

Seven Indians, including 5 Telugu men, arrested in US sting operation on prostitution

Hyderabad: Seven Indians, including five Telugu men, were among 18 men arrested by the Denton County Sheriff's Office in Texas, US, on various charges in a prostitution suppression sting operation, according to a news release. According to Denton County Sheriff Tracy Murphee's statement, the operation was designed to suppress prostitution in Denton County by arresting individuals who attempted to purchase sexual favours for money. The Highland Village Police Department assisted the Sheriff's Office in the operation.

"Two Denton men were charged with evading arrest or detention. Six others from Denton were charged with solicitation of prostitution. Seven men from other cities also received the same charge, including one from Corinth. A Denton man was charged with solicitation of prostitution of a person under 18 and evading arrest or detention. A man from Bowie was charged with solicitation of prostitution of a person under 18 and unlawful carrying of a weapon. A man from Justin was charged with solicitation of prostitution and unlawful carrying of a weapon," the press release stated. Solicitation of prostitution is a state jail felony, while solicitation of prostitution

of a person under 18 years old is a second-degree felony, it said, adding that evading arrest or detention and unlawful carrying of a weapon were both 'Class A misdemeanours'.

"The operation led the Sheriff's Office to develop leads on other individuals allegedly engaging in prostitution and the office's Human Trafficking Unit is following up on those leads," it added. According to the press release, the Indians arrested were Bandi Nikhil (Evading arrest detention), Galla Monish (Solicitation of prostitution), Amit Kumar (Solicitation of prostitution), Kummari Nikhil (Evading arrest detention), Mekala Jaikiran Reddy (Solicitation of prostitution under 18, Evading arrest detention), Rayapati Karthik (Solicitation of prostitution) and Nabin Shrestha (Solicitation of prostitution).

The operation was carried out on August 14 and 15, with 14 of those arrested on charges of solicitation of prostitution, while two arrested on charges of solicitation of prostitution under 18. Two persons were also arrested on additional charges of unlawful carrying of a weapon, while three were arrested on charges of evading arrest detention.



KELSOE, Aaron Russell
Denton, TX
Solicitation of Prostitution



KUMAR, Amit
Little Elm, TX
Solicitation of Prostitution



KUMMARI, Nikhil
Denton, TX
Evading Arrest Detention



MEKALA, Jaikiran Reddy
Denton, TX
Solicit Prostitution Under 18,
Evading Arrest Detention



MORENO-CASTRO, Fernando
Valley View, TX
Solicitation of Prostitution



NEELY, Barry Don
Justin, TX
Solicitation of Prostitution, UI



RAYAPATI, Karthik
Denton, TX
Solicitation of Prostitution



RUBIO-VARGAS, Juan
Bridgeport, TX
Solicitation of Prostitution



SHRESTHA, Nabin
Denton, TX
Solicitation of Prostitution

Hop on for a sustainable shopping spree as 'Pili Taxi' returns to Hyderabad on August 23-24



The exhibition promises to be a sensory delight, showcasing the rich heritage of Indian craftsmanship and tradition. Attendees can explore a diverse range of brands dedicated to ethical fashion and artisanal excellence. Highlights include Trove Craft India's revival of traditional art forms such as pichwai, patachitra, Gond, and Kerala Mural styles.

Hyderabad: Sustainable lifestyle exhibition, Pili Taxi, is gearing up to dazzle Hyderabad at Crafts Council of Telangana in Banjara Hills on August 23 and 24. This highly anticipated event promises a showcase of homegrown and sustainable Indian brands, offering everything from clothing and accessories to art and home decor. The exhibition will be a feast for the senses, spotlighting the rich tapestry of Indian craftsmanship and tradition. Attendees can look forward to an array of brands committed to ethical fashion and artisanal excellence.

Highlights include Trove Craft India's revival of traditional art forms like pichwai, patachitra, Gond, and Kerala Mural styles. Athavis will present its slow fashion collection featuring natural handloom fabrics,

while ROHO celebrates free-spirited individuality. Rama will offer upcycled Banarasi sarees. Other eco-conscious features include handprinted brass jewelry, a range of home decor items, from pottery to perfumes, locally made, handcrafted, vegan, and women-supported products. The exhibition curates brands that work directly with local artisans, fostering a deeper connection between consumers and the artisans behind their purchases.

Beyond shopping, Pili Taxi will offer a space for attendees to eat, socialize, and engage with the community of eco-conscious consumers. This event promises not only a unique shopping experience but also a chance to connect with like-minded individuals committed to making more sustainable choices.

No global solutions for cricket, however positive, can work without India

In theory it is a good move, even overdue. The World Cricketers' Association (WCA) is reviewing the game's global structure to find solutions to the "increasingly disjointed and cramped cricket calendar." The WCA has no faith in the International Cricket Council (ICC) to do the job. All very good except for one thing — the WCA has no influence over India which has a players' association just to satisfy the Supreme Court's directive. The Indian Cricketers' Association (ICA) is not a member of the WCA. Currently, the future of the game is not in the hands of the WCA or indeed the ICC, if we are to be honest. It is in the hands of the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI). When Jagmohan Dalmiya called the shots, the BCCI rallied the Associate Members, and bought votes and influence that way. Since the advent of television money in the billions, the deal is more straightforward and less tiring. India generates the most funds — and calls the tune. Interestingly, there is one Indian in the six-member review group which indicates where the real power lies. This is Sanjog Gupta, a genuine cricket lover who has been following the game in India for years. But that is not why he is in the panel. He is, more significantly, the head of sports in Disney Star, the channel that has changed the tenor of cricket's conversations. Rich combination India has the audience for the game, the market for

products advertised on television, and some of the best players in the world. It is a rich combination no one dare ignore.

The other members of the WCA panel are Paul Marsh (Australia), Sana Mir (Pakistan), Tony Irish (South Africa), Tom Harrison (England), James Kitching (former Director of Football Regulatory, FIFA). Nothing they say or do is binding on India. In the present climate it is dangerous for international teams to try and isolate India. It was nearly attempted once — but that had less to do with money than administration. According to the WCA, 84% of its players are in favour of having specific windows so domestic franchise leagues and international cricket can co-exist. This was an idea suggested by India in the early days of the IPL, but it was turned down. The WCA is exploring areas that need change. The problems range from the scheduling ("confusing and chaotic") which forces players to choose between club and country, to the economic disparity ("reliance on just a few to fund the entire game"). Player employment and contracts (suffering due to lack of a clear global calendar, argues the WCA) is another area. All worthy. And we will know in December when the recommendations are made just how many solutions are workable. In other words, just how many India will find profitable to accept. The notion that the players deserve a say on the future of the game is



a step up from the past when administrators administered and players played, and never the twain met, so to speak. The argument then (although few articulated it) was that soldiers cannot decide on future wars; that is left to the politicians. No evolution. The BCCI hasn't evolved beyond seeing players' associations as trade unions which need to be curbed. Indian players have no organised way of putting their ideas across — that is left to some top players who tend to ignore the big picture in favour of what is good for themselves as individuals. Former players too don't dare go against the BCCI in case their post-retirement opportunities dry up. When the

President of the Indian Cricketers' Association Aunshuman Gaekwad was himself in dire need of funds for medical expenses, the ICA could do nothing. It was left to the BCCI secretary who seems to decide most things, from Indian captaincy to player selection to rewards for performances unilaterally, to announce an amount. When it is difficult for even Indian players to get across to their cricket board, it is unlikely that players from other countries will. It will take a lot of ego-boosting, pride-polishing and esteem-pandering of one individual for the WCA to succeed. Still, it has worked in other fields! Too cynical? Well, cynicism and pragmatism are close cousins.

What are some new research projects in the field of 'smart' insulin? | Explained

The story so far: The Type 1 Diabetes Grand Challenge, a partnership between the Steve Morgan Foundation, Diabetes UK and JDRF, on Monday, August 12, 2024, announced grants of over £2.7 million for new research in the development of next-generation insulins to manage type 1 diabetes. The funding will accelerate research of insulins that imitate how healthy pancreas work, the initiative said.

What is type 1 diabetes?

Type 1 diabetes is a chronic condition characterised by deficient insulin production and requires frequent insulin administration, mostly daily or sometimes even multiple times a day. Without insulin, glucose continues to build up in the bloodstream, causing high blood sugar levels. The insulin hormone helps regulate blood sugar by allowing glucose to enter cells to be used up for manufacturing energy. More about the grants

The funding will be provided to six new international research projects focused on developing the next-generation, or novel, insulins. The research will be conducted at universities in the United States, Australia, and China. "The funded six new research projects address major shortcomings in insulin therapy. Potentially minimising the risk of hypoglycaemia through an insulin-glucagon combination

would ease one of the major concerns associated with insulin therapy today. Therefore, these research projects, if successful might do no less than heralding a new era in insulin therapy," Tim Heise, Vice Chair of Novel Insulins Scientific Advisory Panel of the Type 1 Diabetes Grand Challenge, said. According to the Type 1 Diabetes Grand Challenge, four of the newly-funded projects are related to glucose responsive insulins (GRIs), which can respond to changing blood glucose levels. GRIs activate only when there is a certain amount of glucose in the bloodstream and become inactive when it drops below a stipulated point. This is expected to prevent both hyperglycaemia (high blood glucose) and hypoglycaemia (low blood glucose). Another research project focuses on developing a short-acting insulin. Among the currently available insulins, there is a delay between the administration of the drug and its action on blood glucose — even with the fastest acting variants. This can cause a spike in blood glucose levels before insulin can lower it, thus endangering the person. The last funded project focuses on combining insulin with glucagon. Glucagon is also secreted by pancreas, and it increases blood sugar levels to prevent it from dropping below a critical level. The project relies on the concept

that having both insulin and glucagon in one formulation can stabilise blood sugar levels. GRI projects The four GRI projects are being researched at Monash University, Australia, Wayne State University, U.S., Jinhua Institute of Zhejiang University in China, and University of Notre Dame, U.S. The Monash University project involves development of a second generation of nano sugar-insulin system, based on advanced nanotechnology. In the first-generation experiment of this insulin delivery system, insulin and a glucose-sensing molecule in tiny particles called nano sugars are injected under the skin. These nano sugars react to very small changes in blood glucose and release insulin only when glucose levels are outside a range, without any intervention from the patient. The aim of this experiment is to reduce the number of times people with type 1 have to inject insulin. Researchers at the Wayne University are working to develop a "smart insulin" which can detect changes in blood glucose levels and respond by releasing the right amount of insulin at the right time. Chemical engineer Zhiqiang Cao's team plans to develop a smarter insulin which is "more" sensitive to changing glucose levels, because some novel insulins are not as powerful as the currently available ones, resulting in higher doses to obtain a simi-

lar impact on blood glucose levels.

The third project, conducted by researchers at the Jinhua Institute of Zhejiang University in China, involves novel insulins that respond immediately to rising blood glucose levels. This novel insulin forms a reservoir of insulin under the skin once it is injected, and can therefore be used either daily or weekly. The experiment uses an insulin/polymer complex as the starting point and adds a safe glucose-sensing molecule to it. In the project, the team will improve the GRI and ensure all components work together effectively. The next step will be to make sure the GRI releases insulin properly from the reservoir, especially when blood glucose levels are high. Researchers at the University of Notre Dame, U.S, developed a smart insulin delivery system that uses tiny particles called nanocomplexes, which contain insulin. These nanocomplexes can also be injected under the skin to create a reservoir to automatically release insulin if blood sugar rises. The project will be developed further and tested in pigs exposed to relevant real-life scenarios. Ultrafast insulin Scientists at the Stanford University, U.S. are working on developing and testing an ultrafast-acting insulin that's only active when needed and could reduce the risk of blood glucose highs and lows in people with type 1 diabetes.

BharatBenz Heavy-Duty Rigid Trucks with all-new engine and payload applications launched in India



Daimler India Commercial Vehicles (DICV), a wholly owned subsidiary of Daimler Truck AG ("Daimler Truck") announced the launch of the all-new range of heavy-duty Rigid trucks from BharatBenz in the Indian market. The new range of Rigid, engineered for superior reliability, will be powered by an all-new BharatBenz BSVI-Stage2 6.7-litre diesel engine and will offer new payload applications such as bitumen, bulker, Petroleum, Oil & Lubricants (POL) in addition to a variety of existing payload applications. The all-new engine in new Rigid range is offered in two configurations with higher horsepower and torque – 250HP and 950Nm and 306HP and 1200Nm, which customers can choose from as per their application requirements. 3. Models in the all-new BharatBenz heavy-duty Rigid range will be available to customers needing 2826R (6x2), 3526R (8x2), 3832R (8x2), 4232R (10x2) and 4832R (10x2) configurations. Speaking at the launch, Mr. Sreeram Venkateswaran, President & Chief Business Officer of Daimler India Commercial Vehicles said, "With the introduction of our all-new BharatBenz Rigid, we are committed to supporting the evolving needs of the Indian transportation sector. These trucks are not just tools, but reliable partners designed to navigate the dynamic world of logistics and transportation efficiently. Powered by the all-new 6D26 engine, these new trucks bring significant advancements in fuel efficiency and operational flexibility, which directly contribute to a lower total cost of ownership. These engines are specifically designed to handle substantial payloads efficiently, which allows for smoother shifts and high torque delivery at lower speeds. Available in multiple configurations, they offer not only enhanced acceleration but also class-leading peak and flat torque, resulting in maximized operational effi-

ciency and improved driver comfort, reducing fatigue during extended hauls." 6. Improved Fuel Efficiency:

DICV has significantly advanced fuel economy in the latest BharatBenz Rigid heavy-duty trucks, equipped with the EFFI+ package and multi-drive mode functionality. The EFFI+ package introduces several key innovations including 'Minimal Parked Regeneration' to reduce unnecessary fuel burn during downtime; 'Auto Green Band', which automatically maintains engine speed within the optimal RPM range for

efficiency; 'Auto Idling Shutdown', which cuts off the engine during prolonged idling to conserve fuel; and 'Harsh Acceleration Control', which limits acceleration rates to prevent fuel wastage. 7. Moreover, the Multi-drive mode feature allows drivers to select between various operating modes tailored to different load conditions, greatly enhancing efficiency during partial or no-load operations. These technologies, along with the advanced common rail injection system and Load Based Speed Control (LBSC), collectively optimize per-

formance and maximize fuel efficiency, ensuring operational cost-effectiveness. Enhanced Chassis for Diverse Applications: 8. The newly engineered joggle frame chassis, constructed with riveted joints, lays a solid foundation for a wide range of applications. This advanced chassis design is deliberately crafted to support multiple new applications such as bitumen, bulker, and Petroleum Oil & Lubricants (POL) applications. The trucks are fitted with Parabolic-type, grease-free suspension.

Former ISI chief's close aide flees Pakistan amid probe against him for misuse of official authority

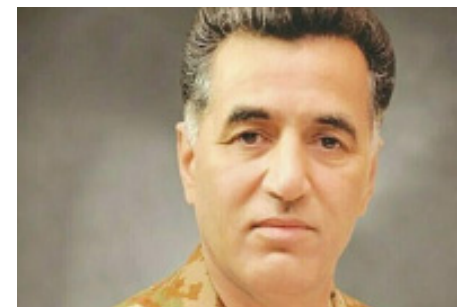
A close aide of Pakistan's former ISI chief Lt General (ret.) Faiz Hameed, who has been in the Pakistan Army's custody on corruption and other charges, has fled the country to evade arrest, according to a media report. Mohsin Habib Warriach, who is said to have managed major business deals for Gen Hameed in Pakistan and abroad, has reportedly fled to the UK, Samaa TV reported. Several military officers and some civilians have been taken into custody in connection with the alleged links with Hameed.

Federal Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi didn't confirm nor deny reports about Mohsin Warriach's leaving the country. Gen Hameed is facing court-martial proceedings for misusing his position to extort money from a private housing society and his role in May 9 attacks on military installations and his close ties with jailed former Prime Minister Imran Khan are also being probed. Imran Khan feared that Gen Hameed might be used against him as an

approver so that he could be tried at a military court. Mr. Warriach, son of former Federal Minister retired Maj Habibullah Warriach, reportedly left the country for the UK before the arrest of Hameed.

According to the report, Mr. Warriach, a central figure in the multi-billion rupees scam at the National Insurance Company Limited, has been managing major business deals for Hameed since 2014. He was the frontman of Hameed in securing business deals for the former spymaster.

Gen Hameed led the ISI (Inter-Services Intelligence) during Khan's administration from 2019 to 2021 before taking early retirement in December 2022. Hameed was arrested following action in the complaint of a private property developer over alleged misuse of official authority. According to the report, Warriach travelled the world on behalf of Hameed, acting as his de facto representative, negotiating and executing deals, often introducing himself as an arms dealer working



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for the Pakistan Army. "Warriach visited Russia on at least one occasion on behalf of Hameed to secure a major arms deal. Hameed was, in fact, going above and beyond merely confirming Warriach's role as an official representative of the Pakistan army," it said.

Cambridge University Press & Assessment launches IELTS 19, the official practice tests for learners



As co-owners of the IELTS exam, Cambridge University Press & Assessment (CUPA) launched 'IELTS 19', the official Cambridge exam preparation resource. The event unveiling was led by Arunachalam TK, Head of Combined English - South Asia, Cambridge University Press & Assessment in New Delhi.

As the foremost assessment of English language proficiency globally, IELTS is recognised by educational institutions, employers, and immigration authorities as a benchmark of linguistic capability. IELTS 19, is an authentic exam preparation resource from Cambridge for anyone aiming for overseas education or work opportunities. Arunachalam TK, Head of Combined English - South Asia, Cambridge University Press & Assessment stated, "We are honoured to present IELTS 19 to learners across South Asia. This resource features authentic examination papers modelled on the actual test, ensuring learners achieve high band scores. Today, English acts as a conduit, facilitating collaborative communication among individuals, enabling them to become global citizens. Our unique skill-based learning resources based on research and insights have already engaged and inspired millions of learners aspiring to study or work abroad.

We are confident that IELTS 19 will empower learners to excel on the exam day."

Additionally, Cambridge also officially announced its preferred partners, LDS Marketing, New Delhi and JB International, Agra, for the distribution of learning resources. These partnerships reflect Cambridge's strategic initiative to strengthen its engagement with trade partners and ensuring enhanced access to a wider learners' base. IELTS 19 offers a robust selection of digital resources available via the Cambridge One platform, designed to enhance the overall preparation process. This includes authentic practice papers, a resource bank with valuable materials, and free Listening and Reading tests accessible online specifically tailored for IELTS candidates.

Additionally, it provides sample videos of the speaking test, audio files for listening practice, detailed answer keys with supplementary explanations, and sample writing answers. In addition to IELTS 19 practice papers, Cambridge also offers The Official Cambridge Guide to IELTS, a comprehensive resource that provides expert advice, eight complete practice tests, and focused language skills training to help candidates achieve their desired band score. Through the years, learning English

has paved the way for millions to explore and experience opportunities worldwide. And Cambridge, through its IELTS prac-

tice test has enabled these learners, migrants and jobseekers in confidently proving their skills to the world.

Delhi HC refers BharatPe-Ashneer Grover dispute to arbitration

New Delhi: The Delhi High Court on Thursday referred a dispute between BharatPe, an online money transaction platform, and its former managing director Ashneer Grover to a sole arbitrator. In its plea filed before the Delhi High Court, the fintech company alleged that Grover disclosed confidential information relating to BharatPe on social media platforms, in violation of the employment agreement.

Before the issue reached Delhi HC, responding to BharatPe's notice to refer the matter to arbitration, Grover agreed on the formation of an arbitral tribunal but disagreed on the name of sole arbitrator. In an earlier round of litigation, the Delhi High Court imposed a fine of Rs 2 lakh on Grover over blatant violation of earlier orders and assurances made by him to not post on

social media defamatory posts against BharatPe. It had asked Ashneer Grover as well as the officials of the fintech company not to speak in a "unparliamentary" or "defamatory" manner against one another. The Delhi High Court issued an order restraining Grover from making defamatory and derogatory statements against BharatPe, its office bearers, or officials, and asked Grover to remove his posts, including one calling the SBI Chairperson "petty". Ashneer and his wife allegedly committed financial irregularities when they were at the helm of the fintech platform.

BharatPe terminated the services of Madhuri Jain, head of controls, after an internal probe found misappropriation of funds that ran into crores during her tenure.

PhonePe enables Credit Line on UPI on its platform

PhonePe today announced the launch of Credit Line on UPI on its platform. Consumers who avail credit lines from their banks can now link these credit lines to UPI on PhonePe and seamlessly make merchant payments. This feature enables consumers to make purchases with ease across millions of merchants and avail the flexibility of short-term credit that helps them manage their monthly expenses better. Reserve Bank of India (RBI) recently expanded the scope of UPI to include pre-approved credit lines, called 'Credit Line on UPI', allowing consumers to avail credit lines through banks and use these through their UPI apps. This will further help exponentially increase the number of merchants where credit lines can be utilised. Along with consumers, the option also allows merchants on the PhonePe Payment Gateway (PG), to offer their customers an additional payment option at the time of checkout. This not only reduces friction but also lowers cart abandonment lead-

ing to higher sales. Merchants simply need to integrate with PhonePe PG to add 'Credit Line on UPI' as a payment option to enable this offering.

Commenting on the launch Deep Agrawal, Head of Payments at PhonePe said "We are excited to launch Credit Line on UPI on our platform. This is the second offering that will unlock the potential of credit usage on UPI, following the tremendous success of Rupay Credit Cards on UPI. We believe digital payments in India is growing strength to strength and PhonePe is committed to providing the most innovative and best-in-class solutions to our customers. This offering will revolutionise the access and use of credit in the country and we are focussed on offering a varied set of new use cases in close partnership with the ecosystem players."

Credit line on UPI rides on the same UPI rails that millions of Indians are familiar with. Here's how users can avail it:



1. Users can link their Credit Line on UPI by clicking on the profile section on the top left of the PhonePe app home page and select the bank from which they availed the Credit Line.

2. The Credit Line associated with their registered phone number will be

linked on UPI upon clicking on the bank.

3. After linking, the user will be required to set a UPI PIN

4. Once this is done, the Credit Line option will show up as a payment instrument on the payment page while the user is making a payment.

India's mobile phone exports hit \$6.5 billion in April-July, led by iPhones



New Delhi: Led by iPhones, exports of mobile phones from India reached \$6.5 billion in the April-July period (Q1 FY25) – an almost 40 per cent surge from the same period last fiscal (FY23), industry data showed on Thursday. iPhone exports surpassed \$1 billion in the month of July – almost similar month-on-month performance as seen in the first quarter of FY25 – led by the production-linked incentive (PLI) scheme. Currently, iPhone exports constitute about 70 per cent of the total mobile exports from the country, the industry data showed.

According to experts, Apple's performance in the April-July period was marked by contrasting fortunes and the long-term growth outlook remains positive, with the

company being well-positioned to capitalise on India's growth trajectory in the coming years with big local manufacturing plans. In the four-month period, online sales improved for iPhones. iPhone 15 remained top sellers, mainly due to their significant upgrades over previous generations.

Apple's operations in the country reached \$23.5 billion in value in the last fiscal (FY24). The Cupertino-based giant clocked nearly \$8 billion in revenue in India in the last fiscal. Key Apple suppliers Foxconn, Pegatron and Tata Electronics (earlier Wistron) have ramped up the assembly of iPhones, as the country is set to enter the crucial festive season soon. According to Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, with a three-fold in-

crease in domestic production and an almost 100-fold jump in exports of mobile phones over the last six years, the mobile phone industry has matured in the country. The electronics sector experienced rapid growth, reaching \$155 billion in FY23. Production nearly doubled from \$48 bil-

lion in FY17 to \$101 billion in FY23, driven primarily by mobile phones, which now constitute 43 per cent of total electronics production. India has significantly reduced its reliance on smartphone imports and is now manufacturing 99 per cent devices domestically, according to the government.

Tata Group gears up for new iPhone assembly plant in TN as Apple expands India footprint

New Delhi: In a further boost to the 'Make in India' initiative, business conglomerate Tata Group is geared up for a new iPhone assembly plant in the country that is likely to become operational in the festive quarter of 2024.

The iPhone unit by Tata is being built in Hosur, Tamil Nadu. The iPhone facility is expected to employ over 50,000 workers, mostly women. The 250-acre Hosur plant will manufacture iPhones using components from a unit that Tata set up a couple of years ago. Tata Electronics is reportedly investing Rs 6,000 crore in the new plant.

The Tata Group acquired Taiwanese electronics manufacturer Wistron's India operations for \$125 million in October last year. The iPhone contract manufacturers in India now include Foxconn, Tata and Pegatron. Reports first surfaced in December last year that the Tata Group is planning to build one of India's largest iPhone assembly plants in Tamil Nadu's Hosur.

Tata already operates the iPhone manufacturing plant in Karnataka, which it has purchased from Wistron.

The shift in Apple manufacturing in the country happens as the tech giant aims to manufacture more than 50 million iPhones in India per year. Meanwhile, Apple has begun to train thousands of workers at its factory in Sriperumbudur, Tamil Nadu (operated by Foxconn) for launching latest iPhone 16 Pro and Pro Max models in the country post the global debut this fall. Apple is set to make its 'Make in India' iPhone 16 Pro and 16 Pro Max models available in the country right after the global launch.

iPhone 16 is set to be made available on the first day of global sales in India, just like last year when iPhone 15 arrived in the domestic market on the very first day of the global sale. It will be shortly followed by iPhone 16 Plus models. Foxconn is a major Apple supplier globally and has invested 1.4 billion dollars in India to date, with more to come.

Azerbaijan claims full control of breakaway region; holds initial talks with ethnic Armenians

Azerbaijan regained control of its breakaway region of Nagorno-Karabakh in a deadly two-day military offensive and held initial talks with representatives of its ethnic Armenian population on reintegrating the area into the mainly Muslim country, Azerbaijan's top diplomat told the UN Security Council on September 21. Foreign Minister Jeyhun Bayramov reaffirmed Azerbaijan's determination to guarantee Nagorno-Karabakh residents "all rights and freedoms" in line with the country's constitution and international human rights obligations, including safeguards for ethnic minorities. He said the talks with Nagorno-Karabakh in the Azerbaijani city of Yevlakh will continue. Azerbaijan's President Ilham Aliyev declared victory in a televised address. Mr. Bayramov said there is now "a historic opportunity" to seek better relations with Armenia after 30 years of conflict. Nagorno-Karabakh came under the control of ethnic Armenian forces backed by the Armenian military in separatist fighting that ended in 1994. Armenian forces also took control of substantial territory around the Azerbaijani region.

Azerbaijan regained control of the surrounding territory in a six-week war with Armenia in 2020. A Russia-brokered armistice ended the war, and a contingent of 2,000 Russian peacekeepers was sent to the region to monitor it. The agreement left the region's capital, Stepanakert, connected to Armenia only by the Lachin Corridor, along which Russian peacekeepers were supposed to ensure free movement. But a blockade by Azerbaijan deprived Nagorno-Karabakh of basic supplies for the last 10 months, until Monday, when the International Committee of the Red Cross was able to make a delivery through another route. Armenian Foreign Minister Ararat Mirzoyan, who called for the emergency meeting of the Security Council along with France, accused Azerbaijan of an "unprovoked and well-planned military attack," launched to coincide with this week's annual meeting of world leaders at the UN General Assembly. "Literally the whole territory of Nagorno-Karabakh," including Stepanakert and other cities and settlements, came under attack from intense and indiscriminate shelling, missiles, heavy artillery, banned cluster munitions, combat drones and other aircraft," he said. Mr. Mirzoyan said the offensive targeted critical infrastructure such as electricity stations, telephone cables and internet equipment, killed more than 200 people and wounded 400 others, including women and children. "More than 10,000 people fled their homes to escape the offensive," he said. "Electricity and phone services were knocked out, leaving people unable to contact each other, and 'Azerbaijani troops control main roads in Nagorno-Karabakh, which makes it impossible to visit and get information on the ground," he said. "The Azerbaijani social media is full of calls to find the missing children and women, to rape them, dismember them and feed them to dogs," Mr. Mirzoyan told the council. He said the "bar-

barity" of Azerbaijan's aggression and deliberate targeting of the civilian population "was the final act of this tragedy aimed at the forced exodus of the people of Nagorno-Karabakh." What Armenia has seen, Mr. Mirzoyan said, "is not an intent anymore but clear and irrefutable evidence of a policy of ethnic cleansing and mass atrocities." Mr. Bayramov strongly denied the allegations of ethnic cleansing. He said representatives from Nagorno-Karabakh asked during Thursday's talks for humanitarian aid, including food and fuel for schools, hospitals and other facilities that government agencies will provide soon. Russia's Deputy UN ambassador, Dmitry Polyansky, told the council: "We need to develop a gradual roadmap to integrate the population of Nagorno-Karabakh into the constitutional order of Azerbaijan, with clear guarantees over their rights and security," "Russia's peacekeepers will support these efforts," he said, adding that "the security and rights of Nagorno-Karabakh Armenians are of key importance." The quick capitulation by Nagorno-Karabakh separatists reflected their weakness from the blockade.

"The local forces, they were never strong. The Azerbaijani Army is much better prepared, much better equipped. ... So it was quite obvious, you know, that any military action that was to take place in that area, it would lead to the defeat of the local Armenian side," Olesya Vartanyan, an analyst at the International Crisis Group, told The Associated Press. Mr. Bayramov said Armenia kept more than 10,000 "armed formations" and heavy military equipment in Nagorno-Karabakh after the 2020 agreement. "During the operation that started on Tuesday, more than 90 of their outposts were taken, along with substantial military equipment," he said. He held up photos of equipment he claimed was seized. Mr. Mirzoyan urged the Security Council to demand protection for civilians in Nagorno-Karabakh; to immediately deploy a UN mission to monitor the human rights, humanitarian and security situation; to seek return of prisoners of war; and to consider deploying a UN peacekeeping force to the region. Azerbaijan's move to reclaim control over Nagorno-Karabakh raised concerns that a full-scale war in the region could resume. The 2020 war killed over 6,700 people. White House national security spokesman John Kirby said the U.S. was "deeply concerned" about Azerbaijan's military actions and was closely watching the humanitarian situation in Nagorno-Karabakh.

In a phone call on Thursday with Mr. Aliyev, Russian President Vladimir Putin also urged that the rights and security of the Armenians in Nagorno-Karabakh should be guaranteed, according to the Tass news agency. "Mr. Aliyev apologised to Mr. Putin during the call for the deaths of Russian peacekeepers in the region on Wednesday," the Kremlin said. Azerbaijan's prosecutor-general's office later said five Russian peacekeepers were

shot and killed on Wednesday by Azerbaijani troops who mistook them amid fog and rain for Armenian forces. One other Russian was killed by Armenian fighters. Meanwhile, protesters rallied in the Armenian capital of Yerevan for a third day on Thursday, demanding that authorities defend Armenians in Nagorno-Karabakh and calling for the resignation of Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan. "At least 46 people were arrested in a large protest outside the main government building in the city centre," police said. The conflict has long drawn powerful regional players, including Russia and Türkiye. While Russia took on a mediating role, Türkiye threw its weight behind long-time ally Azerbaijan. Russia has been Armenia's main economic partner and ally since the 1991 collapse of the Soviet Union and has a military base in the country. Mr. Pashinyan, however, has been increasingly critical of Moscow's role, emphasising its failure to protect Nagorno-Karabakh and arguing that Armenia needs to turn to the West to ensure its security. Moscow, in turn, has expressed dismay about Mr. Pashinyan's pro-Western tilt. While many in Armenia blamed Russia for the defeat of the separatists, Moscow pointed to Mr. Pashinyan's own recognition of Nagorno-Karabakh as part of Azerbaijan. "Undoubtedly, Karabakh is Azerbaijan's internal business," said Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov. "Azerbaijan is acting on its own territory, which was recognised by the leadership of Armenia." French Foreign Minister Catherine Colonna condemned Azerbaijan's offensive and said it is essential that the ceasefire announced on Wednesday is respected. What is at stake, Ms. Colonna



said, is whether the ethnic Armenians in Nagorno-Karabakh can continue living there with their rights and culture respected by Azerbaijan. "Today, they have the responsibility for the fate of the population," she said. If Azerbaijan wants a peaceful and negotiated solution, Ms. Colonna said, "it must here and now provide tangible guarantees" and commit to discussions and to not using or threatening the use of force. German Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock also condemned Azerbaijan's military assault, which she said was launched despite the government's assurances to refrain from the use of force. She called for a complete cessation of violence and lasting peace between Armenia and Azerbaijan that "can only be achieved at the negotiating table." Ms. Baerbock urged both countries to return to European Union-mediated talks.

Google mocks Apple in new video for lack of RCS messaging support

Meet
iPager



San Francisco: Google has mocked Apple in a new video by comparing the iPhone to an "iPager" because it does not use the RCS (Rich Communication Services) messaging protocol and still uses the decades-old SMS/MMS protocol for messaging with Android users. According to The Verge, Google last year launched a

"Get the Message" campaign to put pressure on Apple to support RCS on the iPhone, which is still ongoing today with "iPager".

"iPager isn't real, but the problems that Apple causes by using SMS are," said Google in the video description on YouTube.

Can blood tests for cancer save more lives? | Explained

Imagine a loved one receiving a cancer diagnosis when it's too late for effective treatment. Now, imagine if that cancer had been caught early — when it was still treatable, when hope was still alive. This is the reality we face today, where early detection, diagnosis, and prevention are not just crucial but lifesaving. With 1 in 9 Indians likely to develop cancer in their lifetime, the urgency to address the growing public health burden in India cannot be overstated.

What is the role of cancer screening?

Cancer is responsible for 18% of deaths from noncommunicable diseases, making it the second leading cause of mortality in the country. In 2022 alone, an estimated 14 lakh new cancer cases occurred in India, a number expected to rise by 12% by 2025. As per GLOBOCAN, among women, breast, cervical, ovarian, and colorectal cancers are most common, while lung, esophageal, colorectal, and stomach cancers dominate among men. When cancer is detected late, survival rates plummet while the cost of care skyrockets, often requiring aggressive and expensive treatments. On the other hand, early detection makes cancer easier to treat, causes less suffering, and significantly extends life. This is why many countries have aligned with the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), setting ambitious targets to ensure no cancer goes undetected. For instance, the National Health Service in England aims to increase the proportion of people diagnosed at an early stage from 50% to 75% by 2028. Early detection through screening is a cornerstone of any effective national cancer strategy. There is strong evidence that organised cancer screening can reduce mortality. Consequently, many countries have established national screening programs for breast, cervical, and colorectal cancers. Lung cancer screening is expanding globally, while prostate cancer screening is available but not widely recommended as a formal program. Most European countries, North America, Australia, and parts of Asia have adopted organised cancer screening, but in low- and middle-income countries like India, such programs are still uncommon. According to the recent National Family Health Survey (NFHS-5, 2019-21), cancer screening in India is limited to cervical, breast, and oral cancers, with only 0.2-2% of people having undergone any form of screening.

How effective is cancer screening?

The success of any cancer screening program hinges on uptake—the percentage of people who complete a screening test and receive their results within a set time after being invited. High uptake is essential for detecting cancers early enough to reduce deaths and ensure the cost-effectiveness of the program. Yet, barriers such as anxiety about test results, embarrassment, and, particularly in women's can-



cers, a lack of support from family members, can significantly reduce uptake. Additionally, structural barriers like limited health infrastructure and access to screening facilities further hinder the reach and effectiveness of cancer screening programs. These challenges are exacerbated by disruptions, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, when cancer screenings dropped sharply due to restricted access. Campaigns to increase uptake have shown only modest impact over time, highlighting the need for more innovative solutions.

How do blood-based tests work?

Blood-based tests offer a promising way forward. Already a staple in annual preventive health check-ups, these tests can be adapted for cancer screening with high specificity and reasonable sensitivity at an affordable price. A multi-cancer early detection (MCEd) test, a type of liquid biopsy, detects cancer signals—such as circulating tumour DNA (ctDNA) and circulating tumour cells (CTCs)—released by cancerous cells into the blood at early stages, when treatment is most effective. If a signal is found, the test can often pinpoint the cancer's location, helping doctors plan the appropriate care pathway.

The test can detect up to 50 types of cancer, including those like ovarian, liver, stomach, pancreatic, and esophageal cancers, which currently lack recommended early screening tests. It can also alert individuals to difficult-to-detect and aggressive cancers and is particularly recommended for adults and those at higher risk. However, it's important to understand that the MCEd test is different from genetic testing, which looks for inherited genes that may increase cancer risk over a lifetime. The MCEd test does not assess genetic pre-

dispositions or inherited genetic changes related to cancer. MCEd tests are not yet approved by the U.S. FDA. A few tests have received a Breakthrough Device Designation, but this doesn't mean they have gone through the FDA's rigorous premarket review process. In India, the CDSCO is responsible for drug, medical devices and diagnostic kits. While liquid biopsy for diagnostic purposes is gaining traction in India, MCEd tests are still new and are not in the approved CDSCO list yet. But some companies are now offering these tests to doctors and consumers as laboratory-developed tests (LDTs) and cost up to Rs 15,000 per instance. LDTs are created, manufactured, and used within a single lab. While labs must prove these tests can accurately measure what they claim to measure, federal regulations don't require them to show that the tests actually benefit patients, such as by diagnosing cancer early.

Do MCEd tests have downsides?

MCEd tests are also not without their challenges. One significant risk is false positives, where a test indicates cancer when there is none. When multiple tests are used for screening, the false positive rate can be as high as 50%. But combining traditional screening with an MCEd test can significantly reduce this rate. A 2021 study in the British Journal of Cancer estimated that such a combination could reduce the false-positives rate from 1:43 (i.e. 43 false positives for every true positive) to 1:14 for breast, lung, cervical, and colorectal cancers. Studies have demonstrated that with 25-100% uptake, MCEd tests can detect up to 400,000 additional cancer cases that traditional methods might miss. It's also important to note that while MCEd tests generally report high specific-

ity (>96%), their sensitivity was variable and influenced by study design, population, reference standard test used, and the duration of follow-up. Despite their potential, MCEd tests are not a magic bullet. They carry risks of overdiagnosis and overtreatment, which can lead to unnecessary physical, psychological, and financial strain. Therefore, the U.S. FDA advises that after a positive MCEd result, patients and clinicians should receive quick, comprehensive instructions on diagnostic evaluations required to confirm and understand a suspected cancer after a positive test.

Why do post-test procedures matter?

Since MCEd tests are still new to India (mostly as LDTs), post-testing support is crucial to alleviate the anxiety of a positive result. To address this, both patients and clinicians need a comprehensive range of educational tools and resources. Clear patient information guides should be provided to explain the results, outline next steps, and set expectations for further diagnostic procedures. Decision support tools can help evaluate the benefits and risks of additional testing or treatments, especially considering the potential for overdiagnosis and overtreatment. Access to counselling services, such as genetic counsellors or oncologists, is vital to help patients understand their results and manage the emotional and psychological impact. Interactive digital platforms can offer personalised education, track patient progress, and send reminders for follow-up appointments. Healthcare providers would also benefit from specialised training modules focused on interpreting MCEd results, effective patient communication, and managing the diagnostic process.

A towering hazard, the height of poor enforcement

The incident in Mumbai, on May 13, 2024, where a giant outdoor hoarding collapsed in a widespread dust storm leaving at least 16 people dead and over 70 people injured has led to serious questions. The billboard was installed without authorisation from the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC). After the accident, the BMC has said that action would be taken against those who have put up illegal hoardings in the city. This post-facto response is a lack-lustre reaction, especially when deaths caused by illegal hoardings are not new in India. Just days after this incident, a hoarding collapsed on the Pune-Solapur highway, following rain, injuring an animal. In May 2023, again in Pune, an unauthorised hoarding collapsed leaving five people dead. And in June 2023, three workers were crushed when the huge hoarding that they were erecting collapsed at Thekkalur near Karumathampatti in Coimbatore district. In the case of the Mumbai incident, that a hoarding nine times the permissible size was allowed to remain until it collapsed indicates a lack of oversight on the part of the BMC. A review of outdoor advertisement policies across different cities in India shows that these policies have very little to offer with respect to time-bound action against illegal hoardings.

Although the policies provide for maximum dimensions for hoardings, many cities have billboards that are well beyond permissible sizes. High Courts often haul up corporations for their inaction or lack of enforcement with respect to advertisement regulations. Previously, the Bombay High Court went so far as to provide the procedure for the removal of illegal hoardings, and directed that it be undertaken by two police personnel, accompanied by a civic staff member at the time of removal. Despite a slew of orders since 2017, negligence by the corporation has resulted in a serious incident, leading to a flurry of action by corporations across India. But will this interest in clearing illegal hoardings be sustained?

There are two key issues that hinder the enforcement of advertising regulations by city corporations: the lack of transparency and intermittent enforcement. Insofar as transparency is concerned, advertisement policies must expressly state the process through which complaints against illegal advertisements may be raised and the action to be undertaken. As far as enforcement is concerned, there is a need for a mechanism which ensures the prompt removal of unauthorised hoardings. Enforcement mechanisms do exist in the various outdoor advertising regulations in force. The Delhi Outdoor Advertising Policy, 2017 requires that the owners of non-compliant advertisements be asked to remove the structure within a specified time, failing which they are to be removed by the municipal authority. The policy also allows the suo motu removal of

unauthorised devices that pose a hazard to road traffic.

A more comprehensive enforcement regime is contained in the Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike Advertisement Rules, 2021 — but they were withdrawn after public backlash. The rules vested the Chief Commissioner with the power to remove unauthorised hoardings, and constituted an Advertisement Regulatory Committee to monitor compliance enforcement and the removal of unauthorised advertisements. The Tamil Nadu Urban Local Bodies Rules, 2023 require the municipal officials concerned to review the licensing of hoardings every three months and submit quarterly reports to the chief administrative officer of the urban local body. One mechanism through which a check can be kept on unauthorised hoardings is through the appointment of inter-departmental bodies which undertake periodic zone-wise or ward-wise inspection of outdoor advertisements to ensure that they meet the standards laid down in law. This will make periodic inspections a mandatory duty rather than a discretionary power of the municipal authority. Such enforcement and monitoring bodies may include relevant personnel from the traffic department along with zonal- or ward-level officers of the corporations and departmental safety engineers. City-level policies or bye-laws must also specify the course of action to be taken by corporation officials subsequent to the identification of unauthorised hoardings. It may be noted here that unauthorised hoardings include not only durable installations but also unauthorised banners and flexes (often put up by political party operatives), which, despite being temporary, also pose a significant safety risk. Action must also be taken against officials who fail to remove illegal structures despite complaints. Corporations must also look towards creating platforms and mechanisms through which citizens may report viola-



tions. Compliance may be monitored through the effective deployment of technology, such as the embossing of QR codes on all authorised hoardings. Policies and guidelines lay down safety requirements for outdoor advertising infrastructure, but periodic enforcement of these standards continues to be overlooked. Very often, when harm is caused due to unauthorised hoardings, corporations attempt to evade responsibility by claiming that such structures were illegal in the first

place. However, it is important for municipal authorities to actively recognise their role in the removal of illegal outdoor advertisements and assume responsibility for the identification of unauthorised advertising structures.

The need is for municipal bodies to institute proactive enforcement mechanisms, instead of taking action only in response to either court orders or harrowing incidents such as the one in Mumbai last week.

CII elects office bearers for 2024-25; ITC's Sanjiv Puri assumes office as President

New Delhi: The national council of industry body, the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) has elected new office-bearers for the year 2024-25, at a meeting held on Saturday. Sanjiv Puri, Chairman and Managing Director of ITC Limited has assumed office as the President of CII for 2024-25. He takes over from R Dinesh, Chairman of TVS Supply Chain Solutions. Sanjiv is the Chairman and MD of ITC Ltd, a conglomerate with businesses in FMCG, hotels, paperboards and packaging, agri business, and IT. He is also the Chairman of ITC Infotech India Ltd, its sub-

siidiaries in the UK and the US and Surya Nepal Private Ltd. Spearheading the ITC Next vision, Sanjiv has driven an extensive strategy reset to build a future-tech, climate positive, innovative, and inclusive enterprise. Sanjiv has won many awards including 'Best CEO Award' by Business Today in 2024, 'Transformational Leader Award 2022-23' by the Asian Centre for Corporate Governance and Sustainability. He was also awarded the 'IMPACT Person of the Year, 2020' by Exchange4Media. He was conferred with the 'Distinguished Alumnus Award of the

year 2018' by the Indian Institute of Technology, Kanpur and was bestowed with an Honorary Doctorate by the XIM University, Bhubaneswar. Rajiv Memani takes over as President-Designate of CII for the year 2024-25. He is Chairman of the India region of EY (Ernst & Young), a leading global professional services organization. Memani is also a member of EY's global management body as the Chair of its Global Emerging Markets Committee. He also advises large Indian companies, private equity funds and multinational organizations.