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ASSAM CM, Lalan Singh discuss roadmap to boost fisheries, dairy sectors

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SCAN FOR E-PAPER



OM NAMO VENKATESAYA

01-07-2026
Total pilgrims - 78,067
Tonsures - 3158
Hundi kankabali - 4.39 CR
Laddu sale - 4.16 Lac
Annasprasadams - 1.93 Lac
Medical treatment - 2,601
Waiting Compartments - 27

Approx. Darsan Time for Sarvadarshanam (with out SSD Tokens) - 10-15 H.

Shardul Thakur rues not being "utilised properly" on England tour



Sports News

Telangana Cabinet Clears Major Welfare, Healthcare and Infrastructure Initiatives

Hyderabad, TSIT BUREAU:

Telangana Cabinet, chaired by Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy, on Thursday approved a series of significant decisions aimed at strengthening public welfare, healthcare, education and infrastructure while reaffirming the State's commitment to protecting the interests of rural workers.

The Cabinet decided to implement the Centre's new law relating to the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS) with effect from July 1, 2026, to ensure uninterrupted employment for rural labourers. However, it strongly objected to the Centre's unilateral decision to introduce the legislation without consulting the States, terming it contrary to the spirit of cooperative federalism. The State also resolved to challenge the law before the Supreme Court and raise the issue



in Parliament.

In a major welfare initiative, the Cabinet approved the extension of breakfast, milk and midday meals served in government schools and junior colleges to teachers, lecturers and support staff. Nearly 1.5 lakh employees will benefit from the decision, which is intended to improve accountability while ensuring quality nutrition in educational institutions.

To strengthen public healthcare, the Cabinet sanctioned 6,278 posts for the newly established TIMS Super Speciality

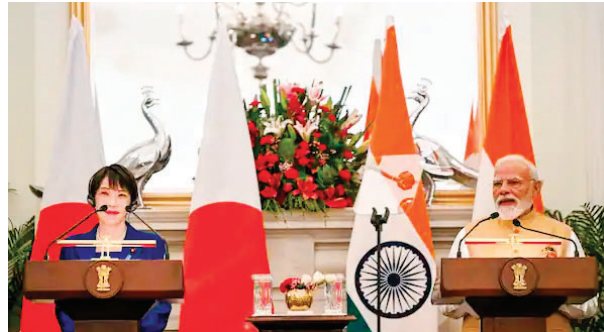
Hospitals at Sanath Nagar, LB Nagar, Alwal and Warangal. The approved posts include 1,494 regular, 549 contract and 4,235 outsourcing positions. The government also decided to develop these hospitals on the lines of NIMS, while Chief Minister Revanth Reddy directed that eligible patients be provided treatment through the Chief Minister's Relief Fund (CMRF) by issuing Letters of Credit (LOCs).

The Cabinet also accorded administrative approval for Phase-I of the Musi Riverfront Development Project, clearing works

worth Rs.7,345.12 crore for the development of a 21-kilometre stretch. It further approved the creation of 147 new posts and deputation of personnel from other departments for the execution and maintenance of the project.

In another important decision, the Cabinet approved the allotment of 50 acres at Bollikunta in Warangal district and 10 acres at Karkalapahad in Rangareddy district to the Telangana State Warehousing Corporation (TGSWC) for the construction of modern warehouses for essential commodities. To enhance educational infrastructure, the Cabinet allotted 20.18 acres at Peddayipally in Mahabubnagar district and 19.12 acres at Kodad in Suryapet district for the establishment of Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalayas. It also approved the allotment of 5 acres at Chalgai village in Jagtial district for setting up a Kendriya Vidyalaya.

India, Japan sign first defence co-development pact



Japan's Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi (L) listens as India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi speaks during their joint press statements after their meeting at the Hyderabad House in New Delhi....

NEW DELHI (TSIT) :

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday described his Japanese counterpart, Sanae Takaichi, as his "younger sister" as the two leaders announced a major expansion of the India-Japan Special Strategic and Global Partnership following the 16th Annual Summit in New Delhi.

Addressing a joint press conference after bilateral talks, PM Modi said Takaichi's maiden

visit to India as Prime Minister was "writing a new chapter" in ties between the two countries. Calling Takaichi a "Japan First Prime Minister" and a "visionary leader", PM Modi said India and Japan shared a common vision for a free, open and rules-based Indo-Pacific.

"Our shared priorities are a free, open and rules-based Indo-Pacific. Our technology partnership has become an important pillar of our relationship," PM Modi said.

First defence co-development project signed

In a significant announcement, PM Modi revealed that India and Japan had signed their first defence co-development project, marking a new phase in bilateral security cooperation.

"We will jointly develop defence technologies that will contribute to regional peace, maritime security and a rules-based international order," he said. The move comes as both countries deepen strategic cooperation amid growing security challenges in the Indo-Pacific.

\$10 trillion yen investment target

Highlighting growing economic ties, PM Modi said Japan and India had signed 120 new business agreements over the past year, adding that Japanese investment in India continues to rise. He announced an ambitious target of 10 trillion yen in Japanese investment into India over the next 10 years, aimed at strengthening manufacturing, infrastructure and technology partnerships.

Kharge urges Centre to step up flood relief in Northeast, calls for PM CARES support



New Delhi (TSIT)

Congress President Mallikarjun Kharge on Thursday expressed grief over the devastation caused by floods and landslides across several northeastern states, urged the Centre to intensify relief and rehabilitation efforts, and called for the immediate utilisation of the PM CARES Fund to support affected families.

In a post on social media platform X, Kharge said the floods and landslides in Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Meghalaya and Sikkim had claimed precious lives and displaced thousands of families, leaving widespread dev-

astation across the region.

"The devastating floods and landslides in Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Meghalaya and Sikkim have claimed precious lives and left thousands of families displaced and devastated. I extend my heartfelt condolences to the families who have lost their loved ones and stand in unwavering solidarity with every person affected by this tragedy across the Northeastern region," Kharge said.

The Congress chief criticised the BJP-led governments at the Centre and in the affected states, alleging that repeated promises to make the Northeast flood-free had not translated into meaningful action. "All the tall promises by 'Double Engine' NDA Governments to the people of Northeast to make their states 'flood free' have disappeared in thin air, even as flood has become a regular annual feature with little preparedness and scarce long-term mitigation efforts," he said.

Iran warns US, Israel against attack during Khamenei funeral

Tehran (TSIT)

Thursday, July 2, marked the 15th day since Washington and Tehran signed a memorandum of understanding and the 125th day since the outbreak of the war, as Iran warned the United States and Israel against launching any attack during the state funeral of late Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei.

Ali Abdollahi, commander of Khatam al-Anbiya Central Headquarters, warned the United States and Israel against any "miscalculation", saying Iran's armed forces were prepared to respond decisively to any threat or aggression, Reuters reported. The warning came as authorities stepped up security and finalised preparations for the six-day funeral ceremonies, which are expected to draw millions of mourners and foreign dignitaries from



dozens of countries.

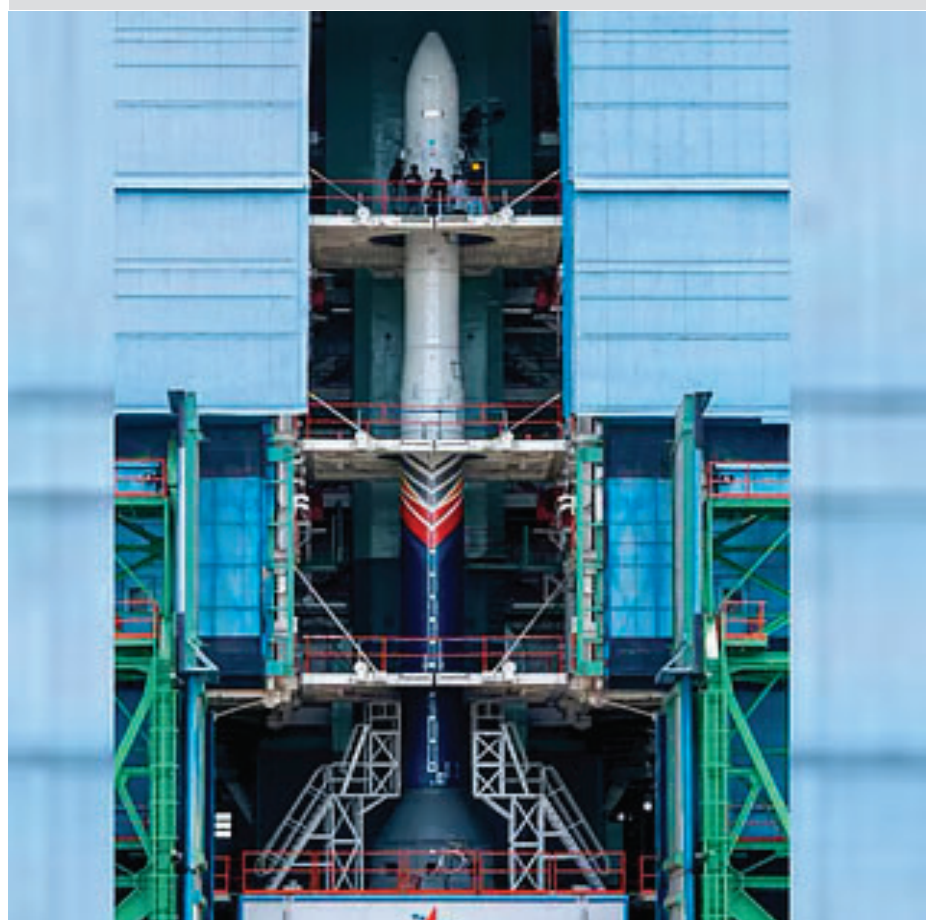
Mojtaba Khamenei is unlikely to make a public appearance during his father's funeral because of heightened security concerns, according to Ayatollah Hakim Elahi, the Supreme Leader's representative in India.

Iran has reinforced security across the country ahead of the funeral. Army spokesperson Mohammad Akraminia said additional troops had been deployed along land and maritime borders, while naval monitoring and air defence surveillance had been intensified. The funeral will begin

in Tehran on July 4 before moving to Qom, Iraq's holy cities of Najaf and Karbala, and concluding with Khamenei's burial in his hometown of Mashhad on July 9. President Masoud Pezeshkian described Khamenei's death as the beginning of a new chapter of national unity, resilience and growth, saying the funeral would demonstrate Iran's solidarity.

Foreign Ministry spokesperson Esmail Baghaei said countries that supported or defended the US and Israeli strikes on Iran had not been invited to the funeral. Iran has made special arrangements for Afghan nationals wishing to attend the funeral. The Indian National Congress has nominated senior leader and former External Affairs Minister Salman Khurshid to represent the party at the state funeral of late Iranian Supreme Leader Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei.

Skyroot Aerospace's Vikram-1



Vikram-1, India's first privately developed orbital-class rocket, to be launched between July 12 and August 4

CM Vijay creates five more TVK district units, names 4 MLAs as district secretaries

In a statement, Vijay said the party had already reorganised its structure by dividing it into districts covering Assembly constituencies and that five more districts had now been created for administrative convenience.

CHENNAI (TSIT):

TVK president and Chief Minister C Joseph Vijay on Thursday announced the creation of five more organisational districts and appointed district secretaries, with four party MLAs being given the responsibility.

In a statement, Vijay said the party had already reorganised its structure by dividing it into districts covering Assembly constituencies and that five more districts had now been created for administrative convenience. The new appointments are MLA J Munirathinam for



Kancheepuram South, MLA V Reddiyarpatti Narayanan for Tirunelveli South-East, S Mariya John for Tirunelveli Central, MLA RS Murugan for Tirunelveli North and MLA R Abhishek for Tiruvannamalai North-West. "I am pleased to inform you that office-bearers

have been appointed for the five newly created districts," Vijay said. He congratulated the appointees and asked party workers to extend full cooperation to the new district secretaries in carrying out organisational responsibilities.

8 labourers mostly from Bihar killed as rock collapses at stone quarry in Bengaluru

BENGALURU (TSIT):

Eight workers mostly from Bihar were killed after a massive granite rock collapsed at a stone quarry in Bengaluru South Taluk on Thursday, police said. According to police, the tragedy occurred in the early morning at Madapattana, bordering Bengaluru Urban and Bengaluru South district.

The victims, all daily-wage labourers employed at a stone crusher site, were trapped beneath the fallen boulders and died on the spot, according to police.

Police said the accident occurred while the workers were engaged in quarrying operations.

The injured were shifted to a private hospital for treatment. Chief Minister

DK Shivakumar expressed his grief over the incident.

The collapse of a crusher wall in Madapattana of Bengaluru South Taluk has caused the death of seven workers, bringing immense sorrow, he said in a post on 'X'. He said, "It is the duty of quarry owners to ensure the life safety and security of workers engaged in quarry operations. The government will take appropriate action against quarries that violate regulations."

According to Yashwanthpur MLA ST Somashekar, the eighth labourer died in the hospital. He charged that he had been complaining about "illegal quarrying" for the past many years and raised the issue in the Karnataka Assembly. Somashekar said some-



time ago, a leopard was killed due to the blast carried out by the quarry owners. "In this illegalities, police, forest department and mining department officials are involved who should be booked and tried. It is a serious matter that eight people have died," the MLA told reporters. The exact number of those injured was still being verified, though initial reports indicated that

He demanded the state government that the accused should not escape from the clutches of the law. According to those working on the spot, the toll may go up as the condition of some of the injured was critical. They said some of them may even lose their limbs permanently. The exact number of those injured was still being verified, though initial reports indicated that

several workers sustained injuries. Rescue personnel and police rushed to the spot and launched operations following the collapse. The area was cordoned off as officials began clearing debris and searching for any other workers who may have been trapped.

One of the labourers said there were about 18 workers from Bihar and North Karnataka at the site. A huge rock fell from about 40 feet on the workers. The severity of the accident could be gauged from the fact that loading vehicles were completely mangled. A tractor on the site broke into pieces. It is learnt that the deceased were mostly from Bihar and efforts were underway to inform their families.

Assam CM, Lalan Singh discuss roadmap to boost fisheries, dairy sectors

New Delhi (TSIT) Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on Thursday met union Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying Minister Rajiv Ranjan Singh (Lalan Singh) and discussed a roadmap to strengthen the fisheries and dairy sectors in the state.

The meeting, held at the union Minister's official residence here, focused on unlocking Assam's potential in fisheries by increasing fish production, promoting exports, strengthening the value chain, expanding processing infrastructure and improving market access.

Sharing details of the meeting on X, Sarma said he had a "very good conversation" with the union Minister and appreciated



his insights and experience in the sector.

The Chief Minister said the discussions explored ways to transform Assam into a major fish-producing and fish-exporting hub through coordinated efforts in production, processing and marketing.

"We had a productive discussion on harnessing Assam's immense potential in the fisheries sector. Along with increasing fish production, we also explored promoting fish exports by strengthening the value chain, improving processing infrastructure and enhancing market access," he said.

In a separate post on X, the union Minister described the meeting as "warm and productive" and said the discussions covered measures to enhance fish production, boost exports, strengthen the fisheries value chain and expand processing infrastructure.

Sarma added that the ideas discussed would be translated into concrete outcomes in the coming days. The two leaders also reviewed measures to strengthen Assam's dairy sector, including enhancing veterinary facilities, setting up Pashu Aushadhi Kendras, establishing Tetra Pak (UHT) and milk powder plants, and improving cattle stock through artificial insemination.

Mumbai (TSIT) QBE Insurance Group Limited, an international general insurer and reinsurer, has acquired 100% ownership of Raheja QBE General Insurance Company Limited

QBE Insurance Group Limited becomes sole owner and shareholder of Raheja QBE General Insurance Company Limited

• Australian-headquartered global insurer acquires remaining stake in Indian carrier.
• The move is a significant milestone in QBE's strategic expansion in India and contributes to QBE's regional growth plans.
• The consolidation will enable new opportunities for innovation, global best practices, new products, and technology – with the goal of improving and creating customer-centric solutions across the Indian insurance landscape.



(Raheja QBE), following approval from the Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (IRDAI). The acquisition follows 18 years of joint ownership with Prism Johnson Limited and marks a significant

milestone in QBE's strategic expansion in the Asian region. Raheja QBE is also being renamed and will be known as QBE as part of this acquisition. This transaction underscores QBE's view of India as an important growth market.

"India is one of the world's most dynamic markets – and we are well positioned to deploy QBE's capabilities and unlock the next phase of growth in a country we believe has enormous long-term potential," said Rob Kosova, CEO, QBE Asia.

Sole ownership will enable QBE to explore new opportunities for product and operational innovation, with the

goal of improving and creating customer-centric solutions across the Indian insurance landscape. Both QBE Asia and Raheja QBE teams will continue to drive the local business forward. "While ownership is changing, our focus remains exactly the same: supporting our customers, partners and people," said Kosova. "Our priority is to build on the strong foundations already in place, preserve continuity for customers and create new opportunities for growth, innovation and career development. We are excited to welcome the India team fully into the QBE family and to shape the future of this business together."

'Methyl Isocyanate of Law': SC quashes verdict based on AI-generated precedents

NEW DELHI: Red flagging the use of "non-existent, fake, and hallucinated" judgements generated by artificial intelligence (AI), the Supreme Court on Thursday set aside a verdict of the National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT), saying that courts must adopt zero tolerance against citing or using AI-generated precedents.

The bench comprising Justices PS Narasimha and Alok Aradhe said, "The production of fake, non-existent, and hallucinated material and its utilisation as precedents in law, is like the release of methyl Isocyanate in the province of law and justice: invisible, insidious, and catastrophic by the time



anyone notices. It not only contaminates but takes away the very lifeblood of judicial determination." It set aside an NCLT judgement on Essel Infraprojects insolvency after finding that the tribunal had relied on non-existent, fake and hallucinated judgement precedents generated through AI tools.

"It is necessary for Courts to adopt a zero-tolerance mode for producing, citing or using AI-generated precedents without verification. It is a misconduct on the part of an advocate to cite such judgements without verification," the verdict said. The bench said it was equally a "serious lapse" if a judge relies on such a fake or hallucinated AI-generated material as precedents in support of the determination.

"We have no hesitation in declaring that such a decision is no decision in the eyes of the law, irrespective of whether such material had a direct or indirect bearing on the decision-making. Such decisions are to be set aside even if an iota of fake or hallucinated material enters the decision-making process, as it would violate the sanctity of adjudication," it said.

Kakatiya University initiates MoUs with three German universities

Warangal, July 2 (TSIT): Kakatiya University has initiated the process of signing Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) with three universities in Germany to expand academic and research collaborations as part of its internationalisation drive. Vice-Chancellor Prof. K. Pratap Reddy submitted Letters of Intent (LoIs) to the international relations divisions of RWTH Aachen University, Ostfalia University of Applied Sciences and the University of Göttingen during his visit to the institutions on June 1, 2026. The initiative was undertaken in the presence of Higher Education Secretary Dr. Yogita Rana, RUSA 2.0 State Project Officer Dr. Soundarya Joseph, RUSA 2.0 Nodal Officer of Kakatiya University Prof. R.



Mallikarjuna Reddy and Osmania University Vice-Chancellor Prof. M. Kumar, who participated in the discussions. The proposed MoUs are expected to provide Kakatiya University students with opportunities for higher education, joint research, student and faculty exchange programmes, participation in summer and winter schools, and collaborative academic initiatives with the German institutions.

GITAM to Hold 17th Convocation on August 22

The South India Times, Visakhapatnam : GITAM (Deemed to be University) will conduct its 17th Convocation on August 22, Registrar Dr. D. Gunasekaran announced in a statement issued on Thursday. Students who have successfully completed their Undergraduate (UG), Postgraduate (PG), and Ph.D. programmes during the 2025–26 academic year are eligible to participate in the convocation ceremony. The event will celebrate the academic achievements of graduates from various disciplines, including Engineering, Management, Science, Law, Pharmacy, Humanities and Social Sciences, and Architecture. Eligible students have been advised to register online for participation in the convocation between July 3 and July 17, 2026. For registration, detailed guidelines, and other information related to the convocation, students are requested to visit the official GITAM website.

South India Shopping Mall launches 15th Blockbuster Aashadam No. 1 Kilo Sale with up to 66% off

Hyderabad, July 3: South India Shopping Mall has launched its 15th Blockbuster Aashadam No. 1 Kilo Sale across Telangana, Andhra Pradesh, and Karnataka, offering customers discounts of up to 66% on lakhs of new designs. The much-awaited annual shopping festival begins today, marking 15 years of the brand's popular kilo sale celebrations.

Announcing the launch, the management thanked customers for their continued trust over the past 15 years and said this year's edition features the biggest collection and savings ever. The sale follows the campaign theme, "E Aashadamlo Shopping Kiloalo! Santhosham Tannulalo!", highlighting the unique kilo sale concept that has become synonymous with the brand.

The showrooms are stocked with thousands of clothing



varieties and lakhs of fresh designs for women, men, and children. The women's collection includes pattu sarees, fancy sarees, designer sarees, and lehengas, while the men's section offers ethnic wear, sherwanis, casuals, and the latest fashion trends. The kids' range features festive ethnic wear and comfortable casual outfits in contemporary styles.

The sale is aimed at shoppers preparing for the upcoming festive and wedding season, providing premium-quality apparel at attractive prices. South India Shopping Mall has invited families and fashion enthusiasts to visit their nearest showroom and take advantage of the limited-period offers before the

RS Brothers launches Aashadam Challenge KG Sale with up to 70% discounts

Hyderabad, July 3: RS Brothers has launched its much-awaited Aashadam Challenge KG Sale across all its outlets in Telangana, Andhra Pradesh, and Maharashtra, offering shoppers discounts of up to 70% on a wide range of apparel and sarees.

The seasonal shopping festival introduces the brand's unique weight-based pricing model, where selected sarees and garments are sold by kilograms, providing customers with significant savings while choosing from thousands of fresh designs and styles. The sale features an extensive collection catering to women, men, and children, making it a one-stop shopping destination for the entire family.



The women's section includes pattu sarees, fancy sarees, designer sarees, lehengas, and bridal collections, while the men's range offers ethnic wear, sherwanis, casuals, and formal outfits. The

kids' section showcases ethnic and casual wear in the latest designs.

Adding to the excitement, this year's campaign features celebrity endorsements that reflect the brand's blend of tradition and modern fashion. The management expressed gratitude to customers for their continued trust and said the Aashadam Challenge KG Sale has been curated to offer the biggest savings ever, with lakhs of new designs at attractive prices. With the upcoming festive and wedding season approaching, RS Brothers has invited shoppers to visit its stores early and take advantage of the limited-period offers before stocks are exhausted.

GITAM to Host Young Indians Parliament 2026 on July 4 & 5

The South India Times, Visakhapatnam : The Visakhapatnam Chapter of Young Indians (YI), an initiative of the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII), will organize the third edition of the Young Indians Parliament (YIP) 2026 on July 4 and 5 at GITAM Deemed to be University, Visakhapatnam, Yi Vizag Chair Deepa Kodali announced.

One of Yi's flagship youth leadership initiatives, the Young Indians Parliament aims to foster constitutional awareness, democratic values, leadership skills, public speaking, and critical thinking among school students through a simulated parliamentary experience. This year's edition will witness the participation of 185 students from leading schools across Visakhapatnam. The participants will engage in parliamentary proceedings, debates, and discussions, enabling them to gain firsthand exposure to the functioning of India's democratic institutions.

The inaugural session, scheduled at 9.00 a.m. on July 4, will be graced by Visakhapatnam Member of Parliament M. Sriharat as the Chief Guest. A strong advocate of civic engagement and democratic learning, he has attended every edition of the Young Indians Parliament held in Vizag as the Chief Guest. The valedictory ceremony will be held at 3.00 p.m. on July 5, with Rajahmundry Member of Parliament Dr. Daggubati Purandeswari attending as the Chief Guest and felicitating the participating students. Students emerging as winners in the Chapter Round will qualify to represent Yi Vizag at the Young Indians Parliament Regional Round. The event is being led by Yi Vizag Chair Deepa Kodali and Co-Chair Supriya Lingam, while the Thair vertical is headed by Chair Brinda Lavu along with Co-Chairs Yogiha Yerra and Harshitha Guggilam.

GEF India and IAPEN Hyderabad Chapter Hosted Nutrition Meet

Dr. Matheen Asrar shared scientific insights on preventive nutrition, healthy cooking oils and the everyday value of Rice Bran Oil

Hyderabad: 02nd July, 2026: GEF India, in association with the Indian Association for Parenteral and Enteral Nutrition (IAPEN India) Hyderabad Chapter, hosted a Nutrition Meet on the theme "Nutritional Insights and Everyday Value of Rice Bran Oil", bringing together nutritionists, dietitians, healthcare professionals and industry experts to discuss the importance of evidence-based nutrition and the role of healthy cooking oils in preventive healthcare. The session was led by renowned Consultant Nutritionist Dr. Matheen Asrar, who shared scientific insights on dietary fats, everyday nutrition and practical approaches to making healthier food choices.

The session focused on the growing burden of non-communicable diseases such as cardiovascular disease, diabetes and obesity, highlighting the importance of preventive nutrition in improving long term health out-

comes. Experts emphasised that while cooking oil is a staple ingredient in almost every Indian household, consumers often make decisions based on misconceptions rather than scientific evidence. They stressed the need to shift the conversation from reducing fat intake to choosing the right quality of fats and following balanced dietary practices.

Dr. Matheen explained that fats are essential for brain function, hormone production, cell health and vitamin absorption, and should not be eliminated but balanced through quality and moderation. She highlighted that Rice Bran Oil contains monounsaturated and polyunsaturated fats along with bioactives such as oryzanol, tocopherols and tocotrienols, which have been studied for their role in supporting cholesterol management. Its high smoke point also makes it suitable for Indian cooking methods such as deep frying and stir frying. Referring



to published evidence, she noted that Rice Bran Oil consumption has been associated with up to a 12% reduction in LDL cholesterol over four weeks, while a meta-analysis of 11 randomised controlled trials

(RCTs) involving 572 participants reported reductions in LDL cholesterol, total cholesterol and triglycerides. She added that these benefits are comparable to those of other unsaturated vegetable oils.

However, she reiterated that the choice of cooking oil, together with a balanced diet and an active lifestyle, remains key to maintaining good health.

Speaking during the session, Dr. Matheen Asrar, RD, PhD, PGDHA, CDE and Consultant Nutritionist, said, "Good nutrition is built on informed choices guided by credible scientific evidence rather than misconceptions or changing dietary trends. As consumers have access to an abundance of nutrition information, it is important to distinguish facts from myths and adopt dietary habits that are practical, balanced and sustainable. Rice Bran Oil is one of the cooking oils with a well-documented nutritional profile and can be included as part of a healthy diet. However, lasting health is shaped by overall dietary patterns, regular physical activity and consistent lifestyle practices rather than any single food or ingredient."

Speaking on the occasion, Ms. Sujata Stephen, General Secretary, IAPEN Telangana Chapter, said, "Nutrition awareness plays a vital role in improving public health and empowering individuals to make informed dietary choices. At IAPEN Telangana Chapter, we are committed to advancing nutrition education by encouraging knowledge sharing among healthcare professionals and promoting practical dietary guidance for the wider community. Our association with GEF India for this Nutrition Meet provided a valuable platform to discuss preventive nutrition, healthy cooking practices and the nutritional value of Rice Bran Oil. We believe that continued collaboration between healthcare professionals, nutrition experts and responsible industry partners can contribute significantly to promoting healthier lifestyles and supporting long term health and wellbeing."

EDITORIAL

The Great AI Writing Trap:
Why Everyone Suddenly
Sounds The Same

I was at a business conference recently, listening to some of India's brightest minds speak one after another. It was the kind of event where you come prepared to be bored and awed in the same day. One after another, speeches written with corporate jargon, waiting for that one moment in each speech that was clearly written to be remembered. But this time, I found myself getting bored faster than I used to. Not because the speakers were bad, they really weren't, but because somewhere in the middle of it all, I realised every speech was following a pattern. Every speaker sounded way more similar than they used to. I started paying attention after that to this pattern. Speeches, articles, social media posts by people with verified accounts and decades of experience - all of it carried a rhythm, like it's a template - the same way of building tension and arriving at a conclusion. So, I did something that we all do these days when we have a thought: I asked ChatGPT why this was happening. The irony of doing that is not lost on me. The answer, to its credit, was way more honest than I expected. It admitted that it is obsessed with the contrast framing of sentences. It is rhetorical and takes control of the reader's mental model. AI has become a genuinely useful writing tool. It fixes grammar, tightens arguments, and helps organise thought. For people writing in a second or third language, it does something more valuable still, bridging a gap that used to require years of immersion or an editor with the time and patience to help. That is a real benefit, and an underappreciated one. But the same tool is producing a problem that is harder to see when you're writing, but obvious to a reader or a listener: it is making intelligent people sound identical. The evidence is in the constructions we can all now identify. "This is not a challenge; it is an opportunity." "India is not a market, it is a mission." "Immigration is not about borders. It is about identity." "AI is not about technology. It is about power."

"Manufacturing is not about factories. It is about sovereignty." "The question is no longer whether, but how." Once you start noticing these formulations, you cannot stop. They are in speeches, opinion pieces, annual reports, social media threads, and television debates. The first time, they sound persuasive. By the hundredth time, they are furniture. And increasingly, they are something worse than furniture. AI writing is no longer just identifiable. It has become something people laugh at, and the people producing it are often the last to know. The reason is an unexpected one. The problem with AI writing is not that it is bad. It is that it is too perfect. Too free of the hesitations and instincts that make writing feel like it came from a person working something out. Human thinking and, by extension, writing, is a product of friction. The odd stumble, the sentence that goes somewhere unexpected, the argument that admits its own uncertainty. AI writing has none of this. Every sentence arrives fully formed. Every problem becomes a clean contrast. Every paragraph strains toward profundity whether or not it has earned it. Readers have started to feel this frictionlessness as a tell, and once they feel it, the mockery follows naturally. Underneath the style problem is a thinking problem, and this one is harder to paper over.

Edit

Punjab 2027: Why Cash Transfers
Alone May Not Be Enough for AAP

Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann yesterday launched the Brahmastra against anti-incumbency, a cash transfer scheme for women. Under the Mawan Dhiyan Satkar Yojana, 36 lakh women beneficiaries received the first of a monthly instalment of Rs 1,000, and another Rs 500 if they were Dalit. We have seen cash transfers to women wipe out a n t i - i n c u m b e n c y overnight in many states. Similar schemes have helped incumbents in Assam, West Bengal, Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra. Punjab's per capita income is less than Rs 20,000 per month and a lot of poor families would be earning much less than that. This scheme is like earning a 5-15% raise. Why would they not vote for AAP? In Karnataka in 2023 I had persuaded the Congress to include cash transfers as one of their guarantees. Working on the Nationalist Congress Party campaign in Maharashtra in 2024, helping the late Ajit Pawar convert this scheme into votes, I saw the joy on women's faces over having autonomy over free money. Ultimately the benefit goes to the entire household and helps get some of the male vote too. In Punjab as in many other states, the scheme will help over 50% of the state's 65 lakh households. In theory, the scheme could over-ride the growing anti-incumbency against the AAP over various issues, from drugs and crime to its crisis with the Akal Takht, from the unpopularity of its MLAs to a general sense that they haven't lived up to the high expectations people had for a system-changing new setup in a state badly in need of an economic



revival. In practice, the AAP cannot presume the election is over. As of today, the Punjab 2027 election is still open and could go anyway. A week is a long time in politics; there are still eight months to go.

Exceptions to the rule
Firstly, it is not true that cash transfers always win elections. There are some exceptions. People remember that Akhilesh Yadav lost UP in 2017 despite a free laptop scheme for students, but they forget that he even had a Rs 500 cash transfer scheme for 50 lakh women. He had a bunch of other welfare measures too. In 2024, the YSR Jagan Mohan Reddy saw a decisive defeat despite aggressive welfare schemes including several targeted direct benefit transfer programmes. Every section of society got something or the other. Similarly, the

KCR Government in Telangana lost the 2023 elections - welfare and cash transfer schemes worked for them in 2018 but not in 2023.

Revolutionary sentiment There are other reasons why AAP can't bank on this scheme alone. Punjab's voters have a history and a habit of doing things different from voters in the Hindi heartland. It is possible that they may react differently to the cash transfer scheme as well. Since the re-organisation of Punjab in 1966, it is on only one occasion that a sitting government repeated itself, and that was the Akali Dal in 2012. What sets Punjab apart from other states is a strong revolutionary sentiment among the people. This revolutionary sentiment means that the people love to create new heroes and

then make them fall. Thereafter, they might forgive you the worst and make you a hero again. The Aam Aadmi Party was built up as a heroic messiah by the people of Punjab, starting in 2014. It is inevitable that the Aam Aadmi Party will go through a cycle where the same voters will bring it down, just like they have done to Congress and the Akali Dal in the past. Punjab does not have standard anti-incumbency like other states. It swings between extreme love and extreme hate. In other words, anti-incumbency could become too pronounced for even a tried-and-tested cash transfer scheme to beat. This is especially possible since the scheme has been launched nine months before the polls - enough time for it to become routine and for the opposition to make the public want change despite it. This will depend entirely on how hard the opposition can work. A fragmented opposition gives an opportunity to all 3 parties - INC, BJP, SAD - to rise up with clever campaigns and become principal challengers to the AAP on grounds of governance, despite the welfare-farism.

A class divide
The anti-incumbency sentiment in Punjab today is louder than it actually exists, because vocal and dominant sections of society are voicing it. Those who tend to keep silent - the poor, Dalits and women - are much less unhappy with the AAP. The party may be achieving the 'Delhi model' in at least this respect, by creating a class divide. Just like other states with cash transfer schemes, the AAP could

ride a silent wave, with the results surprising anyone. Or so it would hope. Punjab's history shows that no party wins a majority without getting a substantial vote from the three big voting blocks each - Hindus, Dalits and Sikhs. The complex stratification within these segments allows all parties to win at least some votes from all three segments. A class divide alone may not achieve these. Unlike other states, the AAP may not be able to bank on the poor alone. In fact even in Delhi, the AAP lost the 2025 election by losing their middle class support. The 40% vote share they won came mostly from the poor, who have come to see the AAP as their own party. This is not an election prediction, just a humble note to election pundits that the battle for Punjab 2027 isn't over. It's only just begun.

PRIMARY HEALTH INTERSECTS
WELLNESS AND DIGITIZATION

— Dr. Priyanka Saurabh

India's healthcare system has been undergoing unprecedented transformation over the past decade. The rapid expansion of digital technologies, artificial intelligence, telemedicine, electronic health records, health data management, and integrated digital platforms have begun to transform healthcare delivery. Medical science, meanwhile, is shifting from just treating diseases to placing greater emphasis on "wellness," i.e., holistic health, disease prevention, mental health, nutrition, yoga, and a healthy lifestyle. The Government of India's initiatives such as the Ayushman Bharat Health and Wellness Centers (AB-HWC), Ayushman Bharat Digital Mission (ABDM), e-Sanjeevani, ABHA Digital Health ID, and the National Digital Health Ecosystem symbolize this transformation. These initiatives have certainly provided new opportunities for modernizing healthcare, but a fundamental question remains relevant—can digital transformation and wellness-focused approaches replace strong primary healthcare institutions? The answer to this question is negative. Technology can make healthcare more efficient, transparent, and accessible, but it cannot replace doctors, nurses, medicines, laboratories, ambulances, and robust primary health care institutions. Healthcare is ultimately a human service, built on a strong institutional framework, trained human resources, and community outreach. If the primary

health care system is weak, even the most advanced digital platforms will not be able to provide quality healthcare to citizens. The foundation of India's public health system is Sub-Health Centers (SCs), Primary Health Centers (PHCs), and Community Health Centers (CHCs). These institutions are the first point of contact for essential services such as maternal and child health, immunization, nutrition, family planning, infectious disease control, early detection of non-communicable diseases, and primary treatment. Unfortunately, in many rural, tribal, and remote areas of the country, these institutions have been struggling for years with a shortage of doctors, nurses, medicines, equipment, and infrastructure. Many Primary Health Centers lack regular electricity, clean drinking water, internet, laboratory facilities, and even ambulances. Therefore, simply developing digital platforms will not automatically improve the quality of health services. The establishment of Ayushman Bharat Health and Wellness Centers was intended to expand primary healthcare services. These services included maternal and child health, as well as services such as diabetes, hypertension, early cancer screening, mental health, geriatric health, and yoga. This concept is consistent with modern public health approaches, as most diseases today are also lifestyle-related. However, in many places, health and wellness centers have been limited to mere name changes. The buildings remain the same, the equipment remains the same, the

human resources remain scarce, and in many places, essential medicines are not regularly available. Without a parallel investment in institutional capacity, "health and wellness" will remain merely a policy term. The Ayushman Bharat Digital Mission is an ambitious reform in the health sector. Through the ABHA ID, efforts are underway to create digital health records for every citizen, digitally register hospitals and health professionals, and integrate treatment information. This will preserve patients' treatment history, reduce unnecessary tests, ensure continuity of health services, and provide reliable data to policymakers. This is a need for the future. However, it is equally true that digital health records cannot replace a doctor in a village, nor can they solve the problem of unavailability of medicines or poor health infrastructure. If primary health centers themselves are not efficient, the digital health system will be limited to information management. A major challenge facing digital health is the digital divide. Even today, millions of citizens in India lack smartphones, quality internet access, and digital literacy. Ensuring equitable access to digital services for those in rural areas, tribal areas, mountainous regions, the elderly, and economically weaker sections is not easy. If health services are heavily digital-based, the very segments of society that need them most will be most disadvantaged. Therefore, the goal of digitalization should be inclusion, not exclusion. A wellness-focused approach is

an important component of modern health policy. A healthy diet, yoga, regular exercise, stress management, mental health, and a drug-free lifestyle certainly play a significant role in disease prevention. However, it would be unfair to consider health solely as a result of individual lifestyle. A person's health is deeply intertwined with their social, economic, and environmental environment. Poverty, malnutrition, lack of access to clean drinking water, poor sanitation, pollution, unsafe housing, and lack of education are social determinants of health that cannot be addressed solely through wellness campaigns. If a family lacks access to nutritious food, simply advising on a balanced diet will not lead to the desired improvement in health. If a pregnant woman has to travel several kilometers to reach the nearest health center, a digital health app will not solve her problem. In a vast and diverse country like India, a strong primary health care system can be the key foundation for the success of healthcare services. The COVID-19 pandemic has made it clear that local health institutions, ASHA workers, ANMs, Anganwadi workers, and primary health centers play a crucial role in addressing any health crisis. While door-to-door surveys, vaccinations, contact tracing, public awareness, and community monitoring have certainly been improved with the help of digital technology, their actual implementation is carried out by grassroots health workers. This demonstrates that technology is a support, not a substitute.

Why India Should Be Very, Very Alarmed
About China's Teesta Move In Bangladesh

It looks like a done deal. Responding to questions on China providing assistance to Bangladesh on the Teesta River project, its Foreign Ministry spokesperson said, with perfect equanimity, that "China-Bangladesh cooperation does not target any third party and should be free from third-party influence". That's nice. One would like to see what Beijing's reaction would have been if the US or Japan played footsie in a project along the Mekong River or the Red river. This when China has 41 hydropower dams, two multi-purpose dams and 25 irrigation dams in its section of just one of those rivers, and still bristles even if an international bank is involved in any project in neighbouring countries. So, no, that lofty statement doesn't wash. The Fine Print A reasonable degree of alarm was generated as Bangladesh Prime Minister Tarique Rehman chose to visit China for his first visit abroad in this capacity. That's usually a privilege reserved for India, but times change, and processes too with it. But then came strong suspicions as the 'Joint Communique' issued during the visit declared that China will "provide support and help within its capacity to the Teesta River Comprehensive Management and Restoration Project (TRCMRP)", together with experts from Bangladesh. Beijing is no open-handed generous power. That phrase, 'within its capacity', will probably mean that it will rope in an international bank to fund the project, leaving the Bangladesh government to mull over the bills. Add to that the fact that the firm



involved in the project is PowerChina, a behemoth that works in almost every Asian country and is also part of the strategic works with the People's Liberation Army, and comes directly under SASAC (State-owned Assets Supervision and Administration Commission of the State Council). That's the Chinese communist party we're talking about. The Chinese Are There Anyway Diplomatic positioning notwithstanding, Beijing knows very well that the project has direct security implications for India. China had been angling for the project for years but was thwarted by the Hasina government's caution in getting Beijing too involved in the country in a project that's virtually next to a sensitive area. The river itself runs parallel to the India-Bangladesh border, thus placing the project about 10-20 km of the border, and a little further on to the highly sensitive Siliguri corridor. True, Sheikh Hasina did allow a contract with the

Chinese in September 2016, when the Bangladesh Water Development Board entered a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with PowerChina (Power Construction Corporation of China) to carry out a technical study to better manage the Teesta for the benefit of northern Bangladesh's greater Rangpur region. That involved dredging the river to prevent severe flooding during the monsoons and equally store water when needed. Though the feasibility studies and accompanying data was completed, the effort came to nothing as the then Foreign Secretary, Harsh Vardhan Shringla, hurried to Dhaka to nip that in the bud. Hasina raised the issue several times with Delhi, but attempts to address it were thwarted by the tempestuous Chief Minister Mamta Banerjee, who opposed it tooth and nail. While all this was going on, the Chinese were steadily entrenching themselves in the Rangpur division in various small businesses, includ-

ing hotels and tourism, which services a large Chinese population involved in construction efforts in the district. This includes the SASEC Road Connectivity Project-II, improvement of the Elenga-Hatikamrul-Rangpur Road to a 4-Lane Highway, construction of a bridge over Teesta in Gaibandha, Barapukuria Coal Mine, Barapukuria Coal Fired Thermal Power Station, and the construction of Saidpur Simple Cycle (HSD based) Power Plant Project. Recently, the Chinese Ambassador Li was also visiting the Uttara Export Processing Zone in Nilphamari of Rangpur division. That's rather a lot of Chinese presence in a very sensitive area. Add to that the Yunus government inviting China to revive a World War 2-era air base in Lalmonirhat, again near the border, and you have a troublesome situation. All that seemed to have been rolled back as a new and young Prime Minister, Tarique Rehman, arrived like a breath of fresh air.

Google must pay €4.1bn fine for using Android to 'block' rivals

Europe's top court has ruled Google must pay a 4.1bn (€3.5bn) fine handed down for using its Android mobile operating system to block rivals. The European Commission had originally handed out a 4.3bn (then €3.9bn) fine in 2018, but this was trimmed to 4.1 bn in 2022. An appeal brought by the tech giant has now been dismissed. It is the largest penalty the Commission has ever imposed against Google. A Google spokesperson said the judgement "fails to recognise" the firm's "significant investment to ensure Android remains open, interoperable and free". "In any event, we adapted our agreements to comply with the initial decision back in 2018 and we remain focused on continued innovation and openness for our users, partners and developers," they continued. When the fine was first announced in 2018, it was alleged there were three



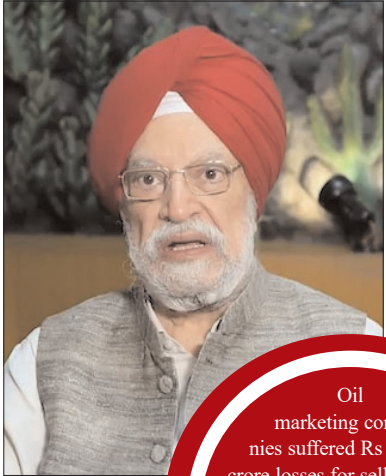
ways in which Google had acted illegally: requiring Android handset and tablet manufacturers to pre-install the Google Search app and its own web browser Chrome as a condition of allowing them to offer access to its Play app store making payments to large manufacturers and mobile network operators that agreed to

exclusively pre-install the Google Search app on their devices, preventing manufacturers from selling any smart devices powered by alternative "forked" versions of Android by threatening to refuse them permission to pre-install its apps. It was acknowledged that Google's version of Android does not

prevent device owners downloading alternative web browsers or using other search engines. Google's chief executive Sundar Pichai blogged in response at the time to the original fine that the decision "rejects the business model that supports Android, which has created more choice for everyone, not less."

Will Fuel Prices Come Down? Minister Hardeep Puri's "2-3 Months" Hint

New Delhi: Oil marketing companies suffered Rs 74,781-crore losses for selling petrol, diesel and LPG below cost for the period up to June 30 when global crude oil prices spiked in the wake of the West Asia conflict, Union Petroleum Minister Hardeep Singh Puri said on Thursday. International crude oil prices have come down, but companies are still processing crude they bought at the height of the West Asia crisis, the Minister told reporters. Asked if there would be a cut in prices of petrol and diesel, Puri said this would be a legitimate question if oil prices stayed low for the next few weeks. "We are using the crude petroleum stock today that we had bought two months ago (at a price that existed two months ago). If this (decline) continues for 2-3 months, we will see. But it is a hypothetical situation," he said. The Minister highlighted that the petrol price increase in developed world was around 20% and around 35% in India's neighboring countries, but in India, the increase in petrol price was just 5.58% during the crisis. "We did well without any dryout or closure at any of the 1,07,000 retail outlets during last four months (February 28th till the end of June)," Puri said. Private fuel retailer Nayara Energy has cut petrol prices



by Rs 5 per litre and diesel prices by Rs 3 per litre across its retail network from July 1, making it the first major cut in retail fuel prices since crude prices began falling. The decision may put pressure on rival private retailers to review their own prices if international oil markets remain stable. But there's a catch. Unlike state-run fuel retailers, Nayara

had been selling petrol and diesel at relatively higher prices in many parts of the country. This gave Nayara room to lower prices without undercutting state-run competitors. "Nayara has reduced the price of Petrol because it had increased it by Rs 5 per litre during the crisis period. They have only taken back that price increase now. They have only reduced that price... while the Oil Marketing Companies had not increased the price at that time," Puri said. Global oil prices climbed above \$110 per barrel during the Iran conflict, forcing Indian state-run OMCs to absorb a significant part of the increase instead of passing it entirely to consumers. Crude oil prices started coming down only in the second half of June after the US and Iran reached an agreement to end the conflict. Oil companies typically buy crude oil - the raw material for producing fuel - at least two months in advance. So, crude oil that is being processed now is essentially what was bought in April or early May when international prices were very high.

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Indriya, Aditya Birla Jewellery, sets a new industry standard with diamonds of the highest sparkle

Mumbai, 02nd June 2026: Indriya, Aditya Birla Jewellery, has set an industry-first benchmark in natural diamond selection, bringing greater delight and trust to the diamond buying experience. Rooted in the belief that exceptional sparkle is the most visible expressions of diamond quality, this approach builds on the brand's best-in-class selection standards. Going beyond conventional grading standards, Indriya's approach to diamond cut and selection evaluates how effectively a diamond reflects, refracts and returns light to deliver superior brilliance, fire and scintillation. Only 1 out of 5 natural diamonds meet these rigorous standards. This shift comes at a pivotal moment for the category. India sits at the heart of the global diamond industry, with over 90% of the world's diamonds cut and polished in regions like Surat and Mumbai. Yet, despite this deep-rooted expertise, diamond jewellery consumption remains below 15%. By prioritising diamonds with optimal proportions and superior light return, Indriya not only brings to the forefront some of the most brilliantly sparkling diamonds in the country but also aims to reshape how Indian consumers evaluate and choose diamonds, beyond the traditional 4Cs.

THE SCIENCE BEHIND THE SPARKLE
While clarity, colour and carat come from nature as physical property, cut is the result of human artistry and precision. It determines how light enters, reflects within and exits the diamond, making it the true driver of



brilliance. A well-cut diamond maximises light return, while sub-optimal cuts allow light to escape, creating a visible difference in sparkle. At Indriya, cut is further understood through three key aspects of light performance: Brilliance, Fire and Scintillation, capturing how a diamond truly appears when worn:
· Brilliance: the white light reflected from a diamond's facets
· Fire: the dispersion of light into spectral colours
· Scintillation: the flashes of sparkle seen in movement of light

Only diamonds that meet Indriya's exacting standards across these parameters are selected, with precise proportions, optimal light return and minimal light leakage. Near-colourless F-H-G diamonds and high-clarity tables further enhance reflection, ensuring exceptional sparkle across every moment of wear. To help consumers and stakeholders experience this distinction firsthand, Indriya has introduced SparkleScope, an innovative in-store technology that enables customers to evaluate a diamond's sparkle. By making sparkle visibly measurable, this experience brings greater transparency to the buying process, allowing customers to see, understand and trust the difference that defines Indriya diamonds.

Commenting on this innovative industry benchmark introduction, Sandeep Kohli, CEO, Indriya said, "The diamond industry is evolving, and innovation is the need of the hour. For decades, quality assessments have focused on the 4Cs, but ultimately customers fall in love with a diamond that sparkle the brightest. It is the first thing they notice, the quality that instantly captures attention, and the reason a diamond feels truly special. At Indriya, we are bringing sparkle to the forefront, by offering a more visible, intuitive and consumer-first way to evaluate diamonds, while setting a new industry benchmark. Every diamond in Indriya is selected for its superior sparkle and is available across a wide range of categories and occasions. Our aim is to democratise access to, and understanding of, exceptional sparkle, enabling customers to discover the best, and most sparkling diamonds." Also sharing his perspective, Mr. Rajendran Ganapathy, Head of Supply Chain at Indriya comments, "At Indriya, we started with a simple belief: if sparkle is what customers cherish most, it should also be the defining benchmark of our diamond selection process. Indriya handpicks only 1 out of 5 diamonds available in the market to ensure that our customers get the most sparkling diamonds. The result is a collection of diamonds that are selected for exceptional visual sparkle that is captivating and enduring."

AIR INDIA CUTS FUEL SURCHARGE UP TO \$125 ON INTERNATIONAL ROUTES AS ATF PRICES EASE

Air India Ltd. announced on Thursday that it will be reducing fuel surcharge on select international routes. The routes included in North America and Australia has its surcharge reduced to \$200 from \$280. Similarly European routes also saw its fuel surcharge decrease to \$125 from \$205. The move comes after a sharp moderation in global crude oil prices and aviation turbine fuel (ATF) prices from their recent highs. According to people familiar with the matter, airlines are actively evaluating a rollback of the surcharge, with a decision likely by the end of the second quarter or early in the third quarter. While international jet fuel prices have declined significantly, airline executives believe fuel costs remain elevated compared with historical averages and are assessing whether the recent softening is sustainable before taking a final call. Industry sources told NDTV Profit said carriers are currently in a wait-and-watch mode, weighing whether to remove the surcharge entirely or opt for a calibrated, phased withdrawal that balances passenger affordability with profitability. Domestic routes are likely to see the surcharge with-



drawn before international sectors, where fuel costs and operating economics remain relatively more challenging, the sources said. Air India, IndiGo and Akasa Air had introduced fuel surcharges in March after a sharp increase in crude oil and aviation fuel prices pushed up operating costs. The additional levy was aimed at offsetting the impact of higher fuel expenses without significantly altering base fares. Fuel surcharges for other international flights and domestic services of the airline remain unchanged. Fuel surcharges for North America, Australia, Europe, and the UK flights had come into force from April 10. On April 7, the Air India Group announced fuel surcharges ranging from USD 24 to USD 280 for inter-

national flights except certain routes, and ₹299 to ₹899 for domestic flights. The group comprises Air India and Air India Express. Following the government's decision to cap domestic Aviation Turbine Fuel (ATF) price hike at 25 per cent, Air India group has adopted this calibrated approach, transitioning from a flat domestic surcharge to a distance-based grid, it had said in a statement on April 7. Citing latest International Air Transport Association (IATA) data, the airline had said the global average jet fuel price rose to USD 195.19 per barrel for the week ending March 27, up from USD 99.40 at the end of February, recording a surge of close to 100 per cent. ATF accounts for almost 40-45 per cent of an airline's total cost.

SINGAPORE SEIZES \$42M MANSION OVER NVIDIA CHIP SMUGGLING

Police in Singapore have seized a multi-million dollar luxury home that was allegedly bought using proceeds from smuggling Nvidia artificial intelligence (AI) chips. The property last changed hands for 55 million Singapore dollars (€32m; \$42.5m), with at least two-thirds of its purchase price allegedly funded by illicit earnings, authorities said on Wednesday. The home was seized as part of a probe into the alleged illegal trade in servers containing highly sought-after advanced Nvidia chips, which are subject to US export controls. The US Department of Justice has previously flagged Singapore as a key transit hub to conceal illegal shipments to China. The police said an order was in place to stop the property being sold during the investigation. Located a short walk from Singapore's famous Botanic Gardens, the property sits in a prime district of the land-scarce city-state. Wei Zhaolun, who is also known as Alan



Wei, will be charged with money laundering for allegedly using around 38 million Singapore dollars of criminal proceeds to fund the purchase of the house, police said. He is the chief executive of Aperia Group, which sells servers and other tech hardware to businesses. The BBC has contacted Aperia Group for comment. Authorities have also seized around one million Singapore dollars held in bank accounts. The police said a total of four people, including Wei, have been accused since February 2025 over fraud and other alleged crimes

linked to the case. The individuals allegedly placed orders for servers from global suppliers under the pretence that they would be used by companies they worked for. Authorities have not said where the servers were shipped to. The police said the servers in the case were bought from three suppliers - Dell, Super Micro Computer and Asus. The BBC has contacted the three companies for comment. If convicted of fraud, the four, who face multiple charges, could face jail time of up to 20 years. Singapore-based tech companies, Luxuriate

Your Life and three firms under the Aperia Group, also face charges in what the police say is the first instance of corporate entities being prosecuted under these investigations. The BBC has been unable to reach Luxuriate Your Life for comment. The police said it holds a "zero-tolerance stance towards such offences" and will act against anyone who violates Singapore's laws to protect the country's integrity as a trusted global business hub. The US and Singapore have cracked down on the illegal shipping of Nvidia chips since Washington restricted their export in 2022 over concerns that they could be used by the Chinese military. Authorities in Singapore said in 2025 that servers containing chips under US export controls were believed to have been shipped via the island-state. The US has since approved the sale of some of Nvidia's semiconductors to China, under certain conditions.

PB FINTECH BLOCK DEAL: MACRITCHIE INVESTMENTS TO PARE 2.6% STAKE; FLOOR PRICE FIXED

Highlights
■ Singapore-based investor MacRitchie Investments Pte. is set to pare its stake in PB Fintech, the parent company of Policybazaar and Paisabazaar, through a block deal worth nearly Rs 1,909 crore, sources told NDTV Profit. According to the deal terms, MacRitchie Investments will sell 1.19 crore shares, representing a 2.6% stake in PB Fintech, via a block transaction scheduled for Friday.

Singapore-based investor MacRitchie Investments Pte. is set to pare its stake in PB Fintech, the parent company of Policybazaar and Paisabazaar, through a block deal worth nearly Rs 1,909 crore, sources told NDTV Profit. According to the deal terms, MacRitchie Investments will sell 1.19 crore shares, representing a 2.6% stake in PB Fintech, via a block transaction scheduled for Friday. The floor price for the transaction has been fixed at Rs 1,604 per share, reflecting a discount of around 4.6% to the stock's latest closing price. The total transaction size is



estimated at approximately Rs 1,908.8 crore. Global investment bank Citi is acting as the sole broker for the block deal. MacRitchie Investments as of March 2026 held 6.47% stake in the company comprising of 3.56 crore shares. PB Fintech Q4 Result PB Fintech's net profit surges 53.5% at Rs 261 crore in the fourth quarter of the previous fiscal. This is in comparison to profit of Rs 170 crore in the same quarter of fiscal 2025, according to its stock exchange notification on Wednesday. Consolidate revenue of Policybazaar parent advanced by 36.7% year-on-year for the three

months ended March, reaching Rs 2,061 crore in comparison to Rs 1,508 crore. Operating income, or earnings before interest and taxes rose 94.3% to Rs 218 crore from Rs 112 crore. Margins expanded to 10.6% from 7.4% in the fourth quarter of fiscal 2025. The total insurance premium for the quarter stood at Rs 9,217 crore, marking a 46% uptick year-on-year. This rise was led by growth in core online new protection business. While the company's core insurance revenue was up 40% on a year-on-year basis, its core credit revenue had advanced 7%.

'Two weeks after her death I got a call': Gaza patients face agonising delays for evacuation



When Gaza's medical board approved Amina Abu al-Kas to leave the Strip for treatment abroad, her son Saber said it felt like the beginning of a new life. "It brought life back into her. She knew there was no treatment in Gaza, so she was happy and excited," he told the BBC. Amina was suffering from an aggressive necrotising infection that had spread to her skull. Doctors in Gaza told her they did not have the medicines or the therapies to treat it. Saber said the pain was unbearable. "My mother couldn't sleep day or night; she stayed awake, crying out from the pain. Painkillers caused stomach ulcers and inflammation, and the doctors banned her from taking them." After receiving the medical referral, Saber said the family waited for news that Amina had passed security clearances and had been accepted by a foreign country for treatment - both necessary to leave Gaza. "We knew that at any moment God might take her. And we also knew that at any moment a miracle might happen, that

we might get a call saying, 'Get your bags ready and prepare to travel through the crossing,'" Saber told the BBC. "We waited a long time, but no response came. My mother died [on 29 May], and two weeks after her death, I got a call from the hospital informing me that her paperwork was ready." Gaza's Hamas-run health ministry says Amina is one of 300 Palestinians who have died waiting for medical evacuations since the US-brokered ceasefire between Israel and Hamas began there last October. The figures are also used by the World Health Organization (WHO), which assists with patient transfers via Gaza's Israeli-controlled border crossings with Israel and Egypt. Thousands of others - the health ministry currently says 15,000 - are still waiting for treatment abroad - some for war-related injuries; others for conditions such as cancer. The list of evacuees is constantly fluctuating, as patients' conditions and decisions change, meaning not all deaths may be recorded.



■ 'Most massive' Russian attack on Kyiv kills at least 18

EU BORDER DELAYS 'NOT BEARABLE' OVER SUMMER, WARNS AIRPORT BOSS

The boss of Berlin Airport has said non-EU nationals arriving in the German capital are having to queue for up to two hours under a new digital border system, and warned the situation is "not bearable over the summer". Aletta von Massenbach told the BBC that at one terminal in Berlin, where Ryanair and Wizz Air operate, waiting times can run between "an hour to two hours". Under the EU's new Entry-Exit System (EES) travellers from outside the bloc must register biometric information when entering most European countries, which is checked when they leave. Airports and airlines say the system is not working. The European Commission (EC) says it is willing to offer more support. EES is meant to modernise the EU's system of border control, making it more secure and eventually making travel smoother. It has been fully operational since April. While the system has worked fine in some places, there have been regular reports of long waits at passport control, especially at peak times. Some passengers say they have missed flights home because they've been held up in queues. Von Massenbach said



one issue was that EU countries used different systems. "There are so many sub-systems for each and every member state," she told the BBC's Today programme. "We see that the complexity doesn't really support smooth processing at the border." Technology issues have prevented EES from being used in the UK at the Port of Dover where French border checks

take place. A new processing area has 84 kiosks to record fingerprints and photographs but currently is not being used because the technology for the kiosks - the responsibility of the French authorities - cannot be activated. Port of Dover chief executive, Doug Bannister, told MPs on Thursday "time is rapidly running out" to fix it. "We are rapidly heading towards the start of the critical summer period and are yet to receive the assurances we need to avoid what has the potential to be a very challenging six weeks," he said. "I'm not going back to Europe" Anne Robinson from Dunbarton has first-hand knowledge of EES and its idiosyncrasies - to the point it has put her off returning to Europe this year.

US BLOCKS LONG-TERM RENEWAL OF NORTH AMERICAN TRADE DEAL



The US has declined to renew the landmark US-Mexico-Canada Agreement (USMCA) in its current form, according to a senior US official. This decision means the bilateral trade pact will miss out on an automatic 16-year extension. The official said the administration "chose not to rubber stamp a USMCA renewal without addressing existing issues" and that "the United States did not agree to renew the USMCA in its current form". If the countries fail to unanimously agree to renew the agreement, "it essentially sets a 10-year shot lock to termination", the official said. Under the pact guidelines, each country must decide whether to renew the agreement for another 16-year term. While the free-trade deal remains in place for now, the lack of a long-term commitment creates fresh economic uncertainty across North America. The agreement, which underpins around \$2tn (£1.5tn) in trade each year, is facing pressure over unresolved disputes. US trade officials are pushing for major changes before committing

to a long-term extension. Washington has consistently raised concerns over rules of origin for automobiles, dairy market access and stopping third-party countries like China from exploiting the regional agreement. Under the USMCA's original terms, unanimous agreement on an extension would have seen the trade deal kept in place until 2042. The US opting out will force the nations to meet every year to negotiate changes. Business groups across the continent had called for the pact to be extended. The decision also kicks off a 10-year countdown towards the deal expiring as early as 2036. The US Chamber of Commerce had warned that sectors such as manufacturing and agriculture relied heavily on cross-border certainty. However, US domestic trade groups such as the American Iron and Steel Institute and the Steel Manufacturers Association welcomed the shift, arguing annual reviews would give US negotiators leverage to fix parts of the deal. The friction comes six years after the USMCA entered into force.

China says pilot crashed small plane into skyscraper for 'personal reasons'

The pilot who crashed his small plane into Beijing's tallest skyscraper last week was suffering from "chronic insomnia and anxiety" and did so for "personal reasons", authorities said Thursday. The crash had killed the pilot, officially identified only by his surname Liu, and wounded 13 others. Liu, a 66-year-old Beijing resident, was a divorced freelancer who lived alone, the Chaoyang district government said in a statement, adding Liu's diary contained "multiple expressions of ending his life". "The comprehensive investigation concluded that this was a case of endangering public safety caused by personal reasons," the statement said. One of the injured has been discharged from the hospital, officials said. Videos of the crash at the CITIC Tower had been widely circulated on social media before being scrubbed off the Chinese internet, as authorities investigated what many observers viewed as a huge security breach. The 109-storey CITIC



Tower, also known as China Zun, is located just a few kilometres from Zhongnanhai, the Communist Party's headquarters. The building has long been treated by many locals as a lucky charm. But shortly after the crash last Friday, even unrelated photos and memes of the skyscraper were taken down from Chinese social media platforms. In the days after the crash, at least three aviation firms told the BBC that

they had been told to suspend light aircraft operations. On the afternoon of the crash, Liu had taken off from an airport in Pinggu district and conducted both accompanying and solo flights, the Chaoyang government's statement said. "During his solo flight, he deviated from the designated area and lost contact with the airport, subsequently colliding with the high-rise building and dying at the scene," the statement

said. According to authorities, Liu had obtained his sport pilot's licence in 2021 and his private pilot's licence in 2024. The plane he flew last week was a two-seat, single-engine Aurora SA60L, manufactured by Chinese company Sunward Aircraft, according to flight tracking service Flightradar24. At 6.9m long, with a wingspan of 8.6m, it is designed for touring, aerial photography and recreational aviation.

CANADIAN BOY, 11, DIES OF RABIES AFTER WAKING TO BAT ON HIS FACE

An 11-year-old Canadian boy has died from rabies after being awoken by a bat on his nose and mouth. The incident took place while the child was on a visit to a cottage in Ontario with his family in 2024, according to a report in the Canadian Medical Association Journal published on Monday. The boy, who was not named in the report, swatted the bat off his face, after which his father caught the winged mammal in a pot and released it outside. The boy's parents did not immediately seek medical attention due to their son not having any visible injuries and not thinking the bat behaved erratically, the journal states. But 19 days later, the boy began experiencing numbness and swelling on his face. The Canadian Medical Association Journal chronicled his family taking him to get emergency care over the following days and both clinics and hospital doctors trying to diagnose his symptoms. At first, an emergency



clinic prescribed the boy antiviral medication used to treat infections caused by herpes viruses as they presumed he might have Bell's palsy, the temporary paralysis of facial muscles on one side of the face. Then he went to hospital on back-to-back visits, first getting a presumed diagnosis of herpes gingivostomatitis, a viral infection of the mouth and gums, then returning the following day after the right side of his face went weak, the journal states. While awaiting to be admitted, he developed a fever of 39C (102F), along with difficulty swallowing, confusion and visual hallucinations. His condition rapidly worsened that day.



Nine Thai monks killed after 11-year-old driver collides with procession

THE US DEPORTED THEM TO VENEZUELA - HOURS LATER EARTHQUAKES STRUCK

Venezuela native Abelardo Rincón built a life for six years in the US state of Georgia - working in a car dealership, marrying and looking forward to the upcoming birth of his daughter - before US authorities detained him amid President Donald Trump's immigration crackdown. The 23-year-old's bereft parents and pregnant wife waited for any and all news while he was held by American authorities, before he was put on a deportation flight to his homeland last month alongside more than 140 other Venezuelans. He landed on 24 June and while still in custody, called his family back in Atlanta. He and other deportees were being housed in a hotel near the coast. Just hours later, twin earthquakes hit the country - killing at least 2,200 people,



injuring more than 10,000 and, according to UN figures, leaving 50,000 missing. Rincón, along with a number of fellow deportees from Flight 164, was among those missing. And their devastated families were left to desperately search for any word about their loved ones - all after struggling to process the quick succession

of arrest, detention, deportation, repatriation and, then, natural disaster. The Department of Homeland Security, which oversees US immigration enforcement agencies like Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), shared a statement, but offered no details on the case when asked by the BBC. "This

flight safely reached Venezuela and all illegal aliens on board were returned home," a DHS spokesperson told BBC on Tuesday. "When an individual is no longer in ICE custody, ICE is no longer responsible for them." It's unclear if the migrants were deported for crossing the border illegally, or for other reasons. The Venezuelan government, meanwhile, has posted numbers for the general public to call, but information has been limited in the wake of such a devastating national disaster. The flight passengers, who reportedly included 19 women and seven children, were being housed by Venezuelan authorities in Hotel Santuario La Llanada in the city of La Guaira after undergoing medical exams and getting documentation.

