Department of Telecommunications (DoT) to strengthen connectivity between vessels and control rooms. More coastal towers are being installed to improve network coverage at sea. Once fully implemented, all registered Indian vessels will transmit identifiable “green” signals to control rooms, while any unidentified or suspicious vessel entering Indian waters will trigger a “red” alert for interception. Speed boats from the coastal police, Indian Coast Guard and Indian Navy will be strategically deployed for patrol and rapid response. Authorities say the MDA-Maharashtra app could become a model for coastal security nationwide. Maharashtra’s coastline, stretching from Palghar to Sindhudurg, remains strategically significant, housing key maritime hubs such as Mumbai Port and Jawaharlal Nehru Port Trust, along with several minor ports, offshore installations and petrochemical facilities. Coastal security has been a top priority since the 2008 Mumbai attacks, when terrorist Ajmal Kasab and his accomplices entered the city by sea using a small boat.

Donald Trump set to feature on gold coin to celebrate 250 years of U.S. Independence



U.S. President Donald Trump is all set to feature on a gold coin to commemorate the nation's 250th anniversary, amid questions over the legality of the move.The 24-karat gold coin, portraying Mr. Trump leaning on the Resolute desk with clenched fists, will be only the second time a living President has featured on a coin.Earlier, Calvin Coolidge, the 30th U.S. President had featured on a commemorative coin alongside George Washington that were minted in 1926 to celebrate 150 years of the U.S. Independence.The U.S. Commission on Fine Arts, at its meeting on March 19, approved the design of the commemorative gold coin, which will be minted once the final dimensions are decided."As we approach our 250th

birthday, we are thrilled to prepare coins that represent the enduring spirit of our country and democracy, and there is no profile more emblematic for the front of such coins than that of our serving President, Donald J. Trump," U.S. Treasurer Brandon Beach said in a statement to FOX Business.U.S. Federal law states that no living president can appear on US currency.However, Mr. Beach said the proposed commemorative coin would be separate from circulating currency and the Treasury Secretary has sole discretion over the final design selection and authorizing its minting.Democrats have termed the Mr. Trump-themed gold coin embarrassing and against the nation's values."Monarchs and dictators put their faces on coins, not leaders of a democracy," Sen. Jeff Merkley (D-Oregon) was quoted by The Washington Post.The coin is expected to join a slate of special-edition currencies and medals the treasury is releasing to celebrate the 250th anniversary of U.S. Independence.Critics see the commemorative coin as the latest effort by Mr. Trump to leave his mark on the Washington landscape. Earlier, the Kennedy Centre was renamed as the Trump-Kennedy Centre for Performing Arts and the US Institute of Peace building had the name of the President added to it.Mr. Trump has also sought to remake White House grounds, proposing a visitor screening center and demolishing the White House's East Wing to build his long-desired ballroom.

ICE officers soon will help with airport security unless Democrats end shutdown, Trump says

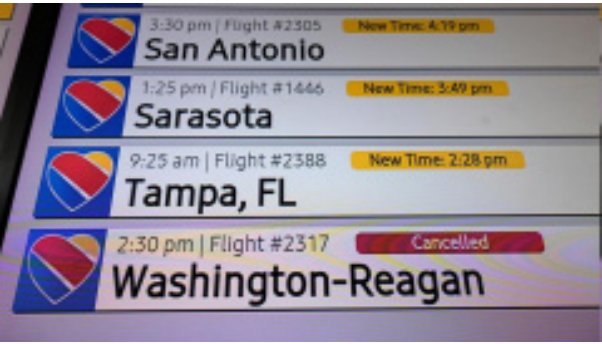
U.S. President Donald Trump said on Saturday he will order federal immigration officers to take a role in airport security starting Monday unless Democrats agree on a bill to fund the Department of Homeland Security.In a series of social media posts, Mr. Trump said he was making plans to put officers from U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement in airports if the congressional standoff continues. After the Senate failed to find a resolution at a rare weekend session, Trump appeared resolute in his plan: "ICE is ready to go on Monday," he said.He announced a partial shutdown contributes to long lines to pass through screening at some of the nation's largest airports.The Republican president said ICE agents would bring the administration's immigration crackdown into the nation's airports, promising to arrest "all Illegal Immigrants."“I look forward to moving ICE in on Monday, and have already told them to, 'GET READY.' NO MORE WAITING, NO MORE GAMES!" Mr. Trump wrote while spending the weekend in Florida.

The move appears to be a pointed effort to expand the type of immigration enforcement that has become a sticking point in Congress. Democrats pledged to oppose funding for DHS unless changes were made in the wake of a crackdown in Minnesota that led to the fatal shootings of two protesters. Democrats are asking for better identification for federal law enforcement officers, a new code of conduct for those agencies and more use of judicial warrants, among other measures.The Minnesota operation was tied in part to allegations of fraud involving Somali residents. On Saturday (March 21, 2026), Trump said ICE officers sent to airports would focus on arresting immigrants from Somalia who are in the United States illegally. Repeating his criticism on Somalis, he said they "totally destroyed" Minnesota."If the Democrats do not allow for Just and Proper Security at our Airports, and elsewhere throughout our Country, ICE will do the job far better than ever done before," Trump said.Trump's posts did not offer detail on how ICE would take a role in airport security and what it meant for the Transportation



Security Administration, which screens passengers and luggage for hazardous items.The vast majority of TSA employees are considered essential and continue to work during the funding lapse, but they are doing so without pay. Call-out rates have started to increase at some airports, and DHS said at least 376 have quit since the partial shutdown began Feb. 14.On Saturday, the Senate rejected a motion by Democrats to take up legislation to reopen TSA and pay workers who are now going without paychecks. Republicans argue that they need to fund all parts of the DHS, not just certain ones. A bill to fund the Cabinet department failed to advance in the Senate on Friday.There were signs of progress, though, with the restarting in recent days of stalled talks between Democrats and the White House. On Saturday, Republican and Democratic senators were set to meet for a third consecutive day with White House officials behind closed doors as Senate Democratic leader Chuck Schumer of New York spoke of "productive conversations."Senate Majority Leader John Thune, R-S.D., urged the bipartisan group to act quickly. He has said repeatedly that Democrats and the White House need to find compromise as lines at airports have grown."If that group that's meeting can't come up with a solution really quickly, things are going to get worse and worse," Mr. Thune said Saturday.

U.S. says airport delays will worsen as shutdown continues



U.S. Transportation Secretary Sean Duffy said he is worried disruptions at major airports will increase as a partial government shutdown continues with no end in sight.Airlines and travel groups fear absences among the 50,000 Transportation Security Administration airport security officers could increase again this weekend. Long lines were seen at major airports on Friday, including in Atlanta and Houston, with spring break travel in full swing."If a deal isn't cut, you're going to see what's happening today look like child's play," Mr. Duffy told CNN. He warned earlier this week that small airports could shut down soon if staffing issues worsened.The shutdown entered its 35th day on Friday and TSA officers

are not getting paid. They are set to miss a second full paycheck on March 27, Duffy noted."This situation is placing increasing strain on the frontline workforce responsible for protecting millions of travellers," said the U.S. Travel Association, airlines, hotel chains and other companies in a joint letter.TSA absences fell slightly on Thursday to 9.8% nationwide from 10.2% Wednesday but were higher at some major airports, including 29% at New York's JFK, 27% at New Orleans, 23% at Baltimore-Washington, 32% at Atlanta and over 30% at both Houston airports, according to the Department of Homeland Security.

Last weekend, absences jumped to 10% after previously averaging around 6% during the shutdown, causing long lines at airports in Houston and New Orleans.Senators trying to reach a dealSenate Republicans and Democrats on Friday were in talks to try to reach a deal to fund the TSA, Senator Majority Leader John Thune said. DHS said 366 TSA officers have left their jobs during the shutdown. Last fall, a 43-day government shutdown led to widespread flight disruptions and the FAA ordered a 10% flight cut at major airports.Thistime, DHS funding lapsed on February 13 after Congress failed to reach a deal on immigration enforcement reforms demanded by Democrats.

Britain sees no evidence that Iran is targeting Europe with missiles

On (2026), the Israel Defence Forces posted on social media that Iran has missiles "that can reach London, Paris or Berlin". "There is no assessment to substantiate what's being said," British Housing Secretary Reed told the BBC."I'm not aware of any assessment at all that they are even trying to target Europe, let alone that they could if they tried."In a separate interview with Sky News, Mr. Reed said that U.S. President Trump spoke for himself when he threatened to "obliterate" Iran's power plants if Tehran did not fully reopen the Strait of Hormuz within 48 hours.Asked to define Britain's position on Mr. Trump's deadline, Mr. Reed said: "The U.S. president is perfectly capable of speaking for himself and defending what it is that he's saying." "We're not going to be dragged into the war, but we will protect our own interests in the region. We will work with our allies to de-escalate the situation."Iran missiles targeting Diego Garcia base fell short, intercepted: ReedMr. Reed

on Sunday (March 22, 2026) said one missile launched by Iran targeting a joint U.K.-U.S. military base in the Indian Ocean "fell short" while another missile was "intercepted". "Our assessment is that the Iranians certainly targeted Diego Garcia," a military base some 4,000 km (2,500 miles) away from Iran, Mr. Reed told the BBC."As we understand it, one missile fell short, failed, the other was intercepted and prevented," said the housing minister, who was representing the government on the Sunday morning shows."But I don't think it's a surprise this has happened, Iran has been recklessly firing missiles around the region," he added.Diego Garcia, part of the Chagos Islands archipelago, is one of two bases which the U.K. has allowed the United States to use for what the British government insists are "defensive operations" in its war against Iran.The Wall Street Journal first reported on Friday (March 20, 2026) that Iran had aimed two ballistic missiles at the base, which is a key hub for Washington's Asia operations, including the U.S. bombing campaigns

Safety of Indians living in UAE is a 'priority': Envoy



The UAE has assured India that the safety of Indians living in the Gulf country is its "priority", stressing that they are protected and treated like family, especially amid the ongoing conflict in West Asia which has seen the emirate facing attacks from Iran.UAE Ambassador to India Abdunnasser Alshaali also hailed India's move to co-sponsor a UN resolution that condemned Iran's attacks against Gulf countries, saying it was a statement of principle from a country that the UAE considers a strategic partner and friend, at a moment when it mattered most.

"The safety of Indian nationals in the UAE is a priority. They are protected and are treated as family, including the 200 nationalities living in the country in peace and harmony," Mr. Alshaali told PTI Videos.He said that UAE President Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan visited five injured civilians in the hospital: two Emiratis, one Indian, one Sudanese and one Iranian. He said: "They are all our responsibility." "Four million Indians live in the UAE; they are not a statistic. They are the son from Kerala sending money home each month so his mother can pay her medical bills, the engineer from Hyderabad building infrastructure that will stand for a century, the teacher from Tamil Nadu shaping the futures of Emirati children," he said.In 2024, the UAE was the second-largest source of remittances to India, totalling \$21.6 billion. "Those four million Indians represent families in every state of India whose livelihoods depend on a stable and secure UAE. Their safety is a personal responsibility that this country's leadership carries every day," he said. "What I would say to Indian families is this: the UAE's commitment to protecting the people who have built their lives here is absolute."On Iranian attacks, Mr. Alshaali said the UAE's integrated air defence systems have intercepted a vast majority of incoming threats and the country "remains safe, secure, and well-protected".

He said that Prime Minister Narendra Modi called the UAE President before any resolution was drafted, before any multilateral statement and before any formal diplomatic process had begun."That call was received as an act of brotherhood. India then co-sponsored UN Security Council Resolution 2817 -- a statement of principle from a country that the UAE considers a strategic partner and friend, at a moment it mattered most. The

Netanyahu visits site of Iranian missile attack, claims U.S.-Israel fighting for entire world

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said the recent missile attacks on Diego Garcia shows that Iran has the capacity to reach deep into Europe and poses danger to the entire world.Mr. Netanyahu was visiting the southern Israeli city of Arad which faced Iranian missile strikes on Saturday (March 21, 2026) evening when he also said his country and the U.S. are fighting together on behalf of everyone.

"If you want proof that Iran endangers the entire world, the last 48 hours have given it. In the last 48 hours, Iran targeted a civilian area. They're using that as a mass murder weapon." Luckily, no one was killed, but that's due to luck, not their intention. Their intention is to murder civilians," Mr. Netanyahu said.Pointing out that Iran fired an intercontinental ballistic missile on Diego Garcia, Mr. Netanyahu said, "That's 4,000 kilometres. I've been warning all the time. They now have the capacity to reach deep into Europe. They already have fired on European countries -- Cyprus. They are putting everyone in their sights." For the past two decades, Israel has been referring to the Iranian ballistic missile programme, arguing that such weapons with nuclear capabilities would pose a grave threat not only to itself but also to Europe.

Iran fired missiles at the UK-U.S. air base on the island of Diego Garcia in the Indian Ocean on Saturday (March 21, 2026).The Israeli Prime Minister also drew attention to the Iran's attack on Jerusalem right next to the holy sites of the three monotheistic faiths, the Western Wall, the Church of the Holy Sepulchre and the Al Aqsa Mosque and said, "By dint of a miracle, again, no one was hurt." "The three sites were nevertheless the targets," he said.A fragment from a ballistic missile fired by Iran fell quite close to the Al Aqsa mosque and the Western Wall on Friday (March 20, 2026).It was a second such attack during the recent escalation when the old city of Jerusalem, home to the three holy sites of the three faiths, was impacted.

In an earlier attack, debris from the intercepted missile fell quite close to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, leaving marks of destruction on some nearby buildings.Mr. Netanyahu also said Iran is stopping the

UAE will remember who stood with us, India was among those who stood with us first," he said.The UN Security Council Resolution 2817, co-sponsored by India, sent a "clear and unified message that the international community will not tolerate attacks on our sovereignty or the deliberate targeting of civilians and critical infrastructure", he said.When asked about the damage inflicted by Iran Alshaali said Tehran launched a "sustained, unprovoked and aggressive assault" against the Gulf countries."As of March 20, the UAE alone has faced 338 ballistic missiles, 15 cruise missiles, and more than 1,740 drones more than all other targeted countries combined," he said, adding that Iranian munitions have struck residential neighbourhoods, commercial districts and civilian infrastructure.

Giving details of the casualties, he said six persons have been killed and 158 injured."These are not military casualties — these are civilians. The UAE condemns Iran's egregious aggression in the strongest possible terms," he said.Mr. Alshaali said the UAE has not stopped functioning for a single day. "Schools remain open, hospitals are operating, and supply chains are intact. More than 10 million citizens, residents, and visitors have continued their daily lives despite Iran's actions," he said.The Envoy said the UAE has absorbed more attacks than every other targeted country combined.He recalled that the GCC states gave Iran assurances that their bases and airspace would not be used to launch attacks against it."Those assurances were offered in good faith. They were not reciprocated. Iran's aggression has been directed not at the states that declared war on it, but at its neighbours — the very countries that worked hardest to prevent this escalation," he said.He categorically rejected any attempt to rationalise the attacks or provide an excuse for them. "An unprovoked attack on a neighbour that exhausted every diplomatic avenue to prevent escalation requires condemnation, not justification," he said.The diplomat said the UAE has responded with "strategic clarity and restraint", defending its territory with professionalism. However, the "restraint remains a choice", he added."The UAE retains its full and legitimate right under Article 51 of the UN Charter to deter aggression. We remain resilient in the face of any threat and are fully capable of safeguarding our sovereignty, stability, and security. Any aggression will not go unanswered, and the UAE stands fully prepared to address such threats," he asserted.When asked if there were any diplomatic solutions to the situation, he said that no one can responsibly put a date on when this will end."This war was avoidable. The UAE and GCC states engaged extensively, both publicly and privately, to prevent exactly this outcome. The UAE has consistently held that military solutions do not resolve the underlying issues in this region. The path forward requires an immediate and unconditional cessation of attacks," he added.



maritime international route, energy route and "trying to blackmail the entire world." "What more proof do you need that this regime that threatens the entire world has to be stopped? Israel and the United States are working together for the entire world," he claimed.Calling upon the international community to come together in the fight against Iran, the Israeli leader said he is happy to see some of them beginning to move in that direction, but claimed that more is needed."[U.S.] President Trump's call to have the international community confront this terrorist, fanatic regime of zealots, that is a call not only for the security of America and the security of Israel, it's for the security of the entire world. And it's time for them to act," he asserted.Responding to questions from reporters, Mr. Netanyahu said that Israel is responding to these attacks "with great force" but not targeting Iranian civilians."We've defined two clear goals. One is to completely break their nuclear programme, their missile programme and their capacity to produce the components for both of these programmes. We're well on our way in achieving it," the Israeli premier claimed."We've also set a goal of creating conditions for the Iranian people to overthrow this tyranny that has tormented them and made life miserable, and is making life miserable for the entire world. And I hope we achieve that too," he reiterated.The missile strike in Arad Saturday (March 21, 2026) evening left 115 people injured with nine of them in serious condition, rescue services said.

Saudi Arabia reports three ballistic missiles targeted Riyadh area

Saudi Arabia's Ministry of Defence said on Sunday (March 22, 2026) three ballistic missiles were detected around the capital, as the kingdom and its Gulf neighbours face Iranian strikes in retaliation for U.S.-Israeli attacks.

"One missile was intercepted, while the other two fell in an uninhabited area," a spokesperson for the Ministry posted on social media.Early Sunday (March 22, 20276) morning, the Saudi Civil Defence issued a warning, before cancelling it seven minutes later after determining the danger had passed.According to the Defence Ministry, five drones were also intercepted since midnight. Iran has kept up retaliatory attacks on Saudi Arabia and nearby nations in response to U.S.-Israeli strikes that sparked the regional war late last month.The attacks on the oil-rich nations, some of which have targeted energy facilities, have exacerbated concerns of a global energy supply shock.



"One missile was intercepted, while the other two fell in an uninhabited area," a spokesperson for the Ministry posted on social media

EYE SECRETS Editorial

Modi’s out-reach to youth

Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s focus on the youth in his Independence Day address reflects the flavour of the season. It acknowledges the growing restlessness of Gen Z, but it remains to be seen whether the government will walk the talk on the big promises made from the ramparts of the Red Fort. Symbolic gestures and grand announcements would mean nothing if not followed by concrete, measurable action plans. The long-pending reforms in the education sector will help the youth prepare for jobs in emerging technology and innovation economies. Modi’s outreach to the youth included a promise to offer free online coaching for competitive exams and AI skilling programmes in an attempt to address post-globalisation anxieties. The big shift in the Prime Minister’s political messaging came days after Gen Z-led protests over exam paper leaks, and unemployment forced the resignation of Dharmendra Pradhan as Education Minister. Addressing the challenges facing the youth, from employment worries to the incursion of artificial intelligence in everyday life, Modi promised that more than one crore youth would be provided AI skills in a “mission mode” drive over the coming year and the country’s digital public infrastructure would be used to provide free online coaching to students wishing to take various competitive exams. Also, there will be a nationwide sports talent hunt among children between five and 15 years of age ahead of the 2036 Olympic Games. The problem is that these themes have appeared repeatedly in election manifestos, government budgets and policy promises across states.

Employment, education infrastructure, online learning and, increasingly, AI have become recurring features of political messaging. The real question is not what is being promised, but how much of it is actually being implemented. The larger question is whether youth discontent will be viewed merely as an issue of jobs, education and technology, or whether the government is willing to understand it as a deeper demand for accountability and responsiveness. The Mood of the Nation tracker has been highlighting that inflation and unemployment are major concerns and need to be resolved. The youth would account for a third of voters in the 2029 general elections. Since they are bound to influence the outcome of the polls, the issues that concern them—education reforms being one of them—must be addressed on a mission mode. The biggest structural weakness of India’s education system begins much before competitive examinations. It has traditionally rewarded memorisation rather than understanding; marks rather than competence; examination performance rather than creativity; conformity rather than questioning; coaching rather than independent learning. The irony is that India can produce millions of students who obtain degrees while many do not acquire adequate communication, quantitative reasoning, problem-solving, digital or workplace skills. The multi-crore coaching industry has become a parallel education system and is particularly powerful because the formal education system does not adequately prepare students for high-stakes examinations.

Karnataka Congress leader shot dead in public; 3 held for ‘contract killing’

A Karnataka Congress leader, David D’Souza, was murdered at point-blank range in Udupi district on Friday afternoon in what police suspect was a contract killing linked to a financial dispute over a construction project. Three men allegedly involved in the murder have been arrested, the police said, identifying them as Raju, 42, from Uttar Pradesh, Ajay Rastogi alias Anmol, 23, from Uttarakhand, and Jiyahul Vazool Shek alias Deepak, 38, from Bihar.

D’Souza, 55, was shot dead around 3.45 pm near the St Xavier Church complex in Mudarangadi in Kapu taluk. According to the police, he had returned to his Thar after visiting his office at the complex when two unidentified men arrived on a motorcycle. One of them allegedly fired at his head before fleeing. The incident was caught on CCTV.

D’Souza was taken to Adarsh Hospital in Udupi, where doctors declared him dead. A case was registered at Shirva police station on charges of murder and under the Arms Act. D’Souza was a former president of the Mudarangadi Gram Panchayat and a civil contractor. He had served multiple terms as panchayat president and also ran businesses, including a local bar and a public transport unit. Karnataka Congress leader murder Udupi Raju from Uttar Pradesh, Ajay Rastogi from Uttarakhand and Jiyahul Vazool Shek from Bihar have been arrested for their alleged role in Udupi Congress leader David D’Souza’s murder.

Policeman, accused hurt in shootout

“During the investigation, we received information that three men allegedly involved in the shooting were travelling by bus towards Bhatkal. A police team intercepted the bus at Ottinane in Byndoor,” a senior police official said. According to police, the three men got off the bus and attempted to flee. During the chase, one of the accused, Raju, allegedly pushed Kapu Police Sub-Inspector Tejaswi and fired at the officer with a pistol before attempting to escape.

The police said they fired at Raju’s leg in self-defence and subsequently caught him along with the pistol. Tejaswi sustained injuries and is undergoing treatment at Udupi District Hospital. Raju is also admitted to the hospital. “A separate case has been registered against Raju for allegedly opening fire at the officer at Byndoor police station,” the senior police officer added. The two other accused were arrested separately. While Ajay was caught in Kumta, Shek was arrested in Bhatkal, with assistance from the local police.

What is Saoji cuisine, the Nagpur legacy back in focus after FDA chief’s remark?



Saoji food Maharashtra FDA commissioner Maharashtra FDA Commissioner Tukaram Mundhe recently told an audience in Amravati that he would fall sick for a month if he ate Saoji mutton. Saoji cuisine, once the food of a weaving community before becoming a working-class meal and then the pride of the Saoji community and the city of Nagpur, has come under the spotlight after Maharashtra Food and Drug Administration (FDA) Commissioner Tukaram Mundhe told an audience in Amravati, “If I ate that, I would fall sick for a month”—referring to Saoji mutton. Although Nagpur and Saoji cuisine are now synonymous, the fiery Saoji masala and cuisine came from the Halba Koshti community. Originally from Madhya Pradesh, the community, known for its weaving skills, migrated to Nagpur in the late 19th century to work in Empress Mills and other textile industries being set up there. But when the handloom industry declined, the community had to find new ways to sustain itself. The women turned to their culinary heritage, creating Saoji masala, made by blending 32 spices with jute or linseed oil. It became the soul of Saoji food, giving it its signature heat, depth, and boldness.

The flavourful, spicy food once prepared only within the community was soon being sold to the city’s working class as an affordable meal option for mill workers and labourers. Over time, Saoji bhojanalayas emerged, focusing purely on taste rather than presentation. Most offered simple arrangements, often limited to wooden benches and metal plates, with an emphasis on serving hot and freshly prepared meals. The cuisine eventually became a defining part of Nagpur’s food culture. The soul of the cuisine: A 32-spice blend The soul of the cuisine lies in its masala—a blend of 32 spices, slow-cooked using either linseed or jute oil. The cooking process involves

the slow roasting of spices, allowing them to release their oils and intensify the overall flavour. The choice of oil plays a significant role in the overall taste and texture of the dishes, giving them a distinct character that sets them apart from other regional cuisines. “Some of the spices used in this blend include peppercorns, star anise, coriander, cardamom, coconut, poppy seeds, plenty of red chillies, cloves, bay leaf and nutmeg. In addition, there are a few whole spices that are also pounded and added to the dish,” said Shilpi Gulati, a Punjabi who grew up in Nagpur and learnt this cuisine from her friends who hail from the Saoji community. She later started House of Saoji, a cloud kitchen, in Pune in 2021. “The coconut and other spices are roasted until they turn almost black, which adds a dark tone. It is a very different kala masala, used widely in Vidarbha,” she explained. The meat, typically goat, is simmered in the spice blend for hours until it absorbs the essence of the masala, resulting in a dish that is rich, aromatic, and deeply satisfying. For those unfamiliar with Saoji food, the first taste can be overwhelming. The heat from the chillies, combined with the warmth of other spices, creates an experience that is intense yet addictive.

The food is unapologetically spicy and oily. Saoji curries, Gulati said, have a medium-thin body, are deep reddish-black in colour, and have a visible layer of oil on top—traditionally seen as a mark of a “proper” Saoji preparation. “It is very fiery or hot because it is very hot in Nagpur and the cuisine helps people regulate the temperature,” she added. The food was originally cooked in earthen pots, and the community mostly cooked mutton. Over the years, chicken versions emerged, and today some restaurants even make Saoji paneer and jackfruit dishes. But the cuisine remains predominantly non-vegetarian. The cuisine has also outgrown its bhojnalaya origins—chefs across Mumbai and Pune are now recreating it for a wider audience, and diners from outside Maharashtra travel to Nagpur specifically to eat it. Back in the Nagpur/Vidarbha region, people love Saoji cuisine. Our founder Nitin Dhankute thought of bringing this food in a more family-style restaurant format to Mumbai. We opened our first outlet in Juhu to a great reception—so many cricketers and Marathi actors came and liked our food. A lot of our customers there came from Thane, so we opened another branch here,” said Mohit Fune, 31, one of the owners of Orange City Saoji, adding, “If you see online, there are a few people who have written bad reviews saying our food is spicy, but that’s the nature of this cuisine. It won’t remain Saoji if we change the spice levels.”

Gurgaon court slams police, grants bail to female ex-manager accused of Rs 32-lakh fraud



court The Gurgaon court pointed out that since sales employees routinely handle client transactions on behalf of the company, CCTV footage of cash exchange alone cannot constitute incriminating evidence of fraud. A Gurgaon court on Monday pulled up a police officer investigating a financial fraud case against a former female sales manager of a hospitality firm in the city for allegedly acting as the “mouthpiece” of the company and ignoring major purported financial irregularities. The court granted interim anticipatory bail to the former hospitality sales manager accused of misappropriating Rs 32.50 lakh. While taking note of the accused woman’s grievances regarding workplace safety and salary cuts, Additional Sessions Judge Dr Gagan Geet Kaur observed that the police allegedly failed to collect independent documentary evidence and turned a blind eye to large cash transactions allegedly permitted by the company in potential violation of tax laws.

The Kherki Daula police on June 15 booked Richa Singh, who joined as sales manager of Karma Lakelands, Sector 80, in September 2024, for criminal breach of trust by an employee, carrying penalties for dishonest misappropriation of property entrusted to them. The court pointed out that since sales employees routinely handle client transactions on behalf of the company, CCTV footage of cash exchange alone cannot constitute incriminating evidence of fraud without documentary proof of the exact amount received or misappropriated. Sessions Judge Kaur noted that the prosecution’s case relied almost entirely on internal company reconciliations and a single CCTV footage clip showing cash being handed over. Accusation against former employee Singh was entrusted with negotiating client bookings and handling event receivables. The management alleged that between October 2025 and March 2026, Singh illegally collected large cash payments from clients, pocketed the funds, and manipulated internal accounts software to cover up the mis-

ing money. The firm claimed the matter came to light in March when a client, Mukesh Kumar, approached them regarding his daughter’s wedding scheduled for March 11. Although his booking was missing from the internal system, as per the complaint, Kumar revealed he had paid Rs 7.50 lakh in cash directly to Singh in January, alongside an earlier cash payment of Rs 10 lakh in November 2025. The company alleged that Singh adjusted funds between different client accounts — including payments from other clients — to conceal a total fraud amounting to Rs 32.50 lakh before erasing her computer data and quitting her job.

In her anticipatory bail application, Singh denied all charges, maintaining that she was falsely implicated as a retaliatory measure. Her counsel highlighted that between October 2025 and January 2026, Singh had repeatedly raised serious written concerns with company executives regarding the safety and security of female staff on duty. Rather than addressing her safety concerns, the management arbitrarily reduced her salary, leading to a strained employer-employee relationship. How job-related dispute turns into criminal case The former female manager argued that the First Information Report (FIR) was lodged months after she stopped attending work to convert a purely employment-related dispute into a criminal prosecution. It was further pointed out that all accounting records, computers, and files remained in the company’s sole custody, and no personal cash receipts signed by Singh were produced. The judge took strong exception to the conduct of the investigating officer, an assistant sub-inspector, noting that he had failed to examine company accounting records or check whether the firm had authorised high-value cash transactions. “The IO failed to reply under what law the company can give approval for receiving an amount more than Rs 2 lakh in cash... but IO is totally silent to assist the court on this point, which raises doubt of evasion of tax i.e., income tax, GST, etc. IO seems to be mouthpiece of the complainant company,” the court remarked. Highlighting the timeline of events, the court observed that Singh had e-mailed the management raising concerns about the safety of female staff on October 15, 2025. Despite company assurances, her salary was subsequently cut, leading to harassment and her eventual departure from the workplace in January 2026. Furthermore, despite allegedly discovering the cash transactions on March 5, 2026, the company delayed filing a formal complaint until June 12, 2026, the court observed. Judge Kaur held that the complaint made by the woman employee of the hospitality firm to her superiors raising safety and security issues of female staff while on duty is a matter of serious concern.

Indian stock markets post weekly gains as crude prices ease

Mumbai: The Indian equity benchmarks posted gains for the second consecutive week, over sharp corrections in crude oil prices and strong Q1 FY27 earnings results. Nifty jumped 0.77 per cent during the week and shed 0.27 per cent on the last trading day this week to reach 24,570. At close, Sensex was down 455 points, or 0.58 per cent, at 78,499. It added 0.52 per cent during the week. Small-cap stocks continued to outperform, supported by strong earnings traction and stock-specific catalysts, while PSU banks led sectoral gains on improving fundamentals.

Metals benefited from a stronger growth outlook and resilient domestic demand, while automobiles gained momentum on expectations of healthy festive-season demand, said market watchers. The week started on a volatile note triggered by the rollout of the new F&O Closing Auction Session (CAS), but markets regained stability as

participants adapted to the revised framework, an analyst said.

“Sentiment improved meaningfully with the sharp decline in crude oil prices, which helped strengthen the macroeconomic outlook and supported expectations of easing inflationary pressures,” he added. Globally, softer labour market indicators reduced the likelihood of a near-term Fed rate hike, leading to a moderation in US bond yields and a weaker dollar. This, coupled with sustained safe-haven demand ahead of key US economic data releases, provided additional support to gold prices.

On the domestic front, the RBI reinforced confidence by maintaining its policy stance, while modestly upgrading its growth outlook and lowering inflation projections. The ongoing Q1 FY27 earnings season has further strengthened investor confidence, with results broadly exceeding expectations and driving broad-based buying interest.

Civic volunteer arrested for rape in Bengal’s Jalpaiguri, 2 others absconding



Handcuffs The sources added that the three accused had been involved in several criminal acts before, but no one filed cases against them owing to the nature of their jobs. The West Bengal Police Thursday arrested a civic volunteer on charges of raping a woman in Jalpaiguri district.

The arrestee, identified as Bulbul Alam, 30, is said to have raped the woman over three days. Two other civic volunteers have also been accused of the crime and are currently absconding. All three are posted at the same police station in Jalpaiguri. The gang rape survivor is a resident of the neighbouring Cooch Behar district. Speaking about the incident, a senior police officer in Jalpaiguri said, “Since the complaint has not been filed here, the investigation is being conducted by the Cooch Behar police. We joined the operation to nab the accused after the Cooch Behar police sought our help.” According to police sources, the three civic volunteers allegedly lured the young woman to Jalpaiguri district last week, put her up in a rented accommodation, and raped her on several occasions. The sources added that the three accused had been involved in several criminal acts before, but no one filed cases against them owing to the nature of their jobs. After this complaint was filed, All India Trinamool Congress took to X and posted, “Another day, another horrific incident under the @BJP4Bengal government... a woman was allegedly raped repeatedly by three civic volunteers – an incident that has once again raised serious questions about women’s safety across the state. What happened to all the tall promises made by BJP leaders? Will the usual voices of outrage speak up now? Or has selective outrage always been driven by political convenience rather than justice?”

Delhi man stages daughter’s murder as suicide, but a photograph gives him away



The photographs looked almost ordinary — a father and daughter standing together in the waters of the Chambal river near Basoni in Agra, around 220 km away from Delhi. They were anything but.

Police said the images were taken moments before the 18-year-old woman, a resident of Delhi, was allegedly drowned by her father and brother-in-law on July 30, allegedly driven by fears of the social stigma they would face when people came to know that the woman, unmarried, was pregnant. They hoped the photographs would help pass off her death as suicide. Instead, the photographs led to their arrest on August 2. While the body of the victim, who the police said was around four months pregnant, is yet to be recovered, divers continue the search in the river. The incident came to light when a neighbour of the family, suspicious of the father’s account after he returned from Agra on July 31, made a PCR call, said DCP (South) Anant Mittal. She was the middle child among three siblings. Police said her mother died of cancer eight years ago. She lived with her father, a confectioner, in a 25-gaj house in South Delhi. Her elder sister lived in the same locality with her husband, who worked at a local sweet shop. Police said the father and the son-in-law took the woman to their village in Agra on July 28 on the pretext of her undergoing an abortion. They stayed at a relative’s house for two days before taking her to the Chambal river. They first allegedly asked the woman to jump into the river. When she refused, they pushed her into the water and drowned her before returning to Delhi, police said.

A source in the police said that before forcing her into the river, the father allegedly touched his daughter’s feet. “The father then forcefully took her into the water and pushed her head under. After she drowned, he folded his hands and apologised for what he had done,” the source added. Police said photographs recovered from the son-in-law’s phone show the father and daughter together in the water shortly before her death. Mobile phone location data of the three also corroborated that the victim and both the accused travelled together to Agra, they added. The case unravelled after a neighbour became suspicious of the father’s account on his return, police said. “The father told the neighbours he had taken his daughter to Agra because she was suffering from depression. After returning, he claimed that she had died by suicide there and thus, he cremated her there,” said an officer. Police said the father initially tried to mislead investigators before breaking down during questioning. During the investigation, police found that the woman had befriended a boy, two years younger to her, through Instagram around eight months ago. The two later entered into a relationship and began meeting regularly. After she became pregnant, her father contacted the boy’s family in an attempt to persuade them to agree to their marriage. However, the efforts were unsuccessful. That was when he decided to murder his daughter.

Beyond solitary spotlight: How these 4 singers are shattering ‘solo diva’ myth in Indian music



For decades, the image of the female singer in the Indian music industry has often been solitary — a single voice at the microphone, fronting a performance largely shaped by others. The Womaniaz, however, offers a different picture. The nine-member band, that performed recently in Pune, places four women vocalists at the centre of the stage, creating music together rather than individually. The group’s four lead singers — Deepti Rege, Tanishq Karnawat, Veda Nerurkar and Shreya Jain Khandelwal — come from different generations and musical back-grounds, yet share a common foundation in classical training and a strong commitment to live performance.

What makes the group unusual is not just its music, but its structure. Instead of competing for space, the four singers share it. “We were friends first,” the group says. “We already knew and respected each other’s music. Over time, the idea of creating something together just felt natural. Each of us brings something different to the table,” says Deepti Rege, the band’s co-founder and senior-most member. Their musical journeys, however, began long before the band itself — often in homes where music was nurtured by families who encouraged daughters to follow artistic ambitions. For Rege, music is almost hereditary. A Hindustani classical vocalist with over 25 years in the industry, she has contributed vocals to several Bollywood productions, including Gangubai Kathiawadi, Bajirao Mastani, Padmaavat and Super 30. Her connection to music stretches back generations. “My grandmother was a disciple of Hirabai Badodekar and also a Marathi poet. I grew up hearing my mother’s riyaz at home. Today, family support continues to play a crucial role in my career. My in-laws proudly talk about my

work even more than I do,” she says with a smile.

For Tanishq Karnawat, the path to music was shaped early by her parents’ encouragement. She began learning to sing at the age of three and continues to train in Hindustani classical music. “My parents were the ones who first encouraged me,” Karnawat says. “My mother used to perform at events and also taught music when she was younger, so music was always part of our home,” she says. Growing up in that environment helped transform a childhood passion into a profession. Today, alongside performing with The Womaniaz, Karnawat also mentors young singers as a vocal instructor at the Kailash Kher Academy for Learning Art.

Singer Shreya Jain Khandelwal similarly grew up surrounded by art. Her grandmother had a deep love for Indian classical music and was trained in the sitar, while her mother carried that artistic tradition forward as a Bharatanatyam dancer. “My parents always gave me the freedom to pursue what I love. Because of that support, I could embrace music wholeheartedly,” she says. Khandelwal, trained at the Shankar Mahadevan Academy and under Pt Murli Manohar Shukla, later performed at large-scale events such as the Ekam Satt Unity Concert at Jio Garden curated by Ameya Dabli, which featured composer A R Rahman. For Veda Nerurkar, the earliest musical lessons came directly from home. “My mother was my first guru. I grew up surrounded by music,” she says. Nerurkar first came into the spotlight as a runner-up on Sa Re Ga Ma Pa Marathi Li'l Champs and later appeared on The Voice India Season 2. But behind those milestones was the steady support of her parents. “They travelled with me for competitions, auditions, and rehearsals. Their belief in me is the reason I could pursue music professionally,” she says. While their journeys differ, the singers say those individual influences shape the sound of the band. Their performances often run for nearly two hours, weaving together melodies from different eras of Hindi cinema. A sold-out ticketed show at the Nita Mukesh Ambani Cultural Centre remains one of their most memorable milestones. Yet the singers say the most meaningful aspect of the project is the sense of solidarity it represents. “When women come together creatively, something powerful happens. On stage, we’re not competing with each other — we’re supporting each other,” they say.

Trump eases oil sanctions on Iran, says Hormuz should be guarded by other nations

United States President Donald Trump said that he is considering “winding down” the war on Iran, adding that securing the Strait of Hormuz — now under Iran’s control — is the responsibility of other nations, even as Washington temporarily eased sanctions on Iranian oil shipments in a bid to ease the global supply crisis. “We are getting very close to meeting our objectives,” Mr. Trump wrote in a social media post, adding that the U.S. has “degraded” Iran’s missile capability, “destroyed” its defence industrial base, and “eliminated” its Navy and Air Force, including anti-aircraft weaponry. Adding that the U.S. had taken out Iran’s nuclear capability, and would never allow Tehran to rebuild it, he vowed to protect America’s allies in the region, “including Israel, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, the UAE, Bahrain, Kuwait, and others.”

While Mr. Trump declared victory over Iran, the U.S. Treasury Department on Friday (March 20) said it was temporarily lifting sanctions on Iranian oil already loaded onto vessels, to tackle supply disruptions and rising prices. “By temporarily unlocking this existing supply for the world, the United States will quickly bring approximately 140 million barrels of oil to global markets, expanding the amount of worldwide energy and helping to relieve the temporary pressures on supply caused by Iran,” Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent said in a statement. “This temporary, short-term authorization is strictly limited to oil that is already in transit and does not allow new purchases or production.” The U.S. and Israel have carried out thousands of air strikes in Iran since they started the war on February 28. At least 1,400 people have been killed, including Iran’s Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei and its Security Council Secretary Ali Larijani. Mr. Trump has repeatedly claimed that the U.S.-Israeli strikes have destroyed Iran’s military capabilities.

Iran’s continuing attacksDespite such claims, Iran has consistently carried out missile and drone attacks against Israel and America’s Persian Gulf Arab allies, besides taking control of the Strait of Hormuz through which one-fifth of the world’s traded oil passed before the war. On Saturday evening (March 21, 2026), Alireza Tangsiri, commander of the Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps (IRGC) Navy, said the Guards had attacked two



American bases in the Persian Gulf. “IRGC pounded the facilities of the two Al-Minhad [UAE] and Ali Al-Salem [Kuwait] air bases, the hangars, and the fuel depots of American-Zionist aircraft with a massive volume of ballistic missiles and suicide drones. These bases were the origin of the aggression against #IranianIslands,” Mr. Tangsiri said in a post. The attacks on oil facilities in the Gulf and the closure of the Strait have driven up oil, gas, and fertilizer prices. Brent crude closed at \$106 a barrel on Friday (March 20), up from \$72 on February 28, the first day of the war. Changing stance on Hormuz “The Hormuz Strait will have to be guarded and policed, as necessary, by other Nations who use it — The United States does not! If asked, we will help these Countries in their Hormuz efforts, but it shouldn’t be necessary once Iran’s threat is eradicated. Importantly, it will be an easy Military Operation for them,” Mr. Trump said, signalling that regional countries should lead any military operation to open the Strait. Mr. Trump had earlier sought help from America’s NATO allies as well as China to open the Hormuz Strait. As most countries rejected his call, he said the U.S. did not want anybody’s help. But again, on March 20, he called NATO partners “cowards” because they did not send any assistance. At the White House, Mr. Trump told reporters on Saturday (March 21) he was not looking for a ceasefire with Tehran. “I think we have won. I don’t want to do a ceasefire. You know you don’t do a ceasefire when you’re literally obliterating the other side,” he said.

Global crisis deepens due to war; CPI slams Modi’s silence



India, as a major democracy, should play a proactive role in promoting peace, says CPI leader K. Narayana

Communist Party of India (CPI) national leader K. Narayana has expressed concern that the ongoing war involving Iran is pushing the world into a severe crisis, primarily benefiting corporate interests. Addressing a press conference here on Sunday (March 22), Dr. Narayana alleged that the conflict driven by the United States and Israel is aimed at controlling oil resources and boosting

corporate profits. The war has resulted in large-scale loss of life and is contributing to a growing global economic crisis.

He criticised Prime Minister Narendra Modi for remaining silent and failing to exert pressure on U.S. President Donald Trump to halt the conflict. Dr. Narayana termed Modi’s stance as “questionable,” adding that India, as a major democracy, should play a proactive role in promoting peace. Highlighting the economic impact, he pointed out that rising petrol, diesel, and gas prices are affecting the transport sector and common people. Gas shortages, he said, have led to the closure of hotels and eateries in some areas, impacting workers and daily wage earners. Dr. Narayana urged Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu to pressure the Centre to take a stand against the war. He said Mr. Naidu, given his political influence, should ensure that India does not support such conflicts. He also announced a “No War” protest would be held in Hyderabad on March 29, calling for participation from all political parties and the public. On State issues, Dr. Narayana questioned the continuation of individuals facing allegations in key positions related to Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams, stressing the need to protect the temple’s sanctity. He welcomed the decision to install a statue of Potti Sriramulu in Amaravati but opposed involving corporate entities in the project.

Rethinking textbook development in India



Of late, the National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) has been in the news for several controversies related to textbook content. The latest concerns its decision to remove a map from the Class 8 Social Science textbook that depicted Bikaner, Bundi, and Jaisalmer as part of the Maratha Empire after the royal family of Jaisalmer objected and claimed this was historical inaccuracy. Another instance was a two-page section in the Class 8 Social Science textbook discussing corruption at various levels of the judiciary, included in the chapter titled “The Role of the Judiciary in Our Society”. This prompted a strong response leading the Supreme Court to take suo motu cognizance of the matter. NCERT not only withdrew the textbook but also issued an apology. But the controversy did not end. The Chief Justice of India ordered immediate seizure of all copies of the book, the initiation a probe to identify those responsible, and demanded accountability from NCERT.

Questions raisedThese controversies raise several important questions such as what content textbooks should contain, what ought to be taught, whether the Court’s intervention is justified, and whether textbook writers and editors have violated established guidelines or, conversely, whether their academic freedom has been compromised.

While it is important to assess whether the Court’s action is justified, it is even more crucial to examine why the NCERT has faced sustained criticism over the past decade. Much of this centres on its revision of school textbooks through the selective removal, reduction, or alteration of content in ways that appear to reflect a particular political ideology or an attempt to rewrite history. This, in turn, raises a deeper concern: does the institution’s recent functioning demonstrate genuine autonomy or suggest that this so-called “autonomous body” has become vulnerable to the influence of those in power? We cannot say whether the NCERT has learned, or will learn, a lesson from the recent controversy. However, it offers a valuable lesson for those involved in materials preparation, textbook writing, and editing. In this context, it is necessary to consider what makes a good textbook for school students, the factors to be considered while writing one, and what should be avoided in preparation. It is also es-

A redoubt of cosmopolitanism

In an age when nationalism increasingly presents itself as grievance, and patriotism is confused with hostility towards difference, a question seeks attention. What kind of civilization is being invoked in the name of the nation? It is understandable that India must imagine its future with pride and not any rancour in its heart. But pride, if it is to transcend mere posturing, must be anchored in memories that unsettle the prevailing ethos of ethnic politics rather than pander to the self-flattering narratives of present day India. During my recent visit to Fatehpur Sikri, I felt this unsettling quality of the past’s proximity, an inescapable sensation manifested palpably in a Proustian reverie of my childhood in the 1950s and 1960s. That was the halcyon era, seemingly untainted by the hardened fault lines of communal discord or the political grammars of difference that would later inscribe themselves upon our social fabric. In that early in-between space, childhood existed before the world began to demand an explanation of sectarian consciousness.

As Walter Benjamin might suggest, Fatehpur Sikri’s ruins evoked for me a “Messianic cessation of happening”, a jolt that arrests linear time, allowing fragments of the past to erupt into the present. My visit became an act of “brushing history against the grain,” thereby interrupting the present narrative of division through childhood memories of times when communal harmony was not a utopian ideal but a given reality.

In an age when Europe was still inching toward what Francis Bacon would later call “the advancement of learning,” Fatehpur Sikri had already become a living laboratory of intellectual cosmopolitanism. At the heart of Fatehpur Sikri stands the Ibadat Khana, the House of Worship. Standing there in the silence of a cold winter morning, I could visualize the Sunni and Shia theologians debating alongside Hindu pundits, Jain monks, Zoroastrians, and Jesuit priests, the encounters sustained in a form of brainstorming. Akbar was not seeking a final synthesis, nor endeavouring to declare authority as the final truth, but expose his rule itself to debate. Scholars, missionaries, theologians, Central Asian mystics, artists, architects and philosophers crossed linguistic and civilizational frontiers to gather at his court, an approach that we later see Rabindranath Tagore introducing in Shantiniketan.

The Ibadat Khana was not merely a hall of worship but a theatre of ideas, where translation, disputation, and philosophical encounter unfolded in real time. One is reminded of Bacon’s utopian vision in New Atlantis, the ship that sails across oceans gathering knowledge from distant lands, or even of Napoleon’s Egyptian expedition, when defeat at sea did not prevent him from carrying scientists, engineers, astronomers and archaeologists up the Nile, inadvertently laying the foundations of Egyptology. Fatehpur Sikri belongs to that larger genealogy of experimental cosmopolitan spaces, a court that imagined empire not simply as territorial dominion, but as the orchestration of knowledge, language and belief across borders. Commonly described as a “ghost city,” abandoned for logistical reasons, it would be a mistake to consider Fatehpur Sikri as an architectural wonder of a past rather than of political thought. What was attempted here in the sixteenth century was not simply imperial administration, but a civilizational argument about power, belief, and difference. The city matters not because it failed, but because of what it dared to imagine and experiment.

essential to reflect on the key questions that school administrators and educators should ask when selecting textbooks for their schools and students. RequirementsConsidering the questions raised about NCERT textbooks, it is essential to provide professional development courses for all textbook writers and editors, and to develop new guidelines grounded in both universally accepted and contextually relevant principles.

In a multilingual, multi-religious, and multicultural country like India, textbook writers and editors are expected to not only possess expertise in their respective fields but also to value inclusiveness. They should be open-minded, principled, and committed to the cause of education. Additionally, they need to be trained to prepare instructional materials in a professional and pedagogically sound manner. The content should be appropriate for the target group; engaging, relevant, accurate, up-to-date, and inclusive. It must be free from religious, cultural, and gender bias, while remaining culturally and linguistically sensitive. Content, particularly in subjects such as history, should be presented objectively with accurate, reliable, and evidence-based information. Above all, it should align with the prescribed curriculum. Since the purpose of education is to inculcate values and promote logical reasoning and critical thinking, activities should be designed to foster empathy and encourage independent thinking. Freedom to choose

Schools should have the flexibility to select one that best suits their students from a range of textbooks by different publishers. This choice-based approach offers several clear advantages. Each author tends to emphasise different dimensions of a subject — such as historical context, social relevance, or technical detail — thereby giving students a broader and more balanced understanding rather than a single, limited viewpoint. Moreover, when a concept is not clearly explained or insufficiently illustrated in one textbook, another may present it in a simpler, more practical, or more relatable manner. Exposure to multiple explanations of the same topic helps reinforce learning and strengthens students’ grasp of fundamental concepts. From an assessment perspective, choosing a book from a variety of textbooks also exposes students to diverse types of exercises. Some authors, particularly those specialising in competitive examinations, provide higher-order and application-based questions that go beyond standard curriculum materials, thereby better preparing students for advanced assessments. What matters most is academic freedom for textbook authors and editors who are committed to education, understand the importance of sound guidelines, act in students’ best interests, and stand firm against pressure from powerful forces to compromise their work. After all, their unwavering intellectual commitment and courage should be reflected in their work, inspiring educators and learners. Those in power, including the judiciary, must respect academic freedom.



it will be a mistake to consider Fatehpur Sikri an architectural wonder of a past rather than of political thought

From this practice emerged Sulh-i-Kul or “peace with all”, not as a sentimental ethic, but as a principle of governance. It rejected the assumption, now taken almost for granted, that political stability requires cultural uniformity. In Akbar’s imagination, power was strong enough to survive doubt which, to him, was not an administrative inconvenience but a condition of ethical rule. This confidence is precisely what contemporary nationalism lacks. Across democracies today, the authoritarian turn is overtly proclaimed, but is imperceptibly allowed to proceed through the narrow narratives of ultra-nationalism and belonging. Race, religion, and culture are thereby mobilised as instruments of political consolidation. While dissent is made out to be disloyalty, the minorities are deemed to be demographic threats.

Standing in the midst of such a space, I could feel deep within me its philosophical essence resonate with other subcontinental traditions that resisted structures of centralized authority. Sikh thought, emerging soon after, made a decisive break by transferring sovereignty from rulers and lineages to the Word. With the declaration of the Guru Granth Sahib as the eternal Guru, authority was removed from charisma, bloodline, and coercion. Truth was placed beyond capture. The Bhakti movement similarly unsettled caste and religious hierarchies through devotion that refused social arrogance. Poets like Kabir dismantled Hindu–Muslim binaries with disarming clarity, insisting that spiritual truth dissolves identity pride. Sufi traditions, with their emphasis on humility and inward ethics, offered another sustained resistance to punitive religion. What unites these traditions is a refusal of the finality of interpretation, of dominance, of the claim that power alone can arbitrate truth. The tyranny of thought stood out rightly rejected.

Fatehpur Sikri therefore, represents power as a process of dialogue. The Diwan-i-Khas, with its central pillar and radiating paths, suggests that multiple perspectives can emerge from a shared space without needing uniformity.

‘Use and throw’ is Hyderabad’s attitude towards appliances, notes study



Hyderabad shares space with the national capital in accelerated consumerism as reflected in its residents' preference for purchase of new appliances rather than repair the faulty ones.A survey conducted by Toxics Link, an environmental research and advocacy organisation, revealed that repair culture is declining in Hyderabad across income groups. The study, titled ‘Stitch in Time: Evaluating Consumer Behaviour & Electronics Repair Accessibility,’ was conducted in five cities — Delhi, Hyderabad, Kolkata, Nagpur and Ranchi, to analyse consumer behaviour, repair practices and challenges faced by the repair industry. It concluded that Delhi and Hyderabad show a dominant ‘replacement trend’ that cuts across all economic groups, reflecting a fast-paced consumption pattern.

Significant replacement trends were found in Hyderabad, particularly for IT and Telecom equipment such as smartphones, laptops, and tablets. ? Lower-income groups (?1-5 lakh) exhibited a high replacement rate (85.71%) for IT devices, driven by outdated technology and repair costs. ? Small appliances such as toasters, mixers, and hair straighteners are replaced 61.54% of the time, while large electrical and electronic appli-

ances such as refrigerators, washing machines, and air conditioners are rarely replaced due to their high cost.As income levels rise, replacement rates increase, with higher-income groups prioritising convenience and technological upgrades. ? For those earning above ?20 lakh, replacement is dominant, with IT and Telecom equipment and large appliances showing replacement rates of 65%. ?Spare part availability is a major concern in getting the appliances repaired, and independent repair shops are often reliant on third party components, which are not trusted by consumers.

Hyderabad's repair facilities are partially equipped, with most repair shops relying on non-original spare parts due to the high cost and limited availability of genuine components. ? Technicians, who lack formal training, often salvage parts from non-functional devices or source them from local wholesalers and informal markets. ? Environmental sustainability is rarely a focus in training programs, contributing to unsustainable practices. ?Software locks and warranties discouraging third-party repairs are another reason, which increases e-waste in the environment. Recommendations for the city include affordable, genuine spare parts and elimination of restrictions on third party repairs, structured training programmes to equip the technicians with modern repair techniques, establishment of public-private repair hubs, cashback schemes or tax rebates for repairs, and imposition of green tax on premature replacements.India’s e-waste generation is projected to rise from 34 billion kg in 2010 to 82 billion kg by 2030, the study noted, and flagged low recycling rates are poised to rise from eight billion kgs in 2010 to mere 13.6 billion kgs by 2030. Widening gap between e-waste generation and formal recycling rates highlights a major sustainability challenge. By choosing to repair rather than replace, the growing problem of e-waste can be mitigated while saving energy and raw materials used in manufacturing new products, the report said.

Telangana Govt raises TDR use, allows more floors and setback relaxations in new building rules



The government has announced amendments to the Telangana Building Rules 2012 aimed at expanding the score of Transferable Development Rights (TDR), easing height restrictions and offering greater flexibility to developers in both high-rise and non-high-rise buildings. Image used for representation purpose onlyThe government has announced amendments to the Telangana Building Rules, 2012, aimed at expanding the scope of Transferable Development Rights (TDR), easing height restrictions, and offering greater flexibility to developers in both high-rise and non-high-rise buildings.

The new norms were issued on Sunday (March 22, 2026) by the Municipal Administration and Urban Development (MA&UD) Department.One of the most significant changes is the redefinition of a high-rise building as any structure measuring 21 metres or above, excluding non-working components such as chimneys, cooling towers, lift machine rooms and water tanks.Further, buildings rising between 18m and 21m on plots ranging from 750 sq.m to 2000 sq.m will now be permitted only through TDR, provided mandatory parking and other rules are

met.The government has allowed the use of TDR for setback relaxations in different categories. Non-high-rise buildings may now obtain setback relaxations via TDR while still adhering to the minimum norms applicable for road-widening situations. High-rises may avail up to 10% relaxation in setbacks through TDR, with a mandatory minimum 7-metre all-round setback.

In instances where Master Plan roads are reduced or modified, applicants are now given a choice to either pay applicable development/conversion charges or furnish equivalent TDR in lieu of payment, offering builders a financially flexible alternative.To facilitate vertical development, the government has revised the norms for additional floors using TDR in large plots (over 2000 sq.m). This is 3 additional floors on 40-ft roads, up to 4 additional floors on 60-ft roads and up to 5 additional floors on 80-ft roads. All such permissions, however, are subject to fire safety, airport clearances and other regulatory checks.In a significant tweak to earlier provisions, the government also revised TDR loading requirements for high-rises. Buildings above 10 floors and up to 20 floors must load 3% of the built-up area above the 10th floor with TDR. For structures above 20 floors, 5% of the built-up area beyond the 20th floor must be supported by TDR. To streamline approvals, developers must submit 50% of the required TDR at the building permission stage, and the remaining before issuance of the Occupancy Certificate.The order follows multiple stakeholder representations seeking rationalisation of TDR usage and more adaptable construction parameters. The new rules are expected to accelerate real estate activity in Hyderabad and other urban regions while providing builders with greater flexibility in project design.

Japan could consider Hormuz minesweeping if ceasefire reached, says Foreign Minister Motegi



Japan could consider deploying its military for minesweeping in the Strait of Hormuz, a ?vital artery for global oil supplies, if a ceasefire ?is reached in the U.S.-Israeli war on Iran, ?Foreign Minister Toshimitsu Motegi said on Sunday (March 22, 2026).“If ?there were to be a complete ceasefire, hypothetically speaking, then things like minesweeping could come up,” Mr. Motegi said during a Fuji ?TV programme. “This is purely hypothetical, but if a ceasefire were established and naval mines ?were creating an obstacle, then I think that ?would ?be something to consider.”

Japan’s military actions are limited ?under its post-

war pacifist constitution, but 2015 security legislation allows Japan to use its Self-Defense Forces overseas if an attack, including on a ?close security partner, ?threatens Japan’s survival and no other means are available to address it.Tokyo has no immediate plans to seek arrangements to allow passage through the Strait of ?Hormuz for stranded Japanese vessels, Mr. Motegi said, adding ?it was “extremely important” to create conditions that allow all ships to navigate through the narrow ?waterway, the conduit for a fifth of the world’s oil shipments.

Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi told Japan’s ?Kyodo news agency on Friday (March 20) that he had spoken to Mr. Motegi about potentially letting Japanese-related vessels pass through the strait.Japan gets around 90% of its oil shipments via the strait, which Tehran has largely closed during the war, now in its fourth week. A spike ?in global oil prices has prompted Japan and other countries ?to release oil from their reserves.U.S. President Donald Trump met Japanese Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi ?on Thursday (March 19), urging her to “step up” as he presses allies — ?so far unsuccessfully — to send warships to help open the strait.Ms. Takaichi told reporters after the ?Washington summit that she had briefed Mr. Trump on what support Japan could and could not provide ?in the strait under its laws.

Career in Social Work

In an age marked by rapid economic growth, widening inequalities and quiet crises in mental health, livelihoods and communities, the question many youngsters now ask is not just “What will I earn”? but also “Will I enjoy it?”Social work is often mistaken for charity or voluntary service. In fact, it is rigorous professional career option that responds directly to the social realities of our times and has not yet been touched by AI. Grounded in theory, ethics, research, and structured field practice, it prepares students to work across hospitals, industries, communities, development organisations, research institutions, and policy spaces. In India, PG programmes offer both generic training and specialised pathways, enabling students to shape careers aligned with their interests and strengths.Important specialisationsOne of the most

sought-after specialisations is Medical and Psychiatric Social Work. Students are trained to work in hospitals, psychiatric settings, palliative care centres, and counselling services. Their role lies at the intersection of health systems and human experience, supporting patients and families as they navigate illness, disability, trauma and end-of-life care. With increasing attention to mental health and holistic healthcare, the relevance of professionally trained social workers in medical settings has never been greater.Another important specialisation is Human Resource Management (HRM), rooted in the core social work principle of focusing on the person within a system. It goes far beyond conventional corporate training. Students study HRM and development, labour laws, industrial relations

Why Indian professors are trading creativity for citations



Imagine a Sahitya Akademi winner being told that his/her life's work is worth “zero” because it isn't in a Scopus database. In the high-stakes world of Indian higher education, a structural paradox is stifling the Humanities. As institutions chase global rankings, scholarly value is increasingly defined not by what is read or taught but by what can be indexed.Under the current rules of the National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) and the National Board of Accreditation (NBA), a prize-winning novel or a landmark poetry collection often carries less institutional weight than a poorly written but Scopus-indexed article. We are currently measuring the weight of a soul using a scale designed for coal.The problem lies in the Scopus: Web of Science Trap. Global ranking systems rely heavily on databases that privilege standardised scientific formats. Poetry and creative fiction, published in literary magazines or small presses, remain invisible to these indexing systems. In the cold logic of ranking metrics, if a work is not indexed, it does not exist. This has birthed a “Humanities Gap”. While Science and Engineering align seamlessly with citation metrics, creative and practice-based research in the Arts is systematically disadvantaged. We are currently measuring knowledge produced in the library using tools designed for the laboratory.

Standardised research is often a “report” on what already exists. Creative writing is the act of bringing something new into existence. A research article on “Social Isolation in Urban India” provides data, percentages, and trends. However, a play about a lonely elderly man in a high-rise apartment makes the audience feel that isolation. Creative writing preserves the “soul” of a culture — its nuances, slang, and emotional landscape — which data points simply cannot capture. Most research articles are locked behind paywalls and written in jargon that

Are we in a paradigm shift in our #endTB response?



“I cannot go for sputum testing to the centre; it would mean losing a day’s work. Who will feed us?” asks 52-year-old Ganga, who works as a garbage collector, standing in front of her 50-sq. ft. home in a crowded slum in urban Pune. Ganga has been suffering from a cough and has experienced significant weight loss over the past two months, but has had to continue work, regardless. Subsequently, she was diagnosed with tuberculosis (TB) of the lungs (pulmonary TB), which is contagious.Ganga’s is the dilemma of thousands of Indians who experience symptoms suggestive of TB. As per latest data from the World Health Organization’s Global Tuberculosis Report, yet again, India has topped the global burden of TB with about 25% of the estimated incident cases, despite 2025 touted to be the year the country aimed to attain the 2030 targets of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) pertaining to TB.

Additionally, the global health scenario has been facing catastrophes in recent times, owing to the COVID-19 pandemic and the human-made disaster of massive fund cuts for health and development initiatives. Ongoing wars and cross-border tensions between nations have made millions homeless and left them struggling for basic amenities. These events have substantially impacted TB care activities across the globe to varying degrees.

TB is a disease that reflects the inequities in a society, its poverty and the everyday distress of people at the margins. These facets make it a truly political disease and the highest level of commitment from systems is required for it to cease to be a public health threat - especially towards highly vulnerable populations.One of those vulnerable populations are migrant labourers from States such as Bihar and Jharkhand who work elsewhere in the country. “There is often a misconception that the best thing for migrant workers in the city who fall ill, is to go back to their home states as they will get family and government support once they are in villages. But in many cases, they do not know how to proceed, with their livelihoods being lost and the rampant stigma towards TB”, explains Vedit Panchal, a community health physician who works amongst marginalised populations in Rajasthan and Chhattisgarh.Stone crushing and iron ore mining are important occupations in the areas where Dr. Vdit works. These jobs lead to substantial lung damage among workers, through the inhalation of fine dust particles. Such unsafe, unchecked work environments with minimal accountability from employers, alongside poor housing and food scarcity contribute to these individuals becoming very high risk of contracting TB and having adverse outcomes, including death.Homelessness is yet another factor that rarely features in our mainstream public health narrative. Most homeless individuals do not have a valid Aadhaar card or mobile number, so many government centres do not even register them as patients”, says Dr. Vdit. This is a painful example of how people who require care the most, are denied it.Gender is also a factor that compromises TB care. Women tend to delay seeking care owing to their domestic responsibilities, prioritisation of family needs over themselves and fear of stigma. Marginalised groups including the LGBTQ population also carry a high burden of TB, many times much higher

only experts understand. A poem or a play is democratic; it can be read by anyone. It travels further and stays in the memory longer than a table of citations.

Internationally, the tide is turning. Forward-thinking frameworks now recognise Non-Traditional Research Outputs (NTROs) to avoid the false equivalence that treats all knowledge as a journal article. The U.K.’s REF 2029 evaluates poems as “outputs”, even allowing major collections to be “double-weighted” to reflect significant intellectual labour. In Australia, the ERA system tracks poetry under “Code J3”, requiring a “Research Statement” to justify its scholarly contribution. In European countries, creative work is treated as a “research artefact”, where the work itself is the primary site of knowledge. In the U.S., tenure committees routinely count poems as primary outputs based on publisher reputation and critical reception. All this proves that recognising art doesn’t mean lowering the bar; it means redefining rigour for different disciplines.India doesn’t need to clone the U.K.’s REF or Australia’s ERA. It needs to borrow their conceptual clarity. A poem or a translation is not a substitute for research; it is research, conducted through a specific mode of inquiry. By adopting a lean NTRO framework, bodies like NAAC and NBA can bridge the gap between creative output and research evaluation without a structural overhaul.

A first step is to formalise creative categories and explicitly recognise poetry, translation, and performance as valid research and not dismiss as “extracurricular”. Next comes the Research Context Note.Instead of a technical paper, allow a two-page brief detailing the work’s intellectual background, originality, and critical acclaim received. Third, existing criteria needs to be mapped and creative works can be interpreted under current parameters like Criterion 5 (Faculty Contribution) or Program Outcomes regarding societal relevance. Fourth is to apply weighted recognition and acknowledge that a book-length project involves more labour than a short-form article and grant it higher qualitative weight. Finally, mandate that institutional repositories archive creative works digitally alongside their research notes for transparent audit verification.The goal is simple: start measuring knowledge in all its forms, rather than just its most “index-friendly” expressions. It is time for Indian accreditation to value the meaning behind the metrics.If the professors aren’t rewarded for being creative, they won’t teach students to be creative. That’s the real loss for India’s workforce.The writer is an Assistant Professor of English, specialising in Communication and Language Studies, at Velammal Engineering College, Chennai.

than the national average.“It’s 2026, and we are still struggling with delayed diagnosis. Despite having advanced molecular diagnostic technologies, we battle with a shortage of CBNAAT cartridges/Truenat chips, especially in rural and semi-urban settings,” says Meera Yadav, patient rights activist and XDR-TB survivor.According to her, the diagnosis of extrapulmonary TB, which affects organs apart from the lungs, is the most difficult. While the sample needed for diagnosing pulmonary TB is the sputum, which is fairly easily obtained from the patient when they cough, the samples needed to diagnose TB of other organs may require advanced tests such as tissue biopsies and CT scans. These are generally expensive and not available in all settings, and this results in huge out-of-pocket expenditure, she says. She also raises concerns about the frequent drug stock outs that happened within the National Tuberculosis Elimination Programme (NTEP), which provides free treatment to persons with TB (PwTB), leading to long gaps in treatment.NTEP also provides a direct benefit transfer (DBT) scheme, Ni-Kshay Poshan Yojana, for nutritional support, wherein ?1000 is transferred per month to the beneficiary bank account, and Ni-Kshay Mitra where donors provide food baskets to PwTB.However, the timelines of these payments have been very erratic owing to various technical reasons, with some PwTB receiving the benefit after completion of treatment only. “We are missing the window of opportunity, critical to prevent complications and deaths among PwTB by delaying these payments”, says community health professor Madhavi Bhargava.The need to invest in strengthening diagnostic infrastructure for both pulmonary and extra pulmonary TB and to streamline both benefits and drug stocking is crucial at this stage.“Another big gap in the programme is the lack of psychosocial support. PwTB face huge stigma from society and it can affect outcomes,” says Meera. TB survivors with lived experience can help PwTB navigate these difficult times, she adds, strongly emphasising formal engagement of people who have survived TB in the past to offer peer support. However, since the abrupt shutdown of USAID in 2025, which actively engaged TB survivors for peer support, several community support initiatives have closed down or are at the verge of closure. There is a need for the government to look into these initiatives and keep them going.

Steps in the right directionUndernutrition still continues to be the most important factor leading to the risk of contracting TB and adverse outcomes in PwTB. Almost 7 to 8 lakh cases of TB in India are attributable to undernutrition. The ICMR-funded RATIONS trial in Jharkhand showed that incidence of TB among household contacts is lowered by almost 48%, by nutritional supplementation, and mortality among PwTB is lowered by almost 60%. It generated the much-needed evidence required for policy change regarding nutritional support in TB care. The latest guidelines from WHO on TB and undernutrition now emphasise nutritional support for TB prevention and the trial results have shaped these recommendations.“The new WHO guidelines recommend that PwTB with even mild or moderate undernourishment as well as the household contacts of PwTB, should receive assessment, counselling and nutritional support as part of TB care. This ensures that adverse outcomes are prevented/minimised in undernourished PwTB and that household contacts get food as a preventive modality”, says Dr. Madhavi, who is also the co-lead of the RATIONS trial.The government planning to introduce ready-to-use energy dense nutritional supplements (EDNS) for undernourished PwTB. But Dr. Madhavi expresses her concern over the EDNS plan, stating that they may mystify nutrition for users and may provide a window for industries to take over this space.Another important introduction in NTEP last year was the differentiated TB care guidelines, which mandate the triaging of individuals at the time of TB diagnosis, to provide customised care in terms of hospitalization or home-based care

Sai Sudharsan ruled out of Galle Test, doubtful for Colombo game



Colombo: In a significant blow to India's batting plans, left-handed batter B. Sai Sudharsan has been ruled out of the opening Test against Sri Lanka, starting on August 15 in Galle, due to a right big toe injury. At the same time, there are severe doubts over the availability of Sudharsan, who has been doing his rehab at the BCCI Centre of Excellence (CoE) in Bengaluru, for the second and final match of the series, to be played in Colombo from August 23 to 27.

"Sai has been definitely ruled out of the first Test as he needs more time to fully recover from the pain in his

right big toe. The medical team is monitoring his progress closely, and a decision on his inclusion for the second Test will be taken later, though he's more of a touch-and-go for it," said a source familiar with the matter to IANS on Saturday. IANS understands that Sudharsan has been progressing well in recovering from a stress reaction on his right foot and began batting as well as fielding and conditioning exercises. But the pain in the metatarsal of the big toe on his right foot after doing his skill work and exercises has been a cause of concern for the medical team.

In seven Tests, Sudharsan has scored 383 runs at an average of 31.91. In his absence, left-handed batter Devdutt Padikkal can be a straight like-for-like replacement after slamming a century on Day Two of the ongoing warm-up game against Sri Lanka Cricket XI at the NCC Ground in Colombo. Padikkal got to his century in 121 deliveries, including hitting 14 fours before he was retired out. Though a definitive word on Sudharsan's replacement in the Test team is yet to come, the Ajit Agarkar-led selection panel could send Ruturaj Gaikwad to Sri Lanka. Gaikwad was in Sri Lanka in June-July as vice-captain of the India 'A' team, winning a 50-over tri-series before making scores of 22, 1 and 13 not out in the red-ball games in Galle. Previously, ace fast bowler Jasprit Bumrah was ruled out of the two-game series due to a left knee injury, with Auzib Nabi named as his replacement.

Travis Head backs himself to continue as Australia's Test opener

Sydney: Australia's dynamic left-handed batter Travis Head has admitted that opening the batting does not come naturally to him in the traditional sense, but said he is comfortable continuing at the top of the Test order after his remarkable success in the Ashes last year. Head, who was on Friday honoured with the prestigious Allan Border Medal as Australia's cricketer of the year, had previously opened only in conditions-specific situations in India and Sri Lanka and has been a mainstay at the top of Australia's white-ball sides.

However, his promotion to open in place of the injured Usman Khawaja in the second innings of the Perth Test last November changed the course of his Test career. The left-hander produced a stunning 123 off 83 balls at Perth, helping Australia secure a two-day victory over England. He followed it with centuries in Adelaide and Sydney, finishing the Ashes series with 629 runs.

The impact of his performances has now extended well beyond that series, with Head appearing set to retain his place as Australia's Test opener during an intense upcoming schedule that could see the team play 20 Tests, or 21 if it reaches the World Test Championship final. Reflecting on his role at the top of the order, Head acknowledged that his first-class career does not fit the traditional profile of an opening batter in Australian cricket. "I don't know exact stats, but what have I played: 170, 180 first-class games. I might have opened in ten of them. I think it would suggest that I'm not an opening batter, a true opening batter, in terms of what Australian cricket is known for, I guess. Guys that have come through the grades opening the batting and played state cricket opening batting, and played Test cricket as opening batters," Head told Cricinfo. "I think my game is conducive to play-



ing well. I feel like I can do a role at the top. I'm at the top, but it's not that true opening batter, if that makes sense. I know that I've still got to work continuously hard at the new ball. I know I'm going to make mistakes. That's okay. I'm very comfortable with where my game's at," he added.

Head's success at the top also formed a major part of a memorable 2025/26 international season, in which he scored 1,437 runs across 30 matches in all three formats. His performances earned him the prestigious Allan Border Medal for a second consecutive year at a Cricket Australia awards function on Friday. Head polled 153 votes to edge South Australian teammate and wicketkeeper-batter Alex Carey, who finished on 152 votes. Carey scored 1,079 runs in 24 matches and registered 28 dismissals during Australia's successful Ashes defence. With his second consecutive Allan Border Medal, Head has joined an elite group of players as the sixth cricketer to win the award multiple times, alongside Ricky Ponting, Michael Clarke, Shane Watson, Steven Smith and David Warner.

Everything clicked at the right time, says Denish Das after Barpeta Braves comeback

Guwahati: Captain Denish Das has expressed his happiness over how things have clicked for Barpeta Braves after his unbeaten 72 off just 45 balls set the tone for their 70-run win over Nagaon Rangers in the Assam Premier League (APL) 2026. The result continued the side's turnaround after a slow start to the campaign, and Das is satisfied with playing a role in the change in their fortunes.

Having lost their opening two fixtures, Barpeta Braves have now strung together back-to-back victories, with the bowlers making light work of the chase on the day – Bikiran Das (4/13) and Shubham Kumar Gupta (3/8) sharing seven wickets to bowl Nagaon Rangers out for 100. For Das, the result was as much about the collective effort as his own innings. The Barpeta Braves captain was quick to credit his side's temperament through what had been a difficult opening phase of the tournament.

"The team is feeling very relaxed after getting the first win of the tournament. Hats off to the boys because they remained really positive throughout these days and I'm very happy for them," he said after Friday's match. Reflecting on his own innings, which included four boundaries and sixes, he said it was built on a method he leans on match after match. Rather than overthinking the situation, Das trusted his natural game. "Normally, I believe in myself and back my instinct. That's what I tell myself every day, and today everything clicked at the right time," he mentioned. Beyond the result, Das was equally reflective on what the tournament represents for players



across Assam. Das reckoned, "Obviously, it is a huge platform, and we want to thank the ACA for giving us such a huge opportunity. Scouts are coming to these matches, and people are also watching us on television, so it provides us with a great chance to progress in our career." With the Duleep Trophy awaiting him once this tournament concludes, Das isn't allowing the bigger stage to change his approach. Currently placed fourth on the batting charts with 126 runs at a strike rate of over 144, his focus remains on the process rather than the occasion. "There is not much pressure because I play to enjoy the game. My focus will remain on trying to perform throughout the tournament, and let's see what comes after that," he says. Meanwhile, his side Barpeta Braves sit third on the table with 4 points from four matches, and Denish Das's blend of calm and instinct at the crease is proving central to their revival in the tournament.

Uttarakhand CM responds to Rishabh Pant's land request

Dehradun: Uttarakhand Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhami has reacted to a plea by cricketer Rishabh Pant for help in purchasing land to build a house in his home state and has issued instructions to officials concerned to tackle the issue as per the rules and assist the India wicketkeeper-batter. Pant made his plea in a social media post around midnight, tagging CM Dhami and seeking help in buying land in the hills to build his first house as he wants to shift his base from Delhi. "Dear Rishabh, you are the pride of Uttarakhand. Through your magnificent sporting performance and achievements, you have brought glory to 'Devbhoomi' on both the national and global stages. Your love for your homeland and your desire to return and contribute here are truly commendable," Chief Minister Dhami said in a reply to Pant's post.

"Instructions are being issued to the concerned offi-

cials regarding the matter you raised. They will contact you shortly to ensure all possible assistance in accordance with the rules," CM Dhami added.

The social media post late in the night tagging the Chief Minister has surprised many, as Rishabh Pant's family already has a house in Roorkee in the state and can easily get in touch with property dealers in the city he prefers and buy available land. But Pant seems to have taken an unusual route to seek help to buy land in the hills for his 'first house', making a social media post from Sri Lanka, where he is on tour with the Indian cricket team. In his post tagging Uttarakhand Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhami, Pant wrote, "Hello sir, how's you ??? (sic) It's a long time for me, especially being local from Uttarakhand. I have been trying to buy land to shift my base from Delhi to Uttarakhand, and I couldn't find anything facilitating and big to live here.

Neeraj lauds Ashish Yadav after winning silver in World Athletics U20 C'ships



India's Olympic champion Neeraj Chopra lauded Ashish Yadav on Saturday after the 19-year-old won a silver in the men's javelin throw event to open India's medal account at the World Athletics U20 Championships at Hayward Field in Oregon, USA. "Always a great feeling to see Indian athletes competing and winning at the International level, this one is little more special for me as a javelin thrower. Super proud of you Ashish on your Silver

at the U-20 Worlds, this is just the start!," Neeraj posted on X. Ashish, who is inspired by Chopra, became the first Indian since Neeraj's historic gold in 2016 to win a medal in javelin at the junior World Championships. Though Ashish didn't produce a big throw like Chopra's 86.48 metres — the junior world record, set in Bydgoszcz, Poland — he did what is crucial in championships: secure a podium finish. His throw of 74.09 metres was enough for silver. Ashish didn't get enough time to practise after returning from a knee injury. But his resolve to win a medal helped open India's account despite him not being fully fit. Yadav's third round throw of 74.09m fetched him the silver medal while T Dharanidharan, the other Indian in the fray in the men's javelin throw finals on Friday, finished sixth with 72.35m. Yadav's effort was 40cm short of his personal best of 74.49m, which he had recorded during the Indian Open Throws Competition in Patiala in March. The gold medal went to South Africa's Jan-Hendrik Heymans who sent his spear to 80.50m, the season's U20 world lead, in his sixth and final attempt. Dominica's Addison James clinched the bronze medal with a throw of 73.89m.

From training at a pond to winning a World U-20 Javelin silver

When he took up the sport two years ago, Ashish Yadav trained with a wooden javelin in a dry pond with patches of quicksand near his village, Mawaiya, Mirzapur. It was more out of compulsion than choice, as there were no other open spaces. On Saturday, the 19-year-old, inspired by Olympic Games and World Championship medalist Neeraj Chopra's exploits, won a silver — India's first medal in this edition of the Under-20 World Championships — at Hayward Field in Oregon, USA. Ashish became the first Indian since Chopra's historic gold in 2016 to win a medal in javelin at the junior World Championships. Though Ashish didn't produce a big throw like Chopra's 86.48 metres — the junior world record, set in Bydgoszcz, Poland — he did what is crucial in championships: secure a podium finish. His throw of 74.09 metres was enough for silver.

South Africa's Jan-Hendrik Heymans won gold (80.50m), while Addison James of Dominica, with 73.89 metres, registered a national record to win bronze. Ashish didn't get enough time to practise after returning from a knee injury. But his resolve to win a medal helped open India's account despite him not being fully fit. "There are sportspersons in my family. My aunty, Punam Yadav, is a weightlifter who won a medal at the 2014 Commonwealth Games. Seeing her, I wanted to get into sports. My uncle is a discus thrower and an Army man. Neeraj bhai is an inspiration for taking up the javelin. I still have a lot more to do, so I don't want to be compared to Neeraj bhai. But this medal is a good start for me because it proved that I can compete at the highest level and finish on the podium. I was about 80 per cent fit, but I am not using that as an excuse. Injuries are bound to happen," Ashish told The Indian Express from Eugene. Until Ashish became serious about the sport, he helped his father in the milk distribution business. "Until I was 17, I used to help my father, who is a milkman. From the age of 10, I went to houses in and around my village and milked cows and buffaloes. My father would sell the milk," Ashish said. His discus-thrower uncle, Dharamraj Singh, irritated that he neither took up a sport seriously nor studied well, gave him a tongue-lashing one day. The uncle promised to get him wooden javelins, which cost Rs 1,200 each. Mawaiya and nearby villages didn't have a proper ground. But that didn't stop Ashish from trying to become the next Chopra.

"The pond, which is about 2 kilometres away from home, would dry up. I could throw without being worried about hitting someone with the wooden javelin. But there was a risk because there were spots which were like quicksand. Every year, there are incidents of children being



sucked into the mud. Children have died too. I got a beating a few times when my family got to know about where I was training. But I was always careful. There is a Shivji mandir near the pond, so I was sure I would be protected. There is no proper ground in Mirzapur or in my village. I had to start somewhere," Ashish said. Dharamraj said Ashish would watch videos of Chopra on loop. "I told Ashish you have to work hard and not lose heart because javelin is not an easy sport. Also, the competition in India is very tough. The silver at the World Championships proves he is on the right track." Winning silver at the Under-20 World Championships made up for his fifth-place finish at the Under-20 Asian Championships in Hong Kong in May. Ashish got his big break when he was selected to train at the Hisar Centre, which is run by the Sports Authority of India in collaboration with the Inspire Institute of Sport.

"Usually, athletes from Uttar Pradesh don't get selected at the Hisar Centre easily. But Arvind Kumar, the coach at the Hisar Centre, saw potential in me and selected me. When I joined the centre, my weight was just 70 kilograms; now it is 84 kg. I am six feet and one inch tall. Earlier, I was underweight, but my coach taught me the importance of eating well and training right. He is like a god to me; he treats me like his own son. Whatever money I needed for the sport, my uncle and my coach would give. They have not asked me to return a single rupee." Coach Kumar was impressed by Ashish's explosive speed, though he didn't top the trials with 64 metres. "We conduct motor-ability tests. His standing board jump was 3.10 metres. Anything over 3 metres is very good; most of the kids do about 2.70 metres, 2.80 metres. His vertical jump was also good. He had a lean body, was tall and his speed was good, which can help a javelin thrower," he said. Ashish's next target is to improve his speed on the runway. "Technically, I have to make changes. I won't rest on my laurels. Javelin is booming in India; one can't afford to take it easy."

Ashmita Chaliha completes the Korean circle – from crutches to making finals

Ashmita Chaliha had last left Korea on crutches. Back in August 2024, she suffered a mid meniscus tear at the Korea Open and needed a flight upgrade because she couldn't sit with a knee swollen like a balloon. When her mother rushed to Bangalore airport to pick her up, she was in tears watching Ashmita walk down an escalator on crutches. Two years on, the chill Assamese with stinging southpaw talent on her strokes, has completed the Korean circle and reached finals of the Super 300 Korean Masters. She defeated Rakshittha Sree Santhosh Ramraj 21-13, 16-21-21-13 relying on her left-handed shot-making and plays Chinese Han Qian Xi in the finals.

Local shuttler Kim Ga Ram was battling on an adjacent court. But the crowd was riveted by the all-India matches between Rakshittha and Ashmita as both Indians unfurled attacks that were magnetic and entertaining in their shot quality. Ashmita's standout quality was just how high she took the shuttle creating all these deft angles while keeping it aggressive. Ashmita's hand speed combined with the leftie angles denied Rakshittha early entry into a rally, and she trailed 13-6 and 9-1 in the first and third set, effectively being driven out of the match when the 26-year-old Ashmita played from the faster side. It was a semifinal between World No 50 and the World No 49, but the older Indian, on her comeback, won.

Mother Geetali recalls the dampener of an August at Bangalore. "PPBA took good care of her and her employers helped land an appointment with Dr Pardiwala for an emergency surgery in Mumbai in two days which would otherwise take a month and half. But Korea was a painful memory," she recalls. "Injuries happen to every sportsman. I told her even Tendulkar and Dhoni have battled injuries. But it took a long time," she says. It was 8 months before she returned to the court, and two years till she made finals. Ashmita returned to Guwahati but stays at the National Centre hostel in the same city, coming home only over weekend.

Her struggles as a non-prodigy are not really documented, even as the Indian propensity to write off talent after age 23 if it doesn't medal big, continues. "She was hurt by criticism. She used to wonder 'they say nice things when I peak but pass negative comments when I lose.' It would affect her, but now she's settled into a groove and



doesn't bother," her mother says. The game has always been there. If anything, it was the most talented game after Sindhu's. A hop smash, an entire arc of attacking pushes and clears and ability to keep the game away from the net — all at a fast clip. "Earlier she would make errors and not learn from them. Now she rectifies quickly. The maturity has come with age," her mother says. "She was immature before." An enigma who loves watching car racing and playing video games and music but only with her closest friends, Ashmita struggled to fit in, in Bangalore even while her game improved. She won India a crucial WS2 match at the Asian team gold win, but it was clear, she needed a coach who would constantly be on her case and not let her drift. Earlier this year, she did well at Malaysia and Macau to reach No 50 but the surge into finals has finally played out at Korea. "What keeps her going is she truly loves badminton. It's inborn drive. She loves to play, looks forward to practicing and enjoys. At 26, she is back to fighting. Fingers crossed for the final," her mother says. Ashmita Chaliha might prove Coach Park Tae Sang's big challenge with the goal to steer the prodigious talent, albeit not a prodigy, back into the elite tier.

2,500 movies in 62 years: Even if we start watching Sukumari’s films at a rate of one per day, we would finish only by 2033



Versatility is not something all actors possess. In fact, it’s often far more difficult to be versatile than to be prolific, which is why not many attempt it. As tedious as the task already is, the industry’s penchant for stereotyping artists adds to the woes of those trying to expand their horizons. As a result, many end up playing characters that seem cut from the same cloth over and over again. Even the Malayalam film industry, renowned for its experimentation and revered for its artistes’ willingness not to be weighed down by their image, has at times chained actors to certain roles, thus denying them the opportunity to experiment.

However, a few have stormed ahead, breaking down such barriers and not allowing anyone to reduce their artistic identity to a few archetypes. Sukumari was not just one of them, but arguably the queen among them. She could switch from Dick Ammayi (Boeing Boeing) to Devaki (Arappatta Kettiya Gramathil) at whim. For her, the journey from Revathi (Poochakkoru Mookkuthi) to Sulochana Thankappan (Thalayanamanthram) was as effortless as moving from Maggie Aunty (Vandanam) to Kannappa Chekavar’s wife (Oru Vadakkan Veeragatha), Subhadra Kunjamma (Chakkikotha Chankaran), and Nabisa (Mizhikal Sakshi). She could be the funny one, the arrogant one, the devious one, the troubled one, the aching one, the scarred one, the envious one, and the liberated one — back-to-back or even simultaneously.Must Read | Mammooty considered becoming a film director as he feared being phased out of acting after consecutive flops: ‘He even accepted an

advance’Born on October 6, 1940, Sukumari made her silver screen debut at the tender age of 10 in the Tamil film Or Iravu (1951). Director P Neelakantan offered her a role in the movie after chancing upon her while she was coincidentally on a film set with her relative, veteran actor Padmini (one among the ‘Travancore Sisters’ trio). Her passion for dance and her natural acting style quickly made her a prominent figure in the industry.

Even her entry into Malayalam cinema was entirely coincidental. In director SM Sriramulu Naidu’s Thaskaraveeran (1957), when the actor who was supposed to play Kottarakkara Sreedharan Nair’s wife failed to show up, the role was given to Sukumari, who was then a member of the movie’s dance troupe.

Sukumari born on October 6, 1940. Sukumari had the unique fortune of playing both the heroine and the mother to several legendary heroes. (Credit: AMMA)Right from the onset of her career, despite it being an era dominated by leading ladies like Sarada, Sheela, and Jayabharathi, Sukumari managed to handle serious mother roles and comedic ones with equal ease, regardless of her actual age. Her on-screen pairing with Adoor Bhasi in comedy sequences became iconic, and the two appeared together in over 30 films.Interestingly, she had the unique fortune of playing both the heroine and the mother to almost all legendary heroes in Malayalam cinema of that era, including Sathyan, Prem Nazir, and Madhu. She also shared the screen with veterans like SP Pillai, Bahadoor, Sankaradi, Thikkurissy Sukumaran Nair, Nedumudi Venu, Bharat Gopy, and Thilakan, and even stole the spotlight from them often. Later, she also became an on-screen mother, sister, and friend to the next generation of actors like Mohanlal and Mammooty, among others.In an illustrious career spanning 62 years, Sukumari appeared in over 2,500 films. Sukumari won the National Film Award for Best Actress in a Supporting Role for her performance in Namma Gramam. (Credit: AMMA)

In an illustrious career spanning 62 years, she appeared in over 2,500 films across Malayalam, Tamil, Telugu, Hindi, Sinhala, French, Italian, Bengali, Tulu, English, and Kannada languages. In 2003, she was honoured with the Padma Shri. Aside from a National Film Award for Best Actress in a Supporting Role for her performance in Namma Gramam, she also won several Kerala State Film Awards for Second Best Actress. Beyond cinema, she was a vibrant presence in dance, theatre, and stage shows as well. She is widely known among her colleagues and Malayalam movie audiences as Sukumari “Amma.”According to Rediff, she married veteran filmmaker A Bhimsingh in 1959 at the age of 19 but became a widow by 30. She shared a son named Suresh Bhimsingh, with him. Sukumari passed away at a private hospital in Chennai on March 26, 2013, after battling burns suffered following an accident at her residence.Yet, thanks to the hundreds of characters she immortalised, Sukumari continues to live on in the hearts of film lovers.

Pawan Kalyan’s Jalsa had a video game before anyone else — and that’s not even its biggest achievement

There are films that do well at the box office, and then there are films that turn into something else entirely. Jalsa belongs to the second category. It arrived at exactly the right moment in Pawan Kalyan’s career, did things no Telugu film had done before in terms of marketing and music, carried ideas that stayed in the audience’s mind long after the credits rolled, and somehow only grew in stature after the cameras stopped.Before Jalsa, Pawan Kalyan had delivered five consecutive underperforming films. The industry had started to question whether the box office pull he had built through hits like Thammudu, Badri, and Kushi still held.

Written and directed by Trivikram Srinivas and produced by Allu Aravind under the Geetha Arts banner, Jalsa released on April 2, 2008, and on its opening day set the highest first-day collection in Telugu cinema history at the time, as well as the highest for any South Indian film in a single state. It ended the year as the highest-grossing Telugu film of 2008. It was also the first film in Pawan Kalyan’s career to cross the Rs 25 crore share mark.The story and what made it workPawan Kalyan plays Sanjay Sahu, a postgraduate from Osmania University working as a gym instructor. He is in love with Indu (Kamalinee Mukherjee), but her father, a police officer played by Prakash Raj, disapproves. Later, Bhagyamathi (Ileana D’Cruz), Indu’s sister, falls for Sanjay, and her father too rejects the match after revealing Sanjay’s Naxalite past. The story builds toward a confrontation with the central antagonist, Damodar Reddy (Mukesh Rishi), a politically powerful factionist.One detail that still catches new viewers off guard is how the film opens. Mahesh Babu provided the voiceover introduction for Pawan Kalyan’s character. At the time, the two were the dominant names in Telugu cinema, and having one introduce the other was a gesture that generated enormous goodwill before audiences had seen a single scene.

Aditya Music acquired the audio rights for Rs 90 lakh, the highest price paid for a Telugu film soundtrack at that time. The music release function was broadcast by four Telugu television channels and registered a TRP rating of 27.95, a record for a film event at the time. In its first week, 35 lakh units of audio cassettes were sold, and Jalsa songs were being broadcast 64 times every day on FM radio, surpassing the previous record of 34.The music’s commercial reach did not stop there. Ringtone downloads from the Jalsa soundtrack alone generated approximately Rs 1.45 crore, a figure that marked a genuine shift in how the Telugu music market was being monetised. In 2008, that was a number the industry had not seen from a film’s music in quite this way.The first movie-based video game in South Indian cinemaThis is one of those Jalsa facts that tends to surprise people, even longtime fans of the film. As part of a wider marketing push, the team behind Jalsa went further than any South Indian film had gone before.Jalsa became the first Telugu and South Indian film to have an official video game. The game was launched at a function at Hotel Novotel in Hyderabad on March 22, 2008. The online version was developed by R22 Games, while the mobile version was developed by



FX Labs.The online game was available for free, while the mobile game was priced at Rs 50 per download and made available across 42 Big C outlets in Andhra Pradesh. The developer of the online version, Chris Whaley, said at the launch that Jalsa was the best action game he had developed up to that point.

The themes and philosophy inside a commercial entertainerThe central theme of Jalsa is fear, specifically who uses it, who is controlled by it, and what it costs. Sanjay Sahu begins the film having already passed through one kind of fear. His Naxalite past, drawn out through a second-half flashback, shows a young man radicalised by the experience of poverty and inequality, who then came to question whether violence in the name of justice was solving anything at all.One of the film’s most quoted lines comes directly from this period of Sanjay’s life: the idea that when innocent people are dying in a war supposedly waged for innocents, the meaning of the war itself must be questioned. Trivikram was not endorsing Naxalism or condemning it. He was asking the audience to sit with a harder question: what does a person do when the system that failed them is the same system they are told to work within?The antagonist, Damodar Reddy, operates entirely through fear. He is presented as a man whose power rests not on strength but on the belief others hold in that strength. The climax, which some critics felt arrived too quickly, revolves around this idea. Sanjay’s method of defeating Damodar Reddy is not through greater force but by dismantling the structure of fear around him, making his power visible as performance rather than substance. The interval monologue, which remains the most-discussed scene in the film, cuts through the comedy that surrounds it with deliberate force. Trivikram uses it to address the audience directly through Sanjay, questioning who actually has the right to speak about hardship, and forcing a distinction between inconvenience and genuine suffering. The scene has been reposted, quoted in political speeches, and played at fan events for eighteen years because it does something the rest of the film does not try to do. It steps outside the entertainment and makes a direct argument.Pawan Kalyan himself has spoken about the weight behind those lines.

‘I shot this with Ranbir Kapoor’: Turban-clad actor clears the air on AI claims over Ramayana teaser ‘colour-changing’ glitch



Ranbir Kapoor’s Ramayana teaser finally released on Thursday, and has been the talk of the town since then. While the actor’s look as Rama is earning praise worldwide, the teaser has also faced criticism online over its VFX, with some users calling certain visuals “video game-like.” Moreover, a particular sequence in which the turban of a supporting actor appeared to change colour mid-scene, sparked speculation about the use of AI. However, the actor seen in that scene has now set the record straight on social media.

In the teaser, a frame shows Ranbir Kapoor’s Lord Rama walking through Ayodhya as people shower flower petals on him. As the shot shifts to an over-the-shoulder angle, a person on the left appears to have a turban that changes from blue to purple. The clip has been going viral on social media, with netizens citing it as possible proof of generative AI in the teaser.However, actor Saket Patel, who starred in the scene, took to his Instagram handle and cleared the air. He clarified that he is the citizen seen wearing the turban in the shot. He also revealed that the sequence was shot on location, and has

Ranbir Kapoor shares daughter Raha’s adorable reaction to Ramayana: ‘Did you shoot with Hanuman today?’

Since the teaser release of Nitesh Tiwari’s Ramayana, fans have been widely praising Ranbir Kapoor’s look as Lord Rama. The makers also hosted a grand teaser screening in Los Angeles for a select audience, followed by an interaction with fans and the media. During the event, Ranbir shared a sweet anecdote about his daughter Raha Kapoor, revealing that she would often ask him about shooting with Hanuman while he was working on the film.During a chat with AP, Ranbir said, “I was extremely blessed to have this opportunity that coincided with me becoming a father. On one side, I am going to work and play Lord Rama, but I am also going home and telling my daughter, Raha, stories about Ramayana. Just to see a 3-year-old so engaged and asking me, ‘Did you shoot with Lord Hanuman today? Or Sita today? What did you do today?’”He further added, “She has so much interest in this story, which tells that this is in our DNA. The culture is so seeped into our subconscious that it comes very naturally — the love and interest come very naturally to us. We really want that to appeal to a larger audience and a global audience, and really share something that we have believed in for centuries and will continue to believe in for centuries.”In another event, Ranbir had revealed that he initially rejected Ramayana, because he felt that he was not ready to play the role of Lord Rama. But, the birth of his daughter Raha changed everything for him. “I remember when Namit offered me this part around 4 years ago, my instant reaction was ‘No’, I’m not fit enough, not good enough, and I won’t be able to do full justice,” he shared.The actor continued, “That fear very quickly turned into gratitude because opportunities like this were needed very much in my life. I was in a period in my life where I needed to change my life and lifestyle. I became a father for the first time. I think the sweet coincidence of playing Lord Rama and becoming a father was



needed for a turning point in my life.”About RamayanaBacked by producer Namit Malhotra, Ramayana is being mounted on a staggering Rs 4,000 crore budget, making it the most expensive Indian film ever and one of the costliest productions globally. The film also features Yash as Ravana, Sai Pallavi as Sita, Sunny Deol as Hanuman, and Ravie Dubey as Lakshman. The ensemble also includes Kajal Aggarwal, Rakul Preet Singh, Arun Govil, Kunal Kapoor, Adinath Kothare, Sheeba Chaddha, and Indira Krishnan.The film is planned as a two-part saga.While the first part is slated for a theatrical release in October 2026, the second chapter is expected to arrive in 2027.

‘I was 15 and in IT class’: Janhvi Kapoor recalls the horror of finding her morphed images online

Janhvi Kapoor recently spoke about the darker realities of growing up in the spotlight, recalling a traumatic experience from her teenage years. In a recent conversation, she shared how she first came across a morphed, sexually explicit image of herself while still in school.

On Raj Shamani’s podcast, Janhvi recalled being just 15 years old when the incident occurred. While attending an IT class at school, she realised that male classmates were looking at a pornographic website. To her horror, the site featured a deepfake-style image of her face morphed onto someone else’s body.“I remember I was in my IT class and I saw boys in my class looking at this site and there was a photo of me on it,” she shared. Janhvi described the experience as isolating, noting that at such a young age, she felt she had to “rationalise” the lack of morality on social media because of her family’s fame.The evolution of digital harassment

While the initial incident happened years ago, Janhvi emphasised that the problem has only evolved with the rise of Artificial Intelligence. She expressed deep concern over how AI-generated visuals are now used to create false narratives.She added, “I am not at peace with it. There are visuals of me out there, even shared by official news pages, which are completely AI. I have never worn those clothes or been photographed like that.”The actor noted that even reputable news pages occasionally share AI visuals of her in outfits she has never worn. This, she argues, poses a professional threat and said, “It gets circulated as if it’s something I’ve put out. That creates a certain kind of impression. Suppose tomorrow I go to a director and I say, ‘Listen, I am not comfortable wearing this,’ they can point to a morphed image and say, ‘But you’ve done it before.’”The “price of privilege”Janhvi Kapoor added that while it affects her deeply, she often feels hesitant to complain about such things. “It upsets



me, of course. But I feel like I don’t have that much of a voice to complain,” she said, adding that perceptions of privilege make it harder to speak out.

“There’s this attitude — you’ve got so much in life, thoda seh lo, don’t complain. So I don’t think my voice has that credibility yet. There will be backlash, and it might take away from the cause,” she added. However, she said that a lot of other women in the film industry have also called out the deepfakes.Several actors across the film industry have spoken out against the growing misuse of AI. Alongside Janhvi Kapoor, stars like Rashmika Mandanna have flagged viral morphed videos, while Aishwarya Rai Bachchan reportedly explored legal options after explicit AI-generated content surfaced online. Anil Kapoor has also taken legal action to safeguard his personality rights in the digital space. Globally, actors such as Scarlett Johansson have raised concerns about how easily deepfake technology can be misused.Disclaimer: This report discusses incidents of digital harassment and the psychological impact of AI-generated deepfakes.