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Mir Osman Ali Khan remembered on his 58th death anniversary

Hyderabad: The 58th death anniversary of the last Nizam of Hyderabad, Mir Osman Ali Khan, was observed on Monday. Several people including the family members paid floral tributes at his mausoleum located at Masjid e Judi, King Kothi. A prayer meeting was also held here. Among those visited are Nawab Mir Najaf Ali Khan, grandson of Mir Osman Ali Khan, his relatives, heritage activists of the city, advocates and students of Osmania University. Nawab Najaf Ali Khan said that the contributions of Mir Osman Ali Khan, the architect of modern Hyderabad remained forgotten. He demanded that the government introduce a lesson in history books in educational institutions to remember the great contributions made by Nizam and to remove misbeliefs about Mir Osman Ali Khan.

S C to continue hearing MLA disqualification case next week; BRS, Congress in war of words



GNS News Agency, Feb 24

Hyderabad: The Supreme Court is slated to continue hearing in the case of 10 BRS MLAs, who defected to the ruling Congress in Telangana, on March 3 and likely to pronounce its much-anticipated verdict soon. The ruling is expected to have significant political ramifications, as the opposition BRS has been demanding their disqualification under the anti-defection law.

Originally scheduled for a hearing on February 18, the case was deferred as the Bench comprising Justices BR Gavai and K Vinod Chandran was occupied with a Constitution Bench. The BRS has accused the Telangana Assembly Speaker of deliberately stalling the disqualification process, violating constitutional provisions. It sees the Supreme Court verdict as a test of justice, while the Congress remains confident. In fact, during a public meeting at Nizamabad on Monday, Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy dismissed the possibility of defections, arguing that similar defections in the past did not lead to polls. However, his remarks have been criticised as misleading as past merg-

ers were constitutional, whereas these defections violate the law.

"Were any byelections held in the past? There was a Speaker then and there were courts as well. Now too, there is a Speaker and the courts too. Why will there be byelections now?" he asked. The remarks not only undermines the judiciary and the Constitution, but also belittles the Congress' national policy against defections, opposition leaders point out. The defected MLAs include Danam Nagender, Kadiyam Srihari, Tellam Venkat Rao, Pocharam Srinivas Reddy, Bandla Krishnamohan Reddy, Kale Yadaiah, T Prakash Goud, Arekapudi Gandhi, Gudem Mahipal Reddy and M Sanjay Kumar. The BRS filed disqualification petitions in June-July 2024, but the Speaker has yet to act. The BRS then approached the Telangana High Court, which initially directed the Speaker to act within four weeks in September last year. But later, a Division Bench revised its stance, allowing a 'reasonable time'. With 10 months elapsed and no progress, BRS moved the Supreme Court, arguing that the delay erodes public trust in democracy. Following arguments on both sides, the case was listed for February 18. The Tenth Schedule of the Constitution mandates disqualification of legislators who switch parties without resigning. The Supreme Court, in Keisham Meghachandra Singh vs Manipur Legislative Assembly (2020), ruled that Speakers must decide such cases within three months. The Telangana Speaker's delay has raised questions on whether constitutional safeguards can override political manoeuvring. If the Supreme Court rules against the defected MLAs, it could trigger byelections in 10 constituencies, potentially altering the State's political situation. The verdict will also clarify whether Speakers can indefinitely delay disqualification proceedings, a practice widely criticised as undermining democracy.

Education is the biggest investment in life: PM Modi

GNS News Agency, Feb 24

Bhopal: Addressing the inaugural session of the Madhya Pradesh Global Investment Summit (GIS) in Bhopal on Monday, Prime Minister Narendra Modi asserted that 'education is the biggest investment in life'. Prime Minister said he came 15 minutes late to inaugurate the summit due to the Madhya Pradesh board exams scheduled for class 10th and 12th on Monday.

"I came to know that there are exams for students of class 10th and 12th and the timing (exams) was clashing with my schedule to leave for the GIS venue from Raj Bhavan. I did not want students to get stuck in the traffic and that is why I decided to change the timing to leave for the venue. Education should not be obstructed in any manner as it is the biggest investment in life," the Prime Minister said. When PM Modi informed the packed gathering about the change in the timing and also apologised for reaching late at the GIS venue, the gesture won the hearts of not just those who were present there but millions of people who watched him live. PM Modi was scheduled to start from Raj Bhavan at 9.45 am and head for GIS-2025 at the Rashtriya Manav Sangrahalaya here, but he left at 10 am, an official said. Chief Minister Mohan Yadav lauded PM Modi's concern for students. "He is always sensitive towards students and their bright future, and also boosts their morale by organising various programmes from time to time," the Chief Minister said.

Harish Rao blames Congress Govt for urea crisis in Telangana



GNS News Agency, Feb 24

Hyderabad: Former Minister and senior BRS MLA T Harish Rao lashed out at the Congress government for pushing Telangana's farmers into distress by failing to ensure adequate supply of urea. "While farmers struggle under the scorching sun for urea, the State government is in deep slumber. The very farmers who feed the nation, are being forced to shed tears," he said, demanding immediate action to resolve the crisis. In a post on X, Harish Rao pointed out that after police were forced to issue tokens for urea in Mahabubabad recently, similar long queues were now formed in Jagtial. Farmers who struggled to stand in queues for long hours under scorching sun, were seen placing their land pass books and other documents to save their spot in the queue. He compared the situation to the hardships faced

by farmers in undivided Andhra Pradesh under Congress rule, accusing the Revanth Reddy government of bringing back those dark days. "In Telangana, where farmers were treated like kings under BRS rule, the credit for forcing them back onto the streets goes to Revanth Reddy," he said. He slammed the Congress for failing to fulfill promises made in its Farmer Declaration, including loan waivers, farmer assurances, and crop bonuses, calling them empty lies and blatant deception.

Texport Industries set to commence operations in Sircilla Apparel Park; to employ 2,000 women

GNS News Agency, Feb 24

Hyderabad: In a major boost to employment and industrial growth, Texport Industries Private Ltd (TIPL) is set to launch its readymade garments unit in Apparel Park, Sircilla, with an initial capacity to employ 2,000 women. This marks the second major apparel unit launch in Sircilla, following Green Needle (Gokuldas unit).

Sharing the news on X, BRS working president KT Rama Rao expressed happiness that the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed in 2022 has now materialised. He shared visuals of the unit, stating that at full capacity, Sircilla Apparel Park will generate 25,000 jobs, crediting former Chief Minister K Chandrashekhar Rao's visionary leadership for the initiative.

Yellow Ribbon Run on March 2 to raise awareness on Endometriosis

Hyderabad: City-based Endometriosis Foundation of India is conducting the second edition of Yellow Ribbon Run at Jalavihar Necklace Road on Sunday, March 2. The Foundation members on Monday said that the run is aimed at educating women about Endometriosis.

Endometriosis is as common as diabetes and asthma which affects women. It's the most misunderstood, misdiagnosed, unknown, under-funded and under researched health condition which severely affects women's lives mentally, personally and professionally, founder, Endometriosis Foundation of India, Dr. Vimee Bindra, on Monday said.

PM Modi transfers 22,000 cr to 9.8 crore farmers under 19th installment of PM-Kisan Samman Nidhi scheme

GNS News Agency, Feb 24



More than 22,000 crore was transferred into the bank accounts of 9.8 crore farmers across the country as Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday released the 19th installment of the PM Kisan Samman Nidhi scheme. The PM also inaugurated several developmental projects in Bihar. Mr. Modi was accompanied by Chief Minister Nitish Kumar at an event in Bhagalpur. Several Union Ministers, MPs and MLAs and officials of the state as well central ministries were also present on the occasion. Earlier in the day, the Prime Minister remarked that the government was proud of India's 'annadatas' (farmers) and was committed to improving their lives.

Congress losing in MLC polls will be people's loss, says Chief Minister Revanth Reddy

GNS News Agency, Feb 24

NIZAMABAD: Dismissing the opposition's rhetoric that the MLC elections would be a referendum on the performance of the Congress government, Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy on Monday said the MLC elections would not have any impact on the government. "Irrespective of whether Congress candidate Narendra Reddy wins or loses, the Congress government will not suffer any loss. But if he loses, there will be no person to raise your issues," Revanth Reddy said while addressing a public meeting here on Monday.

The Chief Minister also brushed aside statements from BRS leaders that by-elections were inevitable in the wake of the case against turncoat MLAs being heard in the Supreme Court. Alleging that the BRS had also poached many elected public representatives from 2014 to 2023, he asked why there would be by-polls when they were not held in similar situations in the past. "Were any by-elections held in the past? There was a Speaker then and there were courts as well. Now also, there is a Speaker and the courts too. Why will there be by-elections now?" he asked. The Chief Minister earlier said the



government was struggling to fulfil its promises due to paucity of funds. "The Government is not in a position to extend retirement benefits of Rs 8000 crore to the retired employees. It is their savings and the Congress government is struggling to sanction Rs 300 crore to Rs 400 crore monthly," the Chief Minister said. However, within one year, all pending dues of retired employees will be cleared, or if need be, Rs 1000 crore will be allocated for the purpose, he said.

CM Revanth Reddy Inaugurates Amgen India Facility in Hyd

GNS News Agency, Feb 24

Hyderabad has further strengthened its position as a biotechnology and life sciences hub with the inauguration of Amgen India's facility center in Madhapur. Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy inaugurated the facility, marking a significant milestone in Telangana's pursuit of scientific innovation and global investment. The foundation for this collaboration was laid during CM Revanth Reddy's visit to the United States in August, where the Telangana government signed an agreement with Amgen, a leading global biotechnology company. Following this, Amgen has now officially launched its first development center in Hyderabad. Speaking at the event, CM Revanth Reddy expressed pride that Amgen, one of the world's most renowned biotechnology firms, chose Hyderabad for its inaugural development center. He emphasized that this move would further strengthen Hyderabad's reputation as a leading innovation and technology hub in the biotechnology and life sciences sectors. CM Revanth Reddy, along with IT Minister D. Sridhar Babu, had previously visited Amgen's R&D center in San Francisco, where they observed the company's commitment to scientific innovation, research, biotechnology, and pharmaceutical advancements. He highlighted that Amgen's presence in Hyderabad would enhance the state's leadership in biotechnology, pharma, and life sciences, making the city a preferred destination for global investors. "Our government is committed to making Telangana a trillion-dollar



economy and positioning Hyderabad among the world's top cities as part of the 'China Plus One' strategy," the Chief Minister stated. He also assured Amgen of full government support in fostering research, skill development, and academic partnerships, urging the company to expand its investments in Telangana. The event saw the presence of several key dignitaries, including Amgen Chairman and CEO Robert A. Bradway, U.S. Consul General in Hyderabad Jennifer Larson, and Amgen Senior Vice President Derrick Miller. IT Minister D. Sridhar Babu also participated in the inauguration, reinforcing Telangana's commitment to attracting top-tier global companies to the state. With Amgen's entry, Hyderabad is set to scale new heights in the biotech industry, reinforcing its position as a global innovation powerhouse.

Members of Parliamentary Panel on Finance ask for review of corporate tax



GNS News Agency, Feb 24

The Parliamentary Standing Committee on Finance, during a six-hour-long meeting on Monday (February 24, 2025), questioned the government on the impact of the corporate tax cut introduced five years ago. As part of a review of the Union Budget, during recess of the Budget Session of Parliament which will reconvene on March 10, the Standing Committee headed by BJP MP Bhartuhari Mahtab met officials from the departments of Economic Affairs, Expenditure, Financial Services, Public Enterprises, Investment and Public Asset Management, and Revenue.

According to sources, many Opposition members

sought answers from the Finance Ministry on whether the corporate tax cuts introduced in September 2019 had increased private investment. "The government has foregone revenue of nearly ₹1.84 lakh crore due to corporate tax cuts in just the first two years of implementation of this cut. It is a valid question to ask that in lieu of giving up this revenue, what has been the corresponding private investment," one of the Opposition MPs said. Segueing into this debate were questions about how the government planned to meet the shortfall arising out of the income tax rebate announced by Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman in her Budget speech on February 1.

"With this measure, the government is foregoing income tax receipts of ₹1 lakh crore. How will the government meet this shortfall, considering the already unhealthy debt-to-GDP ratio," another member pointed out. There were also questions on the number of "zero-filers" after the changes in the income tax slabs. The BJP MPs, according to sources, also used the opportunity to point out "harassment" caused by the goods and services tax (GST) regime. They highlighted the complicated slabs and arbitrary arrest powers. One of the BJP MPs also asked for a detailed review of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA), asking for the number of successful convictions upheld by the Supreme Court so far.

As Pune-Prayagraj flight rates soar, 60% correction expected post Maha Kumbh



GNS News Agency, Feb 24

ment of a 50 per cent fare reduction effective from February. According to travel booking platform Ixigo, the cheapest flight from Pune to Prayagraj is priced at around Rs 20,000 for travel on February 25, 2025, while the highest fares reach around Rs 60,000. In contrast, on the last day of the Maha Kumbh, prices drop drastically to Rs 8,000 for some tickets, with the highest still being 60,000. However, the day after the Mela ends, fares start at Rs 8,000 and go up to Rs 20,000, marking a 60 per cent drop in the highest ticket prices.

IndiGo was the only airline to launch a direct service from Pune to Prayagraj, starting from February 16 for the last ten days of the Mela. The ticket fares for this flight were relatively affordable, starting at around Rs 20,000. However, these flights are not available on travel booking platforms. Responding to this, an IndiGo team stated that demand is high since it is the only direct flight from Pune for the Maha Kumbh at an affordable price. As a result, flights are fully booked, and reservations are almost closed, making them unavailable on travel websites. Another special flight by Akasa Air was introduced from Pune to Prayagraj via Delhi for a month, operating from January 27 to February 26. However, similar to IndiGo, Akasa flights are also not visible on booking platforms. Shubham Tigga hails from Chhattisgarh and studied journalism at the Asian College of Journalism. He previously reported on Chhattisgarh on Indigenous issues and is deeply interested in covering socio-political, human rights, and environmental issues in mainland and NE India. Presently based in Pune, he reports on civil aviation, other transport sectors, urban mobility, the gig economy, commercial matters, and workers' unions. You can reach out to him on LinkedIn ..

HC upholds change in Punjab sports quota criteria for MBBS admissions

GNS News Agency, Feb 24

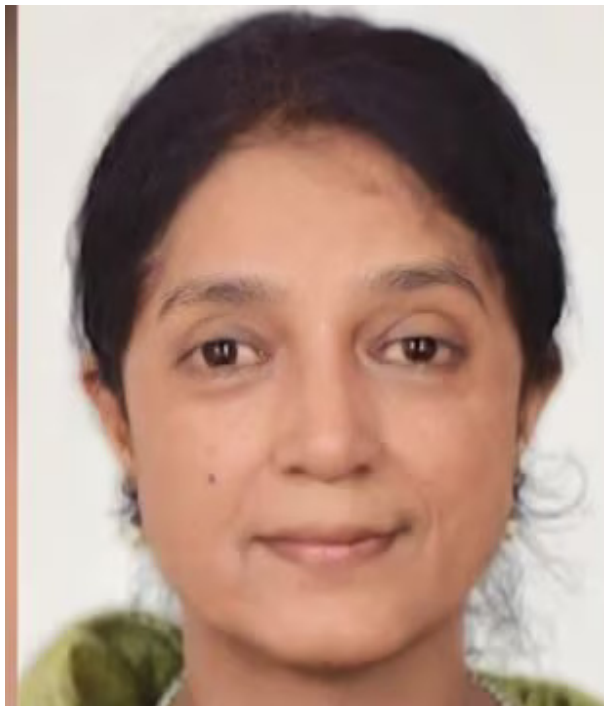
punjab and haryana high court, sports quota, mbbs admissions. A division bench of Chief Justice Sheel Nagu and Justice Sumeet Goel ruled on the plea filed by Ibadat Sekhon against the Punjab government and Baba Farid University of Health Sciences The Punjab and Haryana High Court has dismissed a petition challenging an amendment to the sports quota reservation criteria for MBBS/BDS admissions, ruling that the state government had the authority to modify the rules mid-process due to the exceptional circumstances caused by the Covid-19 pandemic. A division bench of Chief Justice Sheel Nagu and Justice Sumeet Goel ruled on the plea filed by Ibadat Sekhon against the Punjab government and Baba Farid University of Health Sciences (BFUHS). The petitioner had contested a corrigendum issued on August 1, 2023, which expanded the eligibility for sports quota seats by including sports achievements from 2019-20 to 2022-23 instead of limiting them to Class XI and XII, as per the original notification dated March 10, 2023.

The court examined whether altering the reservation criteria midway through the admission process violated legal principles. "A prospectus carries the force of law and must be adhered to without deviation," the court noted, referencing past judgments that prohibit changing rules once a selection process has begun. However, it also acknowledged that the 2023 prospectus included a clause allowing the state to amend any clause or schedule when required. Rejecting the petitioner's argument that her vested rights were violated, the court said, "To mount a legally sustainable challenge against a process modification, it must be demonstrably established that the original rules did not contemplate such an alteration or that the modification introduced is so manifestly arbitrary as to offend Article 14 and Article 16 of the Constitution." The court also noted that Sekhon had applied for admission under the revised criteria and subsequently secured a seat at Gian Sagar Medical College. "Having actively participated in the amended admission procedure, the petitioner is precluded from disputing its fairness or legality at this stage," the bench stated, invoking the doctrine of estoppel, which prevents someone from simultaneously accepting a benefit while challenging its validity. The Punjab government, represented by Additional Advocate General Saurav Khurana, defended the corrigendum, stating that the change was necessary to accommodate candidates affected by the pandemic when sporting events were suspended. "The amendment ensured a level playing field for all aspirants," the government argued. Advocates Amit Jhanji and Avinit Avasthi represented the petitioner, while respondent No.6, the successful candidate who benefited from the new criteria, chose not to appear before the court. Dismissing the petition, the court upheld the validity of the corrigendum, concluding that the changes were within the state's legal authority and did not violate constitutional rights.



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Meenakshi Negi to become Karnataka's first woman principal chief conservator of forests



GNS News Agency, Feb 24

ding key responsibilities such as forest policy, budget and finance, internal audits, accounts, and forest land management. Although several women officers have served in the Karnataka Forest Department, none has led the force. Women have previously held top positions such as Chief Secretary and Director General of Police (DGP) in Karnataka, but this is the first time a woman will head the state's forest administration. Originally from Uttarakhand, Negi was posted to Karnataka as an IFS officer and has served in various capacities over the past 35 years. She has held key positions, including Deputy Conservator of Forests (DCF) in Bellary, Mandya, and Chikmagalur. In Mandya, she played a key role in digitising timber sales, bringing greater transparency to the system. Her administrative capabilities also led to her appointment as Commissioner of the AYUSH Department in Karnataka. Negi later served as Joint Secretary in the Ministry of AYUSH before taking up her role at the NCW. She was instrumental in implementing women's rights and health reforms and was recognised with the Change Maker Award for her contributions. Negi's husband, Vijay Sharma, was also an IFS officer of the Karnataka cadre and served as the Managing Director of the state-owned Jungle Lodges & Resorts. He retired in January 2025.

BRS MLC Kavitha criticises Revanth, demands action on SC categorisation, Dalit Bandhu

GNS News Agency, Feb 24

Hyderabad: BRS MLC K Kavitha lashed out at Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy for misleading Dalits on Scheduled Castes (SC) categorisation and failing to honour Dr BR Ambedkar's legacy. She asserted that neither Prime Minister Narendra Modi nor Revanth Reddy played any role in the SC categorisation process, stating that it was the Supreme Court's verdict that paved the way. Speaking at a meeting of Dalit Bandhu Sadhana Samiti here on Thursday, Kavitha reminded that under former Chief Minister K Chandrashekar Rao's leadership, the then BRS government had passed a resolution on SC categorisation in the Assembly and sent it to the Union government. She urged the Congress government to implement SC categorisation without creating division among Dalits and ensure justice for all communities. The BRS MLC demanded the immediate release of the Shamim Akhtar Commission report, charging Revanth Reddy with deceiving people by linking SC categorisation to job allocations.

Punjab IELTS centres offer French courses to enhance Canada immigration aspirants' chances



GNS News Agency, Feb 24

To help international students improve their chances of securing a Canadian student visa, several IELTS centres in Punjab have begun offering courses in French, with immigration experts advising students to learn the language to take advantage of Canada's increasing focus on bilingual immigration. Over the past few years, Canada has placed more emphasis on welcoming francophone (French-speaking) immigrants, especially those outside Quebec province, where French is the official language. For international students, learning French has thus become an essential strategy, not only for securing a student visa but also for obtaining permanent residency (PR), particularly for those whose postgraduate work permit (PGWP) will soon expire.

According to immigration consultants, Canada is offering direct PR to individuals proficient in French, with this initiative set to continue until 2028. Learning French up to an advanced level can add 63 points to a candidate's PR application. Sumit Jain, a Jalandhar-based consultant from Jain Overseas, said the institute offers French language classes alongside IELTS (International English Language Testing System) training. This opportunity extends even to students already studying in Canada. Around 15 students enrolled with Jain Overseas are taking online French classes from Canada. Jain said, "We are offering free French language classes to our IELTS students by providing them with access to our portal. Just yesterday, a draw for PR was announced, under which 7,000 international students were selected for PR and most of them were selected under the bilingual programme. These students were well-served in the French language. Although we do not know how many are from India, 7,000 PRs for students is a significant number." He emphasised the importance of students doing something extra to improve their chances of staying in Canada.

Tirath Singh, owner of Pinnacle Immigration

Maharashtra Agriculture Minister Manikrao Kokate sentenced to 2 years in prison in 30-year-old fraud case

GNS News Agency, Feb 24

Maharashtra Agriculture Minister Manikrao Kokate Fraud Case: Maharashtra Agriculture Minister Manikrao Kokate has been sentenced to two years in prison by a Nashik district court for his involvement in a 30-year-old document tampering and fraud case. The conviction is related to the illegal acquisition of two flats under the chief minister's discretionary quota. The court also imposed a fine of Rs 50,000 on the NCP leader. His brother, Sunil Kokate, was similarly convicted in the case, which dates back to 1995. The case was initiated by former minister Tukaram Dighole, who accused the Kokate brothers of forging documents to fraudulently obtain flats in the Nirman View Apartment, located on College Road in Yeolekar Mala, Nashik. Tukaram Dighole, a three-time MLA and former Congress leader, was defeated by Kokate in the 1999 elections when Kokate won his first term as an MLA from Shiv Sena. Dighole passed away in 2019.

According to the charges, the Kokate siblings had claimed that they belonged to the low-income group (LIG) and had no other properties, which allowed them to secure flats under the chief minister's 10 per cent discretionary quota. However, investigations revealed that they had falsified documents to receive these benefits. The Nashik district and sessions court convicted the two brothers on Thursday, while two others named in the FIR were acquitted. Manikrao Kokate, who was present in court, said he would appeal the decision, adding that he had obtained bail in the case. In a statement to the press, he said, "I have obtained bail in the case and will file an appeal against the order."

This conviction has drawn further attention to Kokate, who has been embroiled in recent controversies, including his remarks about the Rs 1 crop insurance scheme for farmers. On February 15, during a meeting in Amravati, he said, "Even beggars don't accept one rupee in alms, but the government is giving crop insurance for this sum and this too is being misused." The Rs 1 crop insurance scheme has been plagued by allegations of fraud, with reports indicating that over 400,000 crop insurance applications were rejected due to fraudulent claims. Kokate has acknowledged that

Consultancy in Jalandhar, plans to start French courses soon. He is in search of a qualified teacher for the language. "Many IELTS centres have already begun offering French language courses or are planning to do so in response to Canada's focus on French for PR purposes," he said. He added that students should choose their centres carefully to ensure they receive quality instruction. Singh also pointed out that Canada aims to increase the share of francophone immigrants outside Quebec from 6 per cent in 2023 to 8 per cent by 2026. This bilingual focus can significantly enhance the chances of international students who gain proficiency in French, he noted.

Gurpreet Singh, who plans to introduce French courses at his i-Can Consultancy soon, said talks are underway to collaborate with a reputed French language institute. He said several IELTS centres are now designing French courses to allow students to learn the language while attending their English classes. Singh said that students proficient in both English and French are in a stronger position to secure a job in Canada after graduation and eventually obtain PR status. Experts also explain that learning French provides students with a competitive edge, especially for those whose PGWP is expiring. Ashish Ahuja, owner of ACS, Jalandhar, said his career solution centre recently began offering French courses along with IELTS classes. "Being bilingual is always an advantage. Students who gain knowledge of the French language will definitely have an edge in Canada," he said. Canada's two official languages—English and French—are integral to the country's immigration system. The Canadian government has placed a particular emphasis on attracting bilingual individuals who can integrate into francophone minority communities outside Quebec. These communities, which span provinces such as Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island, and Ontario, offer dedicated immigration streams for bilingual candidates. By learning French, students gain access to these Francophone Community Immigration Programmes (FMCSIP), which prioritise French-speaking newcomers, making it easier for them to qualify for immigration streams and secure PR.

Anurag of Jalandhar-based NIDS Infotech Limited, an institute offering language classes, explained that like IELTS, French language courses are offered in different levels, starting from A1, A2, B1, and B2 for beginners and progressing to advanced levels C1 and C2. "Our institute offers both IELTS and French language courses," he said. Tirath Singh concluded by emphasising the importance of dedication in learning French. "Students who focus and stay determined will be successful. With proper attention, mastering French is entirely achievable," he said, adding that for many students, investing in French language skills can be a long-term solution to their immigration goals.



some applicants misrepresented non-agricultural land as farmland to claim insurance benefits but stressed that no financial loss occurred, as no funds were transferred for the bogus applications. Despite the ongoing issues with the scheme, Kokate insisted that the government would not scrap the initiative but would implement changes to address the irregularities. "These rejected applications may have been turned down due to erroneous entries, but the scheme has been beneficial overall. Unfortunately, it was turned into a scam by certain elements," Kokate said. The decision by the Nashik district court has put Kokate in a difficult position, with both his ministerial and legislative positions now at risk. According to the law, any public representative who is sentenced to two years or more in prison cannot remain in office. Kokate, a five-time MLA from Sinnar in Nashik district, is currently aligned with the NCP led by Ajit Pawar. He has had a varied political career, having previously been associated with the Shiv Sena and the Congress before eventually joining the NCP. Following the NCP split, Kokate chose to side with Ajit Pawar and was subsequently appointed agriculture minister in the new Devendra Fadnavis-led government, securing a prominent role in the cabinet.

To rescue entangled birds, Mumbai Fire Brigade to buy 57 new telescopic poles

GNS News Agency, Feb 24

In a bid to save birds entangled in high-tension cables and kite strings and on electric poles, the Mumbai Fire Brigade (MFB) is set to procure 57 new bird rescue poles for its fire stations. Recently, the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) floated a tender inviting bids for the supply of the 'telescopic bird rescue poles' which are proposed to be distributed across its 35 fire stations in the city.

"The MFB receives many complaints from citizens where we see birds trapped within kite strings or on poles. These poles often have high-tension electric cables running through them and in cases of electric current leaking, it leads to shock and hurts our firemen, leading to grievous injuries," a senior MFB official said. Currently, each fire station in Mumbai has one bird rescue pole, procured in 2017. Speaking to The Indian Express, an official said that of the 57 new poles, one each will be distributed across the 35 fire stations and the remaining will be stationed at its quarters in the eastern suburbs, western suburbs and island city division for emergency dispatch.

"Presently, we have one bird rescue pole in our fire station but since it has been nearly a decade since they were procured, we have floated a tender to procure modified bird rescue poles which will be sturdier and better for rescue," the senior MFB official said. Amidst an increasing



number of high-rises and electric lines across Mumbai, animal welfare bodies and rescuers have pointed out that the city has been recording an uptick in cases of birds being trapped within ducts and high-tension wires. Furthermore, during festivities like Makar Sankranti, kite-string-related injuries injure many birds. Data showed that during Makar Sankranti this year, at least 40 birds including pigeons, owls and kites suffered injuries ranging from minor cuts to severe wounds. According to Pawan Sharma, honorary wildlife warden of Mumbai and founder of the Resqink Association for Wildlife Welfare (RAWWW), they receive an average of 700-800 bird rescue calls annually. "While we aid in the rescue of stranded birds,

No material impact of TotalEnergies' decision as no funding talks were on: Adani



GNS News Agency, Feb 24

Embattled billionaire Gautam Adani's group on Tuesday said French energy giant TotalEnergies' decision to pause new investments in the group will not have any material impact on operations and growth plans as no new funding was under discussion. TotalEnergies SE had on Monday stated that it was not aware of the corruption investigation its partner Adani group's founder chairman was facing in the US and that it is pausing fresh investments in the conglomerate pending the outcome of the charges. "We wish to clarify that there is no new financial commitment under discussion with TotalEnergies," Adani Green Energy Ltd (AGEL) said in a stock exchange filing. It was clarifying on TotalEnergies' statement of November 25. "Hence, the press release (through which the French firm announced its decision) will not have any material impact on the company's operations or its growth plan," AGEL added.

TotalEnergies is one of the biggest foreign investors in Adani's business empire and had previously taken stakes in the group's renewable energy venture AGEL and city gas unit Adani Total Gas Ltd (ATGL). In a statement on Monday, the French firm had said it learnt of US authorities indicting Gautam Adani and two other executives for allegedly paying USD 265 million bribes to Indian officials to secure solar power supply contracts for AGEL. "This indictment does not target AGEL itself, nor any AGEL-related companies," TotalEnergies had said. "Until such time when

the accusations against the Adani group individuals and their consequences have been clarified, TotalEnergies will not make any new financial contribution as part of its investments in the Adani group of companies." Adani group has dismissed the allegations brought in the US court as baseless and has said it would seek all possible legal recourse. TotalEnergies holds 19.75 per cent stake in AGEL — the renewable energy arm of the Indian group. It also has a 50 per cent stake in three joint venture companies that produce electricity from sunlight and wind with AGEL.

The French firm also holds a 37.4 per cent stake in Adani Total Gas Ltd, which retails CNG to automobiles and pipes natural gas to households for cooking. TotalEnergies, France's largest oil and gas company, first joined hands with Adani in 2018 for a liquefied natural gas (LNG) venture before buying a 19.75 per cent stake in AGEL and a stake in three solar assets for USD 2.5 billion in 2020-21. The French energy giant had in February last year put on hold a planned investment in Adani Group's USD 50 billion hydrogen project pending results of an audit launched following allegations by a US short-seller. While the partnership, where the French oil giant was to take a 25 per cent stake in the hydrogen venture of the Adani Group, was announced in June 2022, TotalEnergies had not yet signed a contract. As per the June 2022 announcement, TotalEnergies was to take 25 per cent equity in Adani New Industries Ltd (ANIL) — the Adani Group firm that is investing USD 50 billion over 10 years in a green hydrogen ecosystem, including an initial production capacity of 1 million tonnes before 2030. The announcement by Total adds to the woes of Adani. The crisis around the group, which began when Hindenburg released a damning report in January 2023, has also been used by the opposition parties to attack the government, alleging that the tycoon's rise was primarily because of his association with Prime Minister Narendra Modi. The government has rejected the allegation. Hindenburg's allegations of accounting and financial fraud unleashed an over USD 150 billion rout in market value across Adani's companies. Adani Group has vehemently denied the allegations, calling them malicious and

Cabinet clears PAN 2.0, card to feature QR code



Cabinet clears PAN 2.0, card to feature QR code
The PAN 2.0 is a e-governance project for re-engineering the business processes of taxpayer registration services through transformation of PAN/TAN services, the statement said. An upgrade of existing Permanent Account Number (PAN) with an additional feature of QR code on the cards along with a proposal to make PAN "the common identifier for businesses" was approved by the Union Cabinet on Monday. The Cabinet approved the PAN 2.0 Project of the Income Tax Department, with a cost of Rs 1,435 crore, under which the existing system will be upgraded completely, the digital backbone will be revamped and PAN will be made as a common business identifier for all digital sys-

tems of specified government agencies, Information and Broadcasting Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw said during the Cabinet briefing. The upgrade for existing PAN holders will be free of cost. The PAN 2.0 project will enable technology-driven transformation of taxpayer registration services with an aim to improve ease of access and service delivery, an official statement said. The PAN 2.0 project proposes to make PAN as the "single source of truth and data consistency" and with security and optimisation of infrastructure for greater agility, a statement said. "The new PAN cards will be QR code enabled. The existing ones can regenerate the old PAN card to the QR code-enabled ones," a senior Finance Ministry official told. Around 78 crore PAN cards have been issued so far, out of which 98 per cent belong to individuals. Vaishnaw said there have been demands by businesses to not have different identification numbers and thus, the new PAN will work as a common business identifier.

There will be a unified portal as the existing software is nearly 15-20 years old, he said. "It'll be completely paperless, online and a lot of focus will be on the grievance redressal system," he said. The PAN 2.0 is a e-governance project for re-engineering the business processes of taxpayer registration services through transformation of PAN/TAN services, the statement said.

Human exclamations of pain are similar across the world, new study reveals

GNS News Agency, Feb 24
But what kinds of "pain words" (or "interjections") do speakers of other languages use to express pain? And do these interjections feature similar sounds across languages, as we might expect if they are reflexive responses? A new article published in the Journal of the Acoustical Society of America examines this question for the first time. Our study measured vowels ("a", "i", "o", etc.) in interjections expressing pain, disgust and joy in over 130 languages across the globe. We then compared these with the vowels in nonlinguistic vocalisations (like moans, screams etc.) to test whether interjections and vocalisations share similar sounds. Our results suggest pain interjections can indeed be traced back to nonlinguistic vocalisations, but the story is less clear for joy and disgust. What are interjections? Interjections are standalone words that can be used on their own (like "ouch!" or "wow!"). They don't combine grammatically with other

words. Because linguists mostly study grammatical combinations, for a long time they didn't pay much attention to interjections. This is why some very basic questions about them have yet to be answered — despite interjections being very frequent in speech and fundamental to communication. The main goal of our research was to find out whether interjections share similar vowels across languages based on the emotion or affect they're meant to express. If so, we wanted to know whether these commonalities can be explained by the acoustic forms of nonlinguistic vocalisations like cries and moans. To test this, we collected pain, disgust and joy interjections from dictionaries spanning many languages in Africa, Asia, Australia and Europe (more than 500 interjections in 131 languages). To compare our interjections with noninterjection words, we used large databases with comprehensive lists of words for languages in our sample.

BMC to carry out traffic feasibility study for construction of a new vehicular arm at Coastal Road

GNS News Agency, Feb 24

Following the demands of residents from south Mumbai's Breach Candy, the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) is set to carry out a traffic feasibility study at Malabar Hill's Nepean Sea Road in order to chalk out possibility of constructing a new vehicular arm that will allow entry and exit of vehicles to the Mumbai Coastal Road.

The BMC's move came after cabinet minister Mangal Prabhat Lodha directed the civic authorities to carry out a traffic study. Lodha is the MLA from Malabar Hill and civic officials maintained that the study will be carried out next month. Meanwhile, Lodha's move came after local residents started an online petition demanding an alternative exit for Nepean Sea Road. At present, there are three traffic interchanges of Coastal Road at Amarson's, Haji Ali and Worli. The Amarson's interchange is the closest to Breach Candy which allows vehicles to enter or exit the road via Bhulabhai Desai Road. At present, there's no direct connector that would connect the coastal road with Nepean Sea Road. "Local residents have been demanding for an additional vehicular arm from coastal road considering there's severe congestion faced by motorists exiting the Amarson's interchange. I have discussed this proposal with the chief minister also and he is supportive. Therefore, steps should be taken up to go ahead with the project," Lodha said on Thursday. The Malabar Hill MLA held a meeting with local



residents at the civic headquarters on Thursday.

Meanwhile, senior civic officials maintained that the project is do-able, but this would lead to additional cost to the civic authorities. "The new design needs to be presented to the Supreme Court for taking permission before the execution work begins. The additional construction may affect the existing alignment of underpasses, for which additional measures need to be taken as well," said an official. Meanwhile, Lodha also directed civic officials to construct a parking lot in Breach Candy to cater to the needs of locals. The BMC was constructing a parking lot adjoining the coastal road. However, the work was stopped after locals protested against the project.

Diabetics, find out if having curry plant seeds will help you manage blood sugar levels

Curry leaves or kadipatta — which are native to India — are valued for their therapeutic as well as culinary qualities and are frequently used in many households. But these green leaves, and particularly their seeds, have also come under the spotlight as a natural remedy to manage diabetes. But do doctors recommend them? Dr Haricharan G, senior consultant physician, HoD, internal medicine, Gleneagles Hospitals, Lakdi Ka Pul, Hyderabad started by explaining that curry plant seeds are indeed known for their medicinal properties, particularly in managing diabetes. "The seeds, much like the leaves, contain several bioactive compounds that may help control blood sugar levels. Research suggests that these seeds can improve insulin sensitivity and reduce blood glucose levels, making them beneficial for diabetics," said Dr Haricharan.

The potential benefits

Mahanimbine, one of the chemicals found in curry plant seeds, may have hypoglycemic effects, said Simrat Kathuria, CEO and head dietitian, The Diet Xperts. "By increasing insulin production, decreasing intestinal glucose absorption, and improving insulin activity, these substances aid in blood sugar regulation. In addition, the seeds' high fibre content slows down digestion, which causes blood sugar levels to gradually rise. They, therefore, represent a promising complement to a diet suitable for diabetics," said Kathuria.

How to consume curry plant seeds?

They are dried, powdered, and taken with water or mixed into food, said Dr Haricharan. "It is generally recommended to take 1-2 teaspoons of this powder daily, preferably on an empty stomach in the morning. This practice can be continued for a few months, but it's essential to monitor blood sugar levels regularly and consult with a healthcare provider to avoid any potential complications or



interactions with other medications," said Dr Haricharan. According to Kathuria, curry leaf seeds are best consumed in the morning, right before breakfast. "While the length of consumption can be adjusted, starting with a three-month trial period is a typical strategy. To determine efficacy during this period, blood sugar levels must be monitored. Positive outcomes may allow for an extension of the period under medical observation," said Kathuria.

Things to note

Curry leaf seeds may be beneficial, but they shouldn't take the place of prescription diabetes drugs, urged Kathuria. "Alternatively, they could be applied as an additional precaution. Their effectiveness stems from their inherent capacity to naturally regulate the metabolism of glucose. Moderation is crucial because excessive consumption may have negative consequences including gastrointestinal distress or interact with diabetes medications," said Kathuria. Dr Haricharan also affirmed that curry leaf seeds can be beneficial for diabetics when used correctly, but they should be part of a broader diabetes management plan, and it's important to consult with a doctor before starting any new treatment.

Why you must never take vitamin B12 supplement at night

Often, we fail to follow the dos and don'ts when it comes to foods and medicines — simply because there is so much to remember. But that's just us. You must always stick to having vitamin D capsules after breakfast or lunch because it is fat soluble, and vitamin B12 supplements during the day and not at night. Why, you ask? According to nutritionist Amita Gadre, taking vitamin B12 supplements at night can mess with your sleep cycle. "Since B12 boosts energy, it's best to take it earlier in the day. Timing is everything when it comes to supplements," said Gadre.

Vitamin B12 deficiency, following which the supplements are advised, usually presents symptoms like anaemia, feeling tired or weak, trouble while walking, weight loss, irritability, poor appetite, and diarrhea. According to the Cleveland Clinic, it is usually seen in people who do not get enough vitamin B12 from their diet or when their digestive tract does not absorb enough. Vitamin B12 plays a vital role in maintaining the health of the nervous system and red blood cells, said Dr Aniket Mule, consultant internal medicine, Wockhardt Hospitals, Mira Road. "Vitamin B12 is best taken in the morning due to its role in energy production. It helps form red blood cells, supports nerve function, and contributes to DNA synthesis. As a result, it boosts energy levels and can increase alertness," said Dr Ramesh A, consultant, internal medicine, Gleneagles Aware Hospital, L.B. Nagar, Hyderabad.

Agreed Dr Aniket Mule, consultant internal medicine, Wockhardt Hospitals, Mira Road, Mumbai, and said that vitamin B12 supplement plays a crucial role in energy metabolism and nervous system function and, hence, should be taken during the day. "This is so because the B12 can



increase alertness and reduce feelings of fatigue, which could lead to difficulty falling asleep," said Dr Mule. Dr Mule added that one may also feel energetic and fail to sleep well at night. "It is also believed that B12 at night may not only impact the body's absorption process but also interfere with other nighttime bodily functions that take place to repair and recover processes essential for overall wellness," he told indianexpress.com. Dr Ramesh recommended taking Vitamin B12 supplements earlier for optimal absorption and to avoid sleep disturbances.

This supplement is most often recommended to patients during the day. However, if your doctor has particularly advised you to take vitamin B12 at night, it is best to follow their instructions," said Dr Mule. If you have specific medical conditions or dietary restrictions, consult your healthcare provider for personalised advice on timing and dosage.

Alabama set to execute man with nitrogen gas for 1991 murder, rape

GNS News Agency, Feb 24

A man convicted of murdering a woman after breaking into her apartment is set to be executed in Alabama in what would be the nation's fourth execution with nitrogen gas. Demetrius Terrence Frazier, 52, was convicted of the 1991 murder of 41-year-old Pauline Brown. Prosecutors said Frazier raped and shot her after breaking into her Birmingham apartment. If carried out, Frazier's execution will be the third in the United States in 2025 and the first in Alabama this year.

Alabama became the first State to carry out executions with nitrogen gas when three inmates were put to death using the method last year. The method involves placing a respirator gas mask over the person's face to replace breathable air with pure nitrogen gas, causing death by lack of oxygen. Frazier had no pending court appeals in the hours leading up to his execution. His advocates instead made a plea to the governor in another state to intercede. Frazier's mother and death penalty opponents asked Michigan Gov. Gretchen Whitmer to bring Frazier back to Michigan, where he was serving a life sentence for the murder of a 14-year-old girl before he was turned over to Alabama's death row. Michigan does not have the death penalty. "I know my son has changed. Demetrius has repented," his mother, Carol Frazier, wrote in a letter. "Please don't let Alabama kill my son," she added. Whitmer has not commented on the request. However, the Michigan attorney general's office wrote in a January court filing that the state did not want Frazier back. "While Michigan takes no position on the imposition of the death penalty in this case, Michigan does not seek to return Frazier to a Michigan correctional facility," state attorneys wrote.

Frazier was convicted of separate killings in 1991 in Alabama and in 1992 in Michigan, but he was convicted in the Michigan case first. Prosecutors said on November 27, 1991, that Frazier, then 19, broke into Brown's apartment through a window while she was asleep. Prosecutors said he demanded money and raped Brown at gunpoint after she gave him USD 80 from her purse. He then shot her in the head. He later returned to the apartment to have a snack and look for money, prosecutors said. Frazier confessed to Brown's killing in 1992 while in custody in Michigan, police said. He was sentenced to life in prison in Michigan for the 1992 murder of 14-year-old Crystal Kendrick. Then in 1996, an Alabama jury convicted him of murdering Brown and recommended by a vote of 10-2 that he receive a death sentence. All states but two — Alabama and Florida — now require a unanimous agreement for a death sentence. Frazier remained in Michigan custody until 2011 when the then-governors of the two states agreed to move him to Alabama's death row. A federal judge last week rejected a request to block Frazier's execution. His attorneys argued



the new execution method does not work as quickly as the state promised. Media witnesses, including The Associated Press, described how those put to death with the method shook on the gurney at the start of their executions. The judge ruled that the descriptions of the prior three executions do not support a finding that any of the men "experienced severe psychological pain or distress over and above what is inherent in any execution".

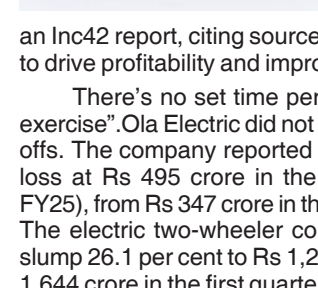
Ola Electric set to lay off 500 employees amid poor results

New Delhi: Ola Electric, mired in controversies amid a government probe and mounting losses, is set to lay off at least 500 employees as part of a restructuring exercise. The Bhavish Aggarwal-led electric vehicle (EV)

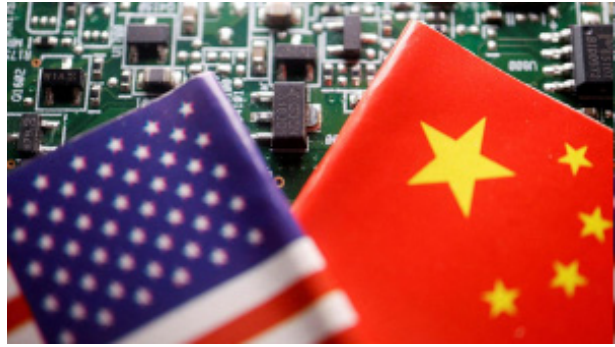
company is trying to boost its operational efficiency by reducing redundancies and 'drive profitability', according to multiple reports. The restructuring exercise will impact employees from several departments, the reports added. According to

an Inc42 report, citing sources, "the aim is to cut expenses to drive profitability and improve margins."

There's no set time period for the completion of the exercise. Ola Electric did not immediately comment on layoffs. The company reported a 43 per cent increase in net loss at Rs 495 crore in the July-September period (Q2 FY25), from Rs 347 crore in the previous quarter (Q1 FY25). The electric two-wheeler company also saw its revenue slump 26.1 per cent to Rs 1,214 crore (on-quarter) from Rs 1,644 crore in the first quarter



Ex-Google engineer faces new U.S. charges he stole AI secrets for Chinese companies



last March on four counts of theft of trade secrets. He is free on bond. Lawyers for Ding did not immediately respond to requests for comment. Ding's case was coordinated through an interagency Disruptive Technology Strike Force created in 2023 by the Biden administration. The initiative was designed to help stop advanced technology from being acquired by countries such as China and Russia, or potentially threatening national security. Prosecutors said Ding stole information about the hardware infrastructure and software platform that lets Google's supercomputing data centers train large AI models. Some of the allegedly stolen chip blueprints were meant to give Google an edge over cloud computing rivals Amazon.com and Microsoft, which design their own, and reduce Google's reliance on chips from Nvidia. Prosecutors said Ding joined Google in May 2019 and began his thefts three years later, when he was being courted to join an early-stage Chinese technology company. Ding allegedly uploaded more than 1,000 confidential files by May 2023 and later circulated a PowerPoint presentation to employees of a China startup he founded, saying that country's policies encouraged development of a domestic AI industry. Google was not charged and has said it cooperated with law enforcement. According to court records describing a Dec. 18 hearing, prosecutors and defense lawyers discussed a "potential resolution" to Ding's case, "but anticipate the matter proceeding to trial."

GNS News Agency, Feb 24

U.S. prosecutors on Tuesday unveiled an expanded 14-count indictment accusing former Google software engineer Linwei Ding of stealing artificial intelligence trade secrets to benefit two Chinese companies he was secretly working for. Ding, 38, a Chinese national, was charged by a federal grand jury in San Francisco with seven counts each of economic espionage and theft of trade secrets. Each economic espionage charge carries a maximum 15-year prison term and \$5 million fine, while each trade secrets charge carries a maximum 10-year term and \$250,000 fine.

The defendant, also known as Leon Ding, was indicted

The legal systems under which citizenship is acquired | Explained



GNS News Agency, Feb 24

The story so far: U.S. President Donald Trump issued an executive order stating that U.S. citizenship will be granted in the future only to children with parents holding U.S. citizenship or a U.S. green card.

What are the legal principles?

Citizenship is defined as full and equal membership of a country. In the words of Hannah Arendt, citizenship is the 'right to have rights'. There are two important legal systems based on which citizenship is acquired in various countries. One of them is 'jus soli' which means 'right of soil.' Under this principle, a child's citizenship is determined by his or her place of birth irrespective of the citizenship of their parents. Many North American and Latin American countries like Canada, Mexico, Brazil, Argentina etc., follow this principle while granting citizenship for children born within their country. The other is 'jus sanguinis' which means 'right of blood.' Under this principle, a child's citizenship is determined by the citizenship of parents. Many African, European and Asian countries like Egypt, South Africa, Germany, India etc., follow this principle.

What is the current issue in the U.S.?

The U.S. has practised the grant of citizenship based on the 'jus soli' principle. The 14th amendment to the U.S. Constitution, adopted in 1868, states that 'all persons born or naturalised in the United States, and subject to the juris-

dition thereof, are citizens of the United States.' The U.S. Supreme Court in 1898 reaffirmed that the 14th amendment extended to all children born in the U.S., irrespective of the parents' citizenship. The current executive order issued by President Trump titled 'Protecting the meaning and value of American citizenship' decrees that American citizenship would be granted only to children with parents holding U.S. Citizenship or a U.S. Green card. This order is to be implemented from February 19. However, a federal court in the State of Washington has temporarily stayed the order stating that it is 'blatantly unconstitutional.'

What about citizenship in India?

Citizenship in India is governed by the Citizenship Act, 1955. Till June 1987, India followed the 'jus soli' principle granting automatic citizenship to anyone born in India. Subsequently, the law was amended to introduce the 'jus sanguinis' principle. Between July 1987 and December 2004, it was required that either of the parents of a child born in India was a citizen of India for granting citizenship. Since December 2004, the requirement was further restricted wherein both the parents had to be citizens or one parent is a citizen and the other not an illegal immigrant. This was primarily to restrict citizenship to children born to illegal immigrants from Bangladesh. The Citizenship Amendment Act, 2019 (CAA) provides accelerated citizenship to Hindus, Christians, Sikhs, Jains, Buddhists, and Parsis from neighbouring countries of Pakistan, Afghanistan and Bangladesh who have entered India before December 31, 2014. India has differentiated on the basis of religion, by excluding Muslims, for grant of accelerated citizenship for the first time through CAA, 2019. Critics argue that this is against the basic structure of secularism under the Indian Constitution. The argument made by the government is that it is only to grant accelerated citizenship to religious minorities of these three neighbouring countries who have migrated to India owing to religious persecution in these countries and hence not discriminatory. The Supreme Court will decide on the constitutional validity of this law. Meanwhile, the government should ensure that implementation of this law does not create undue hardships for Muslim citizens.

Elon Musk creates confusion about deleting government agency 18F that worked on taxpayer tech

Billionaire tech mogul Elon Musk posted Monday on his social media site that he had "deleted" 18F, a government agency that worked on technology projects such as the IRS' Direct File program. This led to some confusion about whether Direct File is still available to taxpayers, but the free filing program is still available, at least for the coming tax season. While Musk's tweet may have intimidated that the group of workers had been eliminated, an individual with knowledge of the IRS workforce said the Direct File program was still accepting tax returns. The individual spoke anonymously with The Associated Press because they were not authorised to talk to the press. As of Monday evening, 18F's website was still operational, as was the Direct File website. But the digital services agency's X account was deleted. The IRS announced last year that it will make the free electronic tax return filing system permanent and asked all 50 states and the District of Columbia to help taxpayers file their returns through the program in 2025. The Direct File trial began in March 2024. But the IRS has face intense blowback to Direct File from private tax preparation companies that have made billions from charging people to use their software and have spent millions lobbying Congress. The average American typically spends about \$140 preparing their returns each year. Commercial tax prep companies that have lobbied against development of the free file program say free file options already exist. Several organisations, including private tax firms, offer free online tax preparation assistance to taxpayers under certain in-



come limits. Fillable forms are available online on the IRS website, but they are complicated and taxpayers still have to calculate their tax liability. Last May the IRS announced it would make the Direct File program permanent. It is now available in 25 states, up from 12 states that were part of last year's pilot program. The program allows people in some states with very simple W-2s to calculate and submit their returns directly to the IRS. Those using the pilot program in 2024 claimed more than \$90 million in refunds, the IRS said in October. During his confirmation hearing January 16, Scott Bessent, now treasury secretary, committed to maintaining the Direct File program at least for the 2025 tax season, which began January 27. Musk was responding to a post by an X user who called 18F "far left" and mused that Direct File "puts the government in charge" of preparing people's taxes.

USAID direct hires put on leave worldwide, except those deemed essential



GNS News Agency, Feb 24

Washington: The Trump administration is placing US Agency for International Development direct-hire staffers around the world on leave except those deemed essential, upending the aid agency's six-decade mission overseas. A notice posted online on Tuesday gives the workers 30 days to return home. The move had been rumoured for several days and was the most extreme of several proposals considered for consolidating the agency into the State Department. Other options had included closures of smaller USAID missions and partial closures of larger ones. Thousands of USAID employees already had been laid off and programs worldwide shut down after President Donald Trump imposed a sweeping freeze on foreign assistance. In the space of a few weeks, Trump political appointees and Elon Musk's budget-slashing Department of Government Efficiency have dismantled the aid agency despite outcry from Democratic

lawmakers.

They have ordered a spending stop that has paralysed US-funded aid and development work around the world, gutted the senior leadership and workforce with furloughs and firings, and closed Washington headquarters to staffers Monday. Lawmakers said the agency's computer servers were carted away. "Spent the weekend feeding USAID into the wood chipper," Musk boasted on X. Musk's teams had taken USAID's website offline over the weekend and it came back online Tuesday night, with the notice of recall or termination for global staffers its sole post.

The decision to withdraw direct-hire staff and their families earlier than their planned departures will likely cost the government tens of millions of dollars in travel and relocation costs. Staff being placed on leave include both foreign and civil service officers who have legal protection against arbitrary dismissal and being placed on leave without reason. The American Foreign Service Association, the union which represents US diplomats, sent a notice to its members denouncing the decision and saying it was preparing legal action to counter or halt it. Locally employed USAID staff, however, do not have much recourse and were excluded from the federal government's voluntary buyout offer. USAID staffers abroad have been fearing the move, packing up household belongings over the past week. Families faced wrenching decisions as the move loomed, including whether to pull children out of school midyear. Some gave away pet cats and dogs, fearing the Trump administration would not give them time to complete the paperwork to bring the animals with them.

When culture follows nature: A pastoral way of life showcased in Bengaluru

GNS News Agency, Feb 24

Every year, Mahendra Khatal, a pastoralist from Maharashtra's Dhangar community, walks between his native village of Dhawalpuri to Vangoan near South Gujarat with other community members and sheep, spending nearly a third of the year traversing through the Dhawalpuri grasslands. It was never an easy life, but now the journey has become even harder for many reasons, not least because these common lands are shrinking, thanks to urban development and construction, with even a large portion of this grassland taken over by the Indian army. Still, they persevere, adapting to these new conditions as pastoralists always have.

"We are resilient," says Khatal, who is in Bengaluru as part of Living Lightly Utsav, 2025, a festival that brings the stories, traditions, cultures and ecologies of India's pastoralists to life, now in its sixth edition. He also talks about the symbiotic relationship between pastoralists and the larger ecosystem: how their lives are closely intertwined with their animals, the land on which they graze, and other animals and plants that live on it. "The animals eat grass and excrete the seeds. This, in turn, helps more plants to start growing, creating ecosystems for animals such as tigers, cranes, boar, deer and wolves," he explains. "The exhibition focuses on the narratives, histories and of pastoralists in the Deccan, from the Western Ghats to the Eastern Ghats," says Sushma Iyengar, the lead curator of Living Lightly. Khatal's story is one of many that come alive at this event, which is being hosted by the Centre for Pastoralism and the Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts in Nagarbhavi, Bengaluru, in partnership with multiple institutions, artists, scholars, academicians and designers from across the country. "The exhibition focuses on the narratives, histories and of pastoralists in the Deccan, from the Western Ghats to the Eastern Ghats," says Sushma Iyengar, the lead curator of Living Lightly, adding that around 19 communities have been featured in this edition, including the Dhangars, Gollas, Banjaras, Erukulas, Kurubas and Nandagawalis. "It has been conceived as a medium through which we spotlight pastoralists' life worlds, their history of mobility, the present context and their challenges," she explains. Since it started, the organising team and their collaborators have been researching this remarkable and complex way of life. The idea for an exhibition of this sort came about several years ago, even before



COVID-19, and since then, the organising team and their collaborators have been researching this remarkable and complex way of life. Sushma reveals that much of the research stemmed from understanding various relationships that pastoralists had: with the land, pastoralists traverse, the other communities, rain-fed farmers, for instance, with whom they share a symbiotic relationship; the state, both historically and today; with materiality and with the divine. "Culture follows nature. It's never the other way around. Pastoralists know and never challenge that," she says, something every exhibit at Living Lightly, which will be held in the city till February 16, reiterates.

The first thing your eyes are likely to land on at the entrance of the Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts, where the primary event is being held, is a poster explaining what "living lightly" for the pastoral community means. Step past this, and you encounter some of these stories in dizzyingly diverse formats: panels with text, photographs, artwork, films, sound installations, olfactory art and much more. "These multifaceted formats are what make it a whole," states the event's press release, adding that the exhibition unfolds across 18 immersive sections on multiple themes, each created by some of India's most acclaimed designers, curators and artists, and pastoral artisans from various communities. "From the disappearing grasslands of the Deccan to the culture and economy of dung as a medium of exchange between pastoral communities, the exhibition sections offer a journey through pastoral histories, cultures, and ecologies, revealing their challenges and enduring relevance in today's world," it states. A few of the highlights of the exhibition include Call of the Kavals, a sound sculpture by Abhi Tambe that brings alive the aural language that pastoralists share with their animals; Walking Stories, a stunning cartographic representation of the migratory journeys of the communities of the Deccan;

and a 360-degree film on forests and pastoralists made by the filmmaker Ram Alluri. Other must-visit exhibits include one focusing on Indian grasslands, illustrated with stunning photographs by the photographer Dhritiman Mukherjee; another that examines the drug economy, replete with sculptures and wall panels made of dung itself; and yet another delving into the 4000-year history of pastoralism in the Deccan that uses a mixture of Sangam poetry, craft, art and facts to drive the narrative around it.

Though the exhibition is on pastoralists across the Deccan and beyond, the exhibition also attempts to give the visitors a feel of pastoralism in Karnataka specifically. For instance, there are exhibits devoted to the legacy of the Kuruba shepherd saint Balumama, the creation and significance of the handwoven woollen Kamblis of Karnataka, the indigenous Deccani sheep of Karnataka and Maharashtra and the Amrut Mahal cattle of Old Mysore as well as an examination of Bengaluru's natural landscapes and the impact of urbanisation on it. The exhibition also attempts to make research and documentation accessible to the public, according to Sushma, who believes in expressing some of these ideas through various artistic forms since "it creates both appreciation and wonder...you absorb the same issues, not from your mind but with your heart," she believes. In addition to the exhibition, a pastoral crafts bazaar and a pastoral cafe will be open on all days, offering further insights into the material culture of these communities. At the cafe, for instance, visitors can sample and purchase a curated selection of pastoral artisanal cheeses from across India, explains Asma Sayed, the co-founder of Bombay Fromagerie. She expands on the cheeses available at the cafe, including goat cheese from Gujarat, camel milk cheese from Rajasthan and Kaladi cheese, a traditional variety created by the nomadic tribal Gujjars of Jammu. Further ahead, at the bazaar, is a selection of craft products "which are materially associated with or intersect with pastoralism," as designer Anshu Arora, who has co-curated the bazaar with Shabri Wable, says. Some of the brands on display include Khamir from Kutch, Dolls4Tiber from Himachal Pradesh, Earthen Tunes from Andhra Pradesh, Porgai and Thechinpoof from Tamil Nadu, Dakhni Diaries from Karnataka and the Kishkinda Trust also from Karnataka, all of which bring together the visual language of these various pastoral communities. "We would like people to shop, but there is also a lot to discover," says Anshu. She adds that a series of craft workshops will also be conducted at the bazaar. The festival is also an opportunity to initiate conversations about the pastoral lifestyle. At one corner of IGNSA, for instance, a pastoral youth conclave is in session, with representatives of various communities coming together to discuss the issues they frequently face. A government expert present who prefers not to be named, talks about some challenges many pastoralists face in the state. "The media always projects that all pastoral communities of Karnataka are Kurubas, but that is untrue. There are more than 7 to 8 of these communities in Karnataka," he says, naming some of them, such as the Kadugollas, Myasabedaru, Krishnagollas, Bedakampanas, Goulis, Lambani, the pig-rearing Handi Jogis, and the Helavas. While some communities rear sheep for wool, most rear animals for meat, he says, pointing out that while meat markets are regularly held in the state, there is barely any modern infrastructure to support it. "They are one of the most neglected industries," he says. Also, "a lot of leather gets wasted in Karnataka because there are no processing and valuing units here." Having a space for conversation is, therefore, an integral part of the Utsav, be it conversations between pastoralists, between pastoralists and citizens at large or between pastoralists and the state to "create different provocations."

Plant flower sapling each on my daughter's birthday February 9: RG Kar victim's mother

GNS News Agency, Feb 24

Kolkata: The mother of the junior woman doctor of state-run R G Kar Medical College and Hospital, who was raped and murdered on the hospital premises last year, on Wednesday, issued a fresh appeal to the common people in West Bengal to hit the streets in protest on February 9, the birthday of her daughter. She had issued this appeal to the common people in the State through a video message. Although the blurred faces of both the parents of the victim were seen in the video, the entire speech was given by the mother sobbing from time to time while issuing that appeal. "My daughter died on August 9. Her birthday is on February 9, six months after the horrific incident. We are yet to get justice in the matter. We will be on the streets on February 9. The people have been beside us for the last six months. So I appeal to the people again to hit the streets on

February 9," the victim's mother said in the video message. She also requested the common people to plant a flower sapling each on February 9. "My daughter was very fond of flower saplings. So I request each of you to plant a sapling either at your home or at your workplace," she appealed. She also made it clear that she and her husband would see it through to the end to get justice for their daughter. "We will not be quitting. We will go to the extreme to get justice. Our only goal is to get justice for our daughter," the victim's mother said. Recently, the victim's parents have been under attack from several Trinamool Congress leaders because of their observations that they were against the death penalty for the sole victim in the crime Sanjay Roy now though the same has been proposed both by the West Bengal government and the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI).

'Marriage has become tough because girls want to be independent,' says Thaman S



Popular Telugu music composer Thaman S has come under fire after his recent statements on marriage and independent women. The composer, in a recent podcast, was asked about his wedding plans and his reply has ruffled feathers. In a conversation with Nikhil Vijayendra Simha on his podcast, Thaman said he wouldn't suggest anyone to get married at the moment because it has become 'difficult'

to sustain it. He said, "Right now, I don't want anyone to get married. It's become tough because the girls also, they want to be independent in life. They don't want to be under (any) one. So, I think we lost kind of that...one kind of girl society." The composer added, "And post covid, everything changed. I think Instagram is one of the main killers also. Maybe, I don't know if I'm using the right words. Because, we only share beautiful things there, but not the struggle that goes behind it. But right now, I don't recommend marriages; it's become very tough to understand the standards. I see people getting divorced left and right; it has become common. No one wants to adjust." A user wrote, "Omg! You don't recommend marriages because women want to be independent? Because they've stopped being innocent? Oh sorry! You mean they stopped being dumb? I did not expect this from you teddy anna. You're no different from a misogynist." Another person commented, "Bro realised feminism post covid." Another person, offended by his statement, said, "Very conveniently he put the blame on women's need for independence! Does it mean that independent women do not deserve companionship and love. He is just proving the typical men's mentality in a marriage where they want to control everything."

Abbas Tyrewala on writing antagonists in today's films: 'It is just cliched to see another Muslim villain'

Screenwriter, lyricist and filmmaker Abbas Tyrewala, who has worked with filmmakers like Santosh Sivan, Farah Khan, Vishal Bhardwaj, Rajkumar Hirani, and Siddharth Anand, is currently working on contrasting films like War 2 and Pawan Kalyan's Hari Hara Veera Mallu. In a recent interview, Tyrewala talked about the increasing showcase of Muslims as villains in movies.

In an interview to Lallantop Cinema, Tyrewala said, "Earlier, films were made by highly individualistic filmmakers. I worked with like-minded people, and there were hardly instances when the villainy or the political stance of a film made me cringe. But now, it isn't the same. And I am not saying this because I am an Indian Muslim, but just that, from a writing point of view, it is just cliched to see another Muslim villain."

Incidentally, Abbas Tyrewala is working on the dialogues of Hari Hara Veera Mallu, which features Bobby Deol as Mughal Emperor Aurangzeb. "When Aurangzeb is the villain, there is a sense of importance that is accorded with his representation. Of course, there is the truth, which can't be denied because it is there in our history, and then there is the exaggeration of truth for cinematic purposes. But there is no denying that what happened had happened," said Tyrewala, adding that India's strength still lies in its secular credentials, and the diversity and pluralism of the nation. "So, it makes me wonder if there is merit in oversimplifying the same old narrative and rekindle old wounds." Tyrewala is also candid enough to add that as a dialogue writer, it is important that he strikes a balance. "So, the balancing act is even more now. There was never a time when I had to



think of a dominating political ideology in the country. So now, I work and navigate through it all. The thing is I don't want to escape from this... but I don't want to cater to it too," said Tyrewala, adding that fame comes with its share of responsibility. "Sometimes, there are two truths to everything. What I actually am, and what I am as a writer, and I have to balance both." Recently, Aurangzeb was the primary antagonist in the runaway blockbuster, Chhaava, headlined by Vicky Kaushal and Rashmika Mandanna, and directed by Laxman Utekar. The character was played by the ever-reliable Akshaye Khanna, who has won plaudits for his role in the film, which has music by AR Rahman.

Shah Rukh Khan's JFK-inspired line was the most boring thing in Pathaan script, says Abbas Tyrewala: 'It was a battle I lost'



Shah Rukh Khan marked his return to cinema in 2023 with Pathaan, following a nearly five-year hiatus after Zero (2018). The film did exceptionally well at the box office, surpassing the Rs 1000 crore mark globally. While Pathaan

was well-received by his fans, one particular line in the film drew significant attention.

Shah Rukh Khan's line, "A soldier doesn't ask what his country can do for him, he asks what he can do for his country," is a variation of John F. Kennedy's iconic quote, "Ask not what your country can do for you—ask what you can do for your country." And, Abbas Tyrewala, the film's dialogue writer, was against incorporating this line.

In a recent interview with Lallantop Cinema, Tyrewala shared, "I was never in favour of the Kennedy line, but it was a battle I lost. I never wanted to use such old line in that film. I was judging that line too much. But, if people liked it, the credit should go to Siddharth Anand, Aditya Chopra and Sridhar Raghavan. They were extremely convinced that no other line will justify this particular scene." He added, "And I believed that there could be nothing more boring than this line. But, I lost that battle. If people are loving it today, it proves that dialogue writers are not necessarily right all the time and the importance of discussing scripts with more people involved in the film. Some things happen that they don't belong to you but people remember you for that." Pathaan also starred actress Deepika Padukone and John Abraham in pivotal roles. The film featured Salman Khan in a cameo role.

HBO's The Last of Us Season 2 to premiere on April 13



Starring Pedro Pascal and Bella Ramsey, the show is based on PlayStation's popular video game of the same name and made its debut on HBO in 2023. The show received critical acclaim and was later renewed for a second season.

The much-awaited second season of the smash hit series The Last of Us will premiere on HBO on April 13, the American cable network has announced. Starring Pedro Pascal and Bella Ramsey, the show is based on PlayStation's popular video game of the same name and made its debut on HBO in 2023. The show received critical acclaim and was later renewed for a second season. "Every path has a price. #TheLastOfUs returns April 13 on Max," HBO posted on Instagram alongside character posters of Pascal and Ramsey. Set 20 years after the destruction of modern civilisation, The Last of Us follows Joel (Pascal), a hardened survivor who is hired to smuggle 14-year-old Ellie (Ramsey) out of an oppressive quarantine zone. The sophomore chapter is set five years after the events of the first season. "Joel and Ellie are drawn into conflict with each other and a world even more dangerous and unpredictable than the one they left behind," read the official logline.

Besides the two actors, Gabriel Luna and Rutina Wesley are reprising their characters of Tommy and Maria, respectively. The new cast members include Kaitlyn Dever as Abby, Isabela Merced as Dina, Young Mazino as Jesse, Ariela Barer as Mel, Tati Gabrielle as Nora, Spencer Lord as Owen, Danny Ramirez as Manny, and Jeffrey Wright as Isaac. Veteran actor Catherine O'Hara will guest star in the series. The Last of Us is written and executive produced by Craig Mazin and Neil Druckmann, who co-created the video game series. The duo also serve as directors on the show. It is produced by PlayStation Productions, Word Games, Mighty Mint and Naughty Dog.

Is Nilavukku Enmel Ennadi Kobam, actor-filmmaker Dhanush's repayment of a 23-year-old loan?



In 2001, at the turn of the millennium, when things around the world changed rapidly, and nothing was the same anymore... Tamil cinema was ushering in a new age of stars. In January, Ajith Kumar had his Dheena hit screens worldwide, which gave him the moniker of 'Thala'. Vijay was simultaneously cementing his stardom with back-to-back successes like Friends, Badri, and Shahjahan. Basically, although Rajinikanth and Kamal Haasan were still going strong, Vijay and Ajith were claiming their spots as the next in line to ascend that ladder, and actors like Vikram and Suriya brushed off their insipid starts to get back into the big leagues. Interestingly, the only notable young actor to make his big screen debut was Shaam, who starred in Jeeva's 12B. Then, in 2002, something really interesting happened.

While the Ajiths and Vijays moved on from being the adolescent cubs to adult lions, Tamil cinema had the space for a new set of young cubs to find their place under the sun. There was Srikanth (Roja Kootam), Prasanna (Five Star), Jeevan (University), Silambarasan TR (Kadhal Azhivadhillai), Richard Rishi (Kadhal Virus), and in the same year, director Kasthoori Raja decided to make a film featuring his son Venkatesh Prabhu in the lead. Backed by a screenplay written by his other son Selvaraghavan, the film titled Thulluvadho lllamai launched a new hero, who was rechristened as... Dhanush.

Since then, over the years, we have seen many actors make their debuts with various types of films, but recently, the vacuum for young actors has been more prominent than ever. Seeing the kinds of films Malayalam cinema made for young adults made the void feel even more pronounced. Even in Tamil, there are young actors making their debuts in films that are star vehicles, albeit with a varying cubic capacity. In comparison, Hindi cinema still has the space for fluff, and young debutants to kickstart their career with candy floss romance or cheery campus stories. But there has been a major paucity for such films in Tamil.

And the boy who made his debut with a coming-of-age film about a few school kids finding themselves, their first whiff of freedom, their first brush of love, their first burst of rebellion, and long-lasting friendships, is coming up with a film for young adults of today. Nilavukku Enmel Ennadi Kobam is Dhanush's third directorial, and a movie that looks and feels completely in contrast to his previous films, Pa Paandi and Raayan. The film features a bunch of young actors — Pavish, Anikha Surendran, Priya Prakash Varrier, Venkatesh Menon, Ramya Ranganathan, Rabiya Khatoun, and Mathew Thomas. What Selvaraghavan did for Tamil cinema was to introduce a bunch of actors in Thulluvadho lllamai, fronted by his brother Dhanush. While not everyone in the film made it big, the stage is completely different for NEEK. Even if the actors are mostly rank newcomers in cinema, it isn't like they are technically 'nobodies'. Pavish is a third generation entrant into the film industry after his uncles Dhanush and Selvaraghavan, and grandfather Kasthuri Raja. There is Anikha and Priya, who are already successful actors. Then there are models, dancers and social media influencers in the case of Ramya, Rabiya, and Venkatesh. And of course, there is Mathew Thomas, one of the poster boys of new-gen Malayalam actors who are

finding themselves in the receiving end of quality scripts that make others envious of the Malayalam film industry. With such a notable star cast, what NEEK can actually do is to give Tamil cinema a wide variety of actors with varying levels of talent and expertise to carry the torch forward. While it is too early to burden them with the tag of 'tomorrow's Tamil cinema', the industry is indeed in a place where it desperately needs someone to own the mantle. And in the hands of Dhanush, who has been there, and has been instrumental in shaping the careers of many pillars of today's cinema, these actors have a mentor who knows a thing or two.

How NEEK would fare is anybody's guess, but it opens up an interesting set of options for Tamil cinema filmmakers. There is a new set of 20-something actors who love cinema, love acting, and get the platform of being in a Dhanush film. The tag of Dhanush would allow more than the usual eyeballs on them. Of course, they would be scrutinised even more, but then, it will allow romantic films to be made for young adults featuring young adults doing young adult things. Why have 30-somethings play young people when you have young talents who can do the same? Of course, as actors, it is their job to be convincing in roles that are above or below their ages... but you get the gist, right?

This will also pull Tamil cinema away from the gore of violence, and the grime of crime, and allow more saccharine-loaded stories to make it to the big screen. The true benchmark of any industry is the variety it gives to the audience, and developing an audience for all kinds of cinema. Take, for instance, in the sixty days between February 9 and April 11, 2024 in Malayalam cinema. They had the youthful Premalu, the grim Bramayugam, the survival dramas fronted by the young and the old guard in Manjummel Boys and The Goat Life, the stoic investigation of Anveshippikandethum, the nostalgia-driven Varshangalkku Sesham, and the outrageous Aavesham. Every actor had something different to do, and every film that was different found its audience, and every character was played by actors who, more often than not, played their age. This has been lacking for a while in Tamil cinema, and this is where NEEK has the potential to be a game changer. Of course, there are other films where young actors will be making their debuts, but again... these would be films that would either not be backed by a production house like Wunderbar Films, and not directed by someone like Dhanush. But more importantly, these might be films that don't allow the young actors to play out their youth on the big screen. They grow up much faster, and without a choice. But now, the likes of Pavish, Anikha, Priya, Mathew, Venkatesh, Rabiya, and Ramya can retain the charm and vivaciousness of their own youth and not channelise it from memories of their past. Basically, Dhanush is doing what Kasthuri Raja and Selvaraghavan did in 2002. 23 years since he stumbled into the world of Tamil cinema, and went on to change the landscape of Indian cinema over the years, Dhanush is embarking on a mission to pay his dues. It is almost like, one fine day, he woke up and decided that it was time to channelise the exuberance of youth through his films and his actors. And that day is finally arriving on February 21 as Nilavukku Enmel Ennadi Kobam is going to hit screens worldwide.

Mohanlal confirms Drishyam 3 with Jeethu Joseph, Antony Perumbavoor: 'The past never stays silent'

Between Drishyam and Drishyam 2, director Jeethu Joseph made seven films. On the other hand, Mohanlal made over 25 films. And almost every promotional interview of these interim films featured one question that always made the cut, 'When will you work on Drishyam 2?' Similarly, post Drishyam 2, Jeethu has made 4-5 films, and Mohanlal has been part of 15-odd films, and the question has just evolved to 'When will Drishyam 3 happen?' Even if there isn't any confirmation on when it will happen, Mohanlal took to his social media accounts on Thursday to confirm that the third film is in the works. Sharing a photo of himself with director Jeethu and producer Antony Perumbavoor, Mohanlal wrote, "The past never stays silent. Drishyam 3 confirmed." This has sent Drishyam franchise fans into quite the frenzy because another long-awaited collaboration,



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of discussion not just in Kerala, but globally. Jeethu is already working on the groundwork, and the thought process is being discussed by him, Lal sir, and Aashirvad Cinemas."

The legacy of Drishyam has been felt all across India with multiple remakes of the first part. The 2013 original found its way to Tamil (Papanasam), Telugu (Drushyam), Kannada (Drishya), Hindi (Drishyam), Sinhalese (Withanage), and even Chinese (The Witness). The sequel Drishyam 2 was also

remade in Hindi, Telugu, and Kannada with Ajay Devgn, Venkatesh and Ravichandran, respectively, reprising the role of Mohanlal from the original. Incidentally, this is the second movie confirmed by Mohanlal in recent times as he just shared information about his next, which would be helmed by actor-filmmaker Anoop Menon. Sharing a photo with Anoop, Mohanlal wrote, "Delighted to announce my next film, a dramatic journey traversing love, longing and music to be shot extensively in

Thiruvananthapuram, Kolkata and Shillong. Written and directed by Anoop Menon and featuring a stellar team BTS, produced by Timeless movies, this subject is so close to my heart. I sincerely welcome all of you to be part of our epic journey." Mohanlal, who was recently seen in his debut directorial Baroz, is currently awaiting the release of Prithviraj Sukumaran's L2: Empuraan. He is also part of the much-awaited reunion with Mammootty in Mahesh Narayanan's next and Tharun Moorthy's Thudaram.

