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Osmania University releases LAW CET and PGLCET notification

Hyderabad: Osmania University on Tuesday released the Telangana Law Common Entrance Test (TG LAW CET) and PG Law Common Entrance Test (PGLCET) 2025 notification for admissions to three year and five year law degree programmes, and LLM courses for the academic year 2025-26. Online registration of applications without a late fee can be done between March 1 and April 15. The last date for registration with a late fee of Rs 500 and Rs 1,000 is April 25 and May 5 respectively. Applications will also be accepted with a late fee of Rs 2,000 and Rs 4,000 up to May 15 and 25 respectively. Candidates can edit their already submitted application between May 20 and 25. Hall tickets will be available for download from May 30.

Hyderabad-based Biological E Limited collaborates of Bavarian Nordic to expand Chikungunya vaccine availability

Hyderabad: Hyderabad-based Biological E. Limited (BE) on Tuesday announced a strategic partnership with Denmark-based Bavarian Nordic A/S to expand access to Bavarian Nordic's Chikungunya Vaccine in low- and middle-income countries (LMIC). The partnership comprises a technology transfer of the current drug product manufacturing process for the Chikungunya Vaccine, with the option to transfer the drug substance process at a later stage. To that effect, the companies have reached an agreement to expand their capacity to provide future supplies to endemic low- and middle-income countries.

PM Modi hails role of Northeast in building prosperous India



February 24 and attended the Jhumoir Binandini (Mega Jhumoir) 2025 programme before opening the summit. The event is witnessing participation from global investors, policymakers, industry leaders, startups, and students. Addressing the gathering, the Prime Minister remarked, "History is witness that Eastern India has played a significant role in India's prosperity. Today, as India moves towards rapid development, once again, the Northeast is poised to showcase its immense potential. Advantage Assam is a reflection of this resurgence."

New Delhi: Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated the Advantage Assam 2.0 investors' summit in Guwahati on Tuesday, emphasizing that Eastern India has always played a crucial role in shaping a prosperous India. The summit features an inaugural session, seven ministerial sessions, and 14 thematic sessions, along with a grand exhibition showcasing Assam's economic landscape. Over 240 exhibitors will highlight the state's industrial evolution, global trade partnerships, booming industries, and the MSME sector.

Recalling his 2013 visit to Assam during the election campaign, he said, "I had then said that the day is not far when people will start learning alphabets with 'A for Assam' -- today, that vision is turning into reality." PM Modi highlighted India's global economic strength, stating, "Despite global uncertainties, experts are confident about India's rapid growth. The reason behind this is our long-term vision for the 21st century. The world today trusts India's young, skilled, and innovative population. It trusts our emerging middle class, moving forward with new aspirations. And most importantly, it trusts 140 crore Indians, who ensure political stability and policy continuity." The second edition of Advantage Assam -- which was first launched in 2018 -- aims to accelerate infrastructure development and investment in the state, positioning Assam as a key investment hub in India. The two-day event is expected to attract investors from across the country and the world.

SC quashes rape case chargesheet against former Army officer; Complainant filed nine FIRs in 7 police stations



Dubey said seven FIRs against nine different people, including the petitioner, at seven different police stations, were registered at her instance in the last eight years. The high court in its order on July 31, 2024, observed the matter was before the trial court, which would consider the arguments on behalf of the petitioner, and pass an appropriate verdict. "Petitioner is a 63-year-old decorated officer of the Indian Army with critical medical ailments, who has also suffered a massive heart attack and has two stents implanted. He was diagnosed with cancer and clinically declared as a highly immune-compromised case," his plea said. The former Army officer, said the plea, was a "victim of an unscrupulous abuser" of law whose modus operandi was to extort the "hard-earned money of respectable citizens like him" by misusing the rape and molestation laws. It came on record that during the COVID-19 lockdown somewhere between 2019 and 2020, the complainant got in touch with the petitioner claiming to be a social media influencer.

New Delhi: The Supreme Court on Tuesday quashed a chargesheet against a former Army officer in an alleged rape case saying it was an "abuse of process of law". A bench of Justices Sudhanshu Dhulia and K Vinod Chandran granted the relief to Capt. Rakesh Walia (retired) noting that the Delhi High Court erred in its decision of not quashing the chargesheet. Walia had challenged a Delhi High Court order dismissing his plea against the chargesheet. Advocate Ashwani Kumar Dubey, appearing for the petitioner, submitted that the complainant's testimony showed there was no offence and the FIR deserved to be quashed. Dubey said the woman ran a "sextortion" racket and filed multiple FIRs against different persons, blackmailing them for money. He submitted that a wrongful and malicious prosecution was initiated against his client.

KTR likens Revanth to Roman emperor Nero, says CM turning blind eye to Telangana's distress

Hyderabad: BRS working president KT Rama Rao launched a fierce attack on Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy for neglecting farmer suicides and the collapse of the Srisailem Left Bank Canal (SLBC) tunnel while prioritising election campaigns. Pointing out the tragic suicides of seven farmers in just 48 hours, he lambasted the Congress government's apathy, stating that 450 farmers had taken their lives since the Congress came to power. "Revanth Reddy is acting like Roman emperor Nero, turning a blind eye to Telangana's distress while he campaigns for MLC elections and rushes to Delhi for the 36th time," he remarked, taking a dig at the Chief Minister for frequent visits to the national capital while failing to even expand his Cabinet. He also charged Revanth Reddy and his Ministers with remaining indifferent to the SLBC tunnel accident, where eight persons were trapped. Welcoming former ZPTC Keerti Venkateswaralu and 500 Congress activists from Station Ghanpur into the BRS fold at Telangana Bhavan on Tuesday, Rama Rao stated that the exodus of Congress cadre into the opposition BRS reflected the shifting political tide in Telangana. He doubted if the Chief Minister himself had realised it while remarking that losing the MLC election would not affect the Congress.



Rs 1,137 crore contract under the AMRUT scheme to a dubious firm belonging to his brother-in-law. He reminded that no details of the raids conducted by the Enforcement Directorate on the properties of Minister Ponguleti Srinivas Reddy were revealed to date, adding that the BJP was shielding Revanth Reddy's corruption. He stated that both parties were conspiring against former Chief Minister K Chandrashekhara Rao. The former Minister also lashed out at the Chief Minister for his anti-farmer policies, stating that farmers in Lagacherla were jailed for refusing to give land for his son-in-law's factory. He said even Kodangal was rebelling against Revanth Reddy, with people vowing to bring down the Congress government. He dared Kadiyam Srihari, who defected to the Congress, to resign and contest fresh elections if he had the courage. Predicting bypolls in 10 Assembly constituencies where defections occurred, he said the BRS would return with a resounding victory. Ridiculing the Congress' financial mismanagement, Rama Rao said Revanth Reddy was more willing to send moneybags to Delhi than releasing funds to farmers. He pointed out that while Chandrashekhara Rao borrowed Rs 41,000 crore annually to build transformative projects such as Kaleshwaram, Mission Bhagiratha and medical colleges, the Congress government had racked up Rs 1.5 lakh crore in debt in just 14 months -- without initiating a single new project. "People are regretting not voting for BRS. Only now do they understand Chandrashekhara Rao's value after seeing Revanth Reddy's disastrous rule," he said, assuring that BRS would continue to fight for Telangana's interests.

Attacking the Congress-BJP nexus, the BRS working president pointed out that while the BJP was quick to target the Kaleshwaram project after one of the pillars of the Medigadda barrage developed cracks, it remained silent on the Sunkishala retaining wall collapse, the SLBC tunnel accident, and the Khammam Peddavagu bridge disaster. "Where is the frenzy that the BJP displayed when a single pillar of Kaleshwaram cracked? Now, when entire structures collapse under Congress rule, why is Prime Minister Modi silent?" he asked.

He stated that while the Congress government refused to give details of the Sunkishala accident under RTI, citing national security, the BJP government was yet to take any action on Modi's remarks of the Congress government in Telangana collecting RR tax (Rahul Gandhi-Revanth Reddy). Rama Rao also questioned the Centre's inaction, despite complaints against Revanth Reddy handing over a

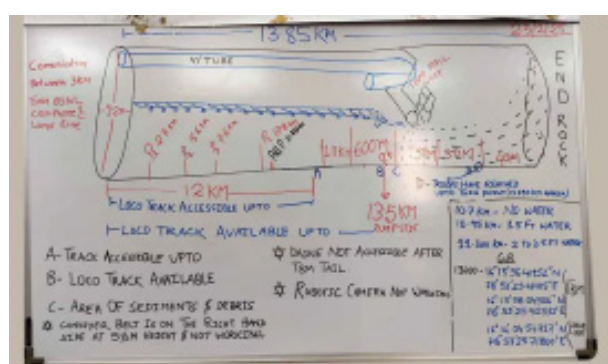
Telangana to have first-of-its-kind life science policy, says Revanth Reddy

Hyderabad: Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy said the Green Pharma City, a key initiative under Future City project, was progressing rapidly and already, a few biggest pharma companies had signed MoUs with the State government. He also said the State government was developing pharma villages between Outer Ring Road and Regional Ring Road. Efforts were on to generate five new lakh new jobs, he said at the inaugural ceremony of the BioAsia summit here on Tuesday. "We created Genome Valley years ago. We are coming up with a new Life Sciences policy, which would be the first in India," Revanth Reddy announced. The Chief Minister said efforts were to transform Telangana into a one trillion US dollar economy in next 10 years. "We creating Future City, AI City and many other big projects as part of this endeavour," he said, adding that Hyderabad was now EV capital of India. It has the highest sales of EVs in the entire country. As Telangana was a land-locked State, the Telangana government was developing a mega dry



port and it would connect it to neighbouring Andhra Pradesh. These two ports would be connected with a dedicated rail and road link, he said. "Many industry giants are here at BioAsia and together we can use this platform for great collaborations. Our government is committed to extend all support, including infrastructure and policy," the Chief Minister said.

Telangana Tunnel Collapse: over 600 rescue personnel on task at SLBC tunnel collapse site



tion, monitored by high-level officials. A ministerial group headed by Deputy Chief Minister Mallu Bhatti Vikramarka reviewed the progress of the rescue mission on the project site on Tuesday. Minister for Irrigation Uttam Kumar Reddy, Minister for Roads and Buildings Komatireddy Venkat Reddy, and Minister of Excise Jupally Krishna Rao who are personally overseeing the rescue operations, took part in the review.

Hyderabad: The rescue operations at the Srisailem Left Bank Canal (SLBC) tunnel collapse have entered a critical phase, with all efforts concentrated on reaching the final stretch of the tunnel. Nearly 600 personnel from nine agencies, alongside the Indian Army and Navy, are positioned at the SLBC tunnel. The precarious condition of the tunnel following the roof collapse has prompted swift ac-

Hyderabad going dry; water crisis looming large, says Harish

Hyderabad: With summer yet to begin, Hyderabad is already staring at an unprecedented water crisis, and BRS leader T Harish Rao held the Congress government squarely responsible for the looming disaster. He reminded that under former Chief Minister K Chandrashekhara Rao's rule, Hyderabad never saw a drinking water crisis. "But today, borewells are drying up, groundwater is depleting, and people are forced to buy water tankers, even before the summer commenced," he said, adding that Congress regime always led to a water crisis in the past and it has been proven once again. In a statement, Harish Rao cited official reports pointing out

that Telangana's groundwater reserves have dropped by a staggering 2.88 billion cubic meters, one of the worst declines in the country. Despite 15 per cent excess rainfall, he said Hyderabad's groundwater levels have fallen by 1.33 meters, while Kukatpally has hit a shocking 25.90 meters below ground. "Is the government even aware of what is happening?" he questioned, accusing Congress of neglecting critical water management projects. Drawing a sharp contrast, the former Irrigation Minister reminded that the BRS government initiated Mission Bhagiratha and Mission Kakatiya to ensure piped drinking water and revive thousands of lakes respectively. "Even in peak summer, we kept water bodies full. But under Congress, lakes are drying up, and the government is nowhere to be seen," he said.

22 Indian fishermen released from Pakistan jail reach Gujarat

Twenty-two Indian fishermen released from Pakistan's Karachi jail reached Gir Somnath in Gujarat on Tuesday (February 25, 2025) and expressed happiness on being able to return to their country. They also urged the government to expedite the release of several other Indian fishermen still languishing in the neighbouring country's jails. The 22 fishermen were apprehended by Pakistan's marines security agency between April 2021 and December 2022 while fishing near the maritime boundary in the Arabian sea off Gujarat. About 195 fishermen were still languishing in Pakistani jails, Assistant Director Of Fisheries, Veraval, V.K. Gohel said. Of the 22 fishermen who have been released, 18 are from Gujarat, three from Diu in the neighbouring Union Territory, and one from Uttar Pradesh. The Gujarat government in a statement said Chief Minister Bhupendra Patel and Agriculture Minister Raghavji Patel had requested the Centre for their release. The fishermen reached Vadodara via train Monday evening after being handed over to Indian authorities at the Wagah Border a few days back, Mr. Gohel said. From Vadodara, they reached Veraval in Gir Somnath district by a bus on Tuesday, Mr. Gohel said. Upon reaching Vadodara, the fishermen expressed happiness over returning to their country. They also expressed concern for the several fish-

erman still lodged in Pakistani jails, and urged the government to expedite the process of their release. "They are suffering from diseases and facing problems regarding food. They are in great difficulty," one of the released fishermen claimed while talking to reporters in Vadodara. Another fisherman recounted his plight, saying he was caught by the Pakistani marine security agency when he went fishing off the Gujarat coast three-and-a-half years ago. "All who returned are sick" All 22 persons who have returned are sick, and there are still many more who are jailed there. We request the government to make all possible efforts to get them released quickly, because there are lot of problems in the jails there," he said. Those who returned carried a letter from the Indian fishermen lodged in Pakistani jail, expressing their pain and a request to the government for a quick resolution to their plight. "We are 150 fishermen here. Two years ago, the Supreme Court of Pakistan released us, but we are still imprisoned. Almost all the fishermen have become mentally ill due to the tension of not being able to get out of here," reads the letter. "We have been sick, and facing breathing difficulties and skin diseases, yet only 22 fishermen have been released from here. Injustice is being done to the remaining 150 fishermen. There is no one here who understands our situation," the fishermen claimed in the letter. Out of the 18 released fishermen belonging to Gujarat, 14 are from Gir Somnath, three from Devbhoomi Dwarka and one from Rajkot.

Indian Chronicle

English Daily

USAID row

IN his zeal to Make America Great Again, US President Donald Trump is demonising and crippling an institution that has done well as a global benefactor for decades — the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). Trump and his much-touted Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE), headed by Elon Musk, have no qualms about making false claims to push their narrative. Efficiency is obviously their top priority, not accuracy or transparency. One typically unsubstantiated claim triggered a political slugfest in India. The BJP jumped to a conclusion when Trump and DOGE accused USAID of allocating \$21 million to India for enhancing 'voter turnout'. The ruling party regarded it as proof — though none was furnished by the US — that the Congress had sought foreign funding to influence India's electoral exercise. The Congress, in turn, pointed a finger at the BJP. It was a huge anti-climax when reports indicated that the money was sanctioned to Bangladesh, not India. And it's nothing short of absurd that Trump and Musk got two distinct sub-continental nations mixed up.

The NDA government has avoided hitting back at Trump, perhaps because he never tires of calling PM Narendra Modi his 'friend'. An annual report of the Finance Ministry has ruled out the diversion of USAID money for political funding in India. It shows that \$750 million provided by the US agency was used for government projects linked to food, agriculture, rural development, energy and environment during 2023-24. So, all this has turned out to be much ado about nothing. The lesson for India from this avoidable controversy is loud and clear: Let facts do the talking instead of treating Trumpspeak as the gospel truth. Strict regulation of foreign contributions is no doubt vital to weed out agencies bent on destabilising the nation, but the entire process should be marked by accuracy, transparency and fairness. Efficiency can wait.

With 829 varieties, three-day festival uncorks scent of rose

GNS News Agency, Feb 25

Amidst the beds of roses showcasing 829 varieties of roses in full bloom and stunning hues, the three-day 53rd edition of the 'Zero Budget and Zero Waste' Rose Festival opened Friday to the public at the Rose Garden. UT Administrator Gulab Chand Kataria, who inaugurated the festival, appreciated the efforts made by the MC employees and officers to make this festival a grand success and said rose, the 'Queen of Flowers', has been glorified as a symbol of love, compassion and eternal beauty. He added that the Chandigarh Rose Garden has been planned in such a way that a walk through the garden is like reading a story, and the festival is a way to pay tribute to the magnificence of the roses and a mega celebration of nature. What makes the festival special, said Kataria, is the high level of local public participation, and a variety of engaging events that citizens can enjoy. He remembered Dr M S Randhawa who conceptualised the Chandigarh Rose Festival and the third President of India, Dr Zakir Hussain, after whom this rose garden has been named, with both being keen horticulturists.

A large area of the festival at the Rose Garden is dedicated to breathtaking floral displays, innovative new designs and exotic exhibits, with a variety of flowers and plants being part of the displays. A treat for the eyes is a space dedicated to bonsai of different varieties, with as many as 200 from the personal collection of former bureaucrat Rupan Deol Bajaj who has dedicated close to 40 years of her life creating bonsai on display here. There are also grand installations, photo booths and displays made of fresh flowers, and also a showcase of photographs of the varieties here at the Rose Garden, with the names, and all details of the flowers also part of the exhibit. Dr Rajni Thareja and Sanjay Thareja, directors of The Gurukul chain of schools, took home 37 prizes at the festival. The duo stole the show with their prize-winning entries of Stock, Rose, Nactacium, Hydence, Dantas, Marigold, Cactis, Succulent, Kale, Dahlia and Antenium. They also dominated in the flower arrangement categories of 'arrangement with roses', 'without roses', 'dry flower arrangement', 'foliage', 'the advent of spring', and 'garland and bouquets'. They have been winning various prizes not just in the Rose Fest but also in the Chrysanthemum Show every year for the last two decades and are highly passionate about their flowers which they nurture with utmost love and personal care. Sanjay Thareja said that his motivation came from his mother Kamlesh Thareja, who is the former founder-principal of DAV School, Sector 15, Chandigarh. He says he grew up watching her nurture her plants with tender loving care. "One has to dedicate oneself completely, and have in-depth knowledge about plants and their growing conditions, only then can one raise prize-winning entries," said Sanjay, who dedicated his unprecedented win to the spirit of the ongoing Mahakumbh. This year, the MC has created two food courts as part of the festival, with the highlight being specialities from Rajasthan, Himachal Pradesh, Punjab, Bihar, Haryana, and Mumbai, with traditional food being served here. "We loved the bhel puri and siddu from Himachal, and also the fresh preparations by CITCO, especially the chana-bhatura," said Rachna Singh, here with her college mates from Derabassi. The Chandigarh Lalit Kala Akademi has several installations on display on the theme of peace and flowers, with artists painting live and interacting with the public on the process of the art. It has planned a brass and pipe band competition, folk dance contest, photography exhibition, Nirol Babeyan da Bhanga, cultural evening and game zone for children over the next two days. Artists from various parts of the country will perform on the main stage, with Rajasthani dance, being jogi, ghoomar, bhavai and cultural evenings that include a performance by famous Punjabi folk singer Sukhi Brar and group. One of the festival's highlights is a stall 'Old is Gold' by Inderjeet from New Chandigarh. He has been participating in the festival for the last 20 years, and displays here old tape recorders, gramophones, projectors, amplifiers, radios, record players, cassettes, records, that he has collected over decades and that he repairs.

"It started as a hobby, and then I took a course to learn how to repair old radios etc, and now I have people from across the region coming to me to get their old things repaired, mostly imported, and this stall gives the public to revisit an era gone by, with some of the things dating back 70 years," smiled Inderjeet. This year, several self-help groups are displaying a variety of things at the stalls here, with hand-knit and hand-embroidered clothes, jams, pickles, soaps, toys, stationery, incense sticks etc being sold here. "As the festival is visited by so many people from all walks of life, it gives us a chance to reach out to people and also promote our work," said Aarti, who makes soaps, creams etc.

More than 300 cats shifted to Kharadi from Hadapsar apartment after PMC's notice



GNS News Agency, Feb 25

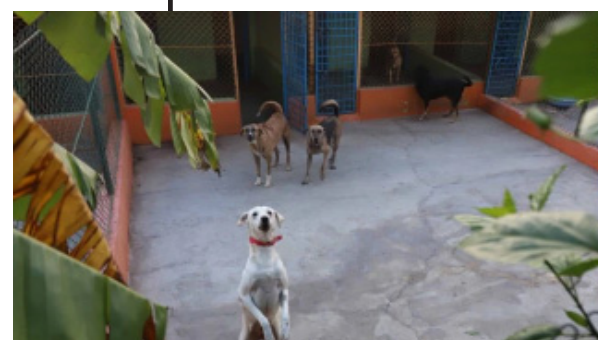
Residents of Marvel Bounty Cooperative Housing Society, in Hadapsar still remain puzzled about how a single flat on the ninth floor of the society managed to house over 300 cats. While the cats have been relocated as of Friday, many residents say a lot of questions remain unanswered; the chief of which was how Rinku and Ritu Bharadwaj the residents remained unfazed despite multiple complaints against them. On Friday, when The Indian Express visited the society, they were told that the cats were relocated to Kharadi. Dr Sarika Funde, veterinary officer of Pune Municipal Corporation (PMC) confirmed that the cats have been relocated by the sisters to another property owned by them. Neighbours have also confirmed this relocation. Earlier this week, the Hadapsar police had to step in when the residents had complained of numerous cats in a single flat which had caused problems for the residents.

The two sisters, residents said, had moved into the flat post the COVID 2020 lockdown. Problems started soon

after a pungent smell seemed to evade the flat. "At first we thought the smell was coming from the drainage of pipelines. Families nearby have been losing sleep due to the pungent odour and the constant meowing," said one of the residents. Another resident from the tenth floor recounted how concerns were raised as early as 2022 when a previous complaint led to a raid, revealing 50-60 cats inside the flat. "We expected action back then, but nothing happened. We kept filing complaints because this is affecting 143 families in our society," they said.

However, when the two sisters had moved in, their relations were cordial with their neighbours. "When they first moved in, we weren't on bad terms. She used to leave her keys with us when she went out, but as time passed and the odor started worsening, our relations became strained," they explained. But what was marked by everyone was that the sisters really did not bond with any residents. Residents said the 3 BHK flat on the ninth floor did not have a kitchen, which had left many questioning how they fed the cats. "The lack of air, space, and hygiene is inhumane, not just for us, but for the cats too," another resident stated. Like other societies this society had its share of pet lovers. "We love animals too—many of us have pet dogs—but this is extreme. These cats were not vaccinated, and many are pregnant. The lack of hygiene and cleanliness was unbearable," a resident expressed. "The matter gained urgency when a resident approached Pune Municipal Commissioner Rajendra Bhosale a few months ago. Following a short investigation, PMC officials, along with four female police officers, raided the apartment last Thursday. The officials had to wait for nearly two hours before the sisters opened the door. Once inside, they discovered more than 350 cats crammed into the 3BHK flat.

District deputy registrar of cooperative societies issues guidelines on pets in Pune



GNS News Agency, Feb 25

The district deputy registrar (DDR) of cooperative societies in Pune issued a letter earlier this week on the dos and don'ts for pet owners and cooperative housing societies in the city. The development follows the discovery of 300 cats in a flat in a housing society in Hadapsar last week. The instructions aim to avoid animal cruelty and minimise nuisance to other housing society members and are based on the Animal Welfare Board of India's (AWBI's) guidelines on dogs, pets and strays.

Speaking to The Indian Express, Sanjay Raut, DDR, Cooperative Societies, Pune, said that in 2015, the AWBI had published detailed guidelines on dogs and their caregivers, for residents' welfare and apartment owners' associations. "These guidelines are meant for both pet owners and residents alike," he said. The guidelines mention that people must show compassion to all living creatures as per Article 51(g) of the Constitution and that pet owners rightly consider their pets as family members. "A pet is akin to a perennial toddler and therefore deserves the same attention throughout its life as that reserved for a human toddler during its infancy," the guidelines state. "However, it is the responsibility of the pet owner to ensure that pets are not a source of nuisance to others," they add. "Barking is a natural form of expression for a dog, and must and has to be tolerated in a society. However, incessant barking can disturb neighbours. Hence, pet owners are advised to make every effort to keep their dogs quiet, particularly during night hours," the guidelines further state. The guidelines also mention that housing societies cannot legally impose a ban on owning pet dogs, saying such a move would be illegal. The guidelines encourage pet owners to clean up after their pets, keep their dogs leashed and ensure that their pets do not cause a nuisance. Last week, the Hadapsar police had to intervene after a housing society complained of over 300 cats being kept in a flat by two sisters. The cats were relocated but the case saw a few housing societies approach the DDR's office seeking directions on pet ownership.

Delhi HC allows cross-examination of constable who named man as accused 5 years after incident



GNS News Agency, Feb 25

After a surprise disclosure by a head constable, implicating a man as an accused in the Northeast Delhi 2020 riots for the first time in court deposition — five years after the incident — a trial court last month had refused to allow the accused time to cross-examine the witness. Now, the Delhi High Court has overturned the trial court's order. The HC reiterated that speedy trial "cannot be at the cost of fairness of the trial since that would be against all canons of justice". "We must not delude ourselves into believing that the purpose of expeditious trial would be served by denying to an accused a fair and reasonable opportunity to cross-examine a prosecution witness on a critical issue," Justice Anup Bhambhani held in an order on February 13.

The accused, Mohd Danish, had moved the High Court seeking a direction to the trial court to recall a prosecution witness in the case — head constable Shashikant — for cross-examination. Danish, in his plea, submitted that in relation to the rioting incident of February 24, 2020, head constable Shashikant had not named or identified him in his June 1, 2020, statement recorded under CrPC Section 161; he only identified Danish as an accused in the course of his court deposition recorded on January 24 this year. Since Danish was not identified earlier, the senior lawyer representing him before the trial court, was not present on the day; thus, Shashikant was not cross-examined. When the

junior counsel representing Danish had sought time from the trial court to cross-examine Shashikant, the request was rejected. The trial court refused to give the accused even a day to allow a senior counsel on his behalf to cross-examine the witness. It said a day-to-day trial in the case has been ordered and recorded that "it shall not (be) possible to conduct a desired speedy trial in the case unless defence counsel also act professionally". Justice Bhambhani, while allowing Danish's request, recorded, "... not to suggest that long and unnecessary adjournments should be granted for the asking, especially when a witness is under cross-examination, but to roll-over a case for cross-examination by a day or two when there is good reason for it cannot possibly be faulted... In the present case, it is not that the petitioner had acted carelessly and gone completely unrepresented on 24.01.2025. Junior counsel was present for the petitioner... in the course of his (prosecution witness Shashikant's) examination-in-chief on 24.01.2025, i.e., almost 5 years later, the witness identified the petitioner in court. There can hardly be any doubt that this would have come as a rude shock to the petitioner (Danish); this court would venture to think that even if the senior lawyer representing the petitioner was present before the learned trial court on that day, he would have taken time to consult the petitioner to cross-examine the witness thoroughly, apart from confronting him with the statement recorded under Section 161 CrPC." Justice Bhambhani further recorded, "While this court does not fault the learned trial court for attempting to proceed with the trial expeditiously, in the opinion of this court, denying the petitioner the right to cross-examine (head constable Shashikant) on an issue which is critical to the petitioner's defence — namely to his very presence and identity at the time of the occurrence — appears to have been a disproportionate sense of expedition. Nothing prevented the learned trial court from rolling over the cross-examination of PW-9 to the next date or to an early date thereafter, so as to afford the petitioner a fair opportunity to cross-examine that witness; and to also obviate any subsequent challenge that the petitioner was not given a fair opportunity to cross-examine the witness..."

'Thought it was a scam': Man who lost iPhone 15 Pro Max on Delhi Metro 2 years ago gets a surprise call

GNS News Agency, Feb 25

Almost two years ago, Pawan Tiwari had alighted from a train at the New Delhi Railway Station and was making his way into the adjacent Metro station when his cellphone went missing. While lugging his bags and managing his way through the crowd, Tiwari had made his way across the ticket scanning machine at the Metro station, only to feel fingers fumbling in his jeans pocket. Before he could realise what had happened, his phone had been pickpocketed.

Tiwari filed a complaint with the police and forgot about the incident. Such things happen, he told himself. However, almost two years later, he received a call from the police informing him that his phone had been recovered. The campaign, 'Mission Reconnect - Your Phone's Journey Back Home', was launched on January 30 to not only track and recover stolen phones but also ensure their hassle-free return to their owners. The campaign, 'Mission Reconnect - Your Phone's Journey Back Home', was launched on January 30 to not only track and recover stolen phones but also ensure their hassle-free return to their owners. "When I received the call, I thought it was a prank call and hung up," said Tiwari, chuckling. "I know at least five persons in my circle who have had their phones snatched or stolen... I don't remember a single one getting their phone back," he added. On Friday, the Delhi Police's Metro unit held an event to return recovered stolen phones to their rightful owners. The campaign, 'Mission Reconnect - Your Phone's Journey Back Home', was launched on January 30 to not only track and recover stolen phones but also ensure their hassle-free return to their owners.

According to police, cellphone thefts account for over 80% of all crimes reported in the Delhi Metro, often orchestrated by organised criminal networks that swiftly dispose of or sell stolen devices. In the last 20 days, 32 dedicated teams had travelled across 16 states — from Kerala to Jammu & Kashmir, and Meghalaya to Gujarat — tracking stolen phones and arresting culprits. The event on Friday was attended by Joint Commissioner of Police (Transport Range) Vijay Singh; DMRC Chief Security Commissioner Suvasish Choudhary; CISF DIG Akhilesh Kumar and DCP (Metro) Hareeshwar Swami. Around 250 people who had lost their cellphones during Metro travel attended the event, where 201 recovered phones were handed over. "Most people who lose their phones in Delhi are not from the city and most probably won't come back to claim their phones.



In such cases, we will courier their phones to them," DCP Swami told. Ansh Aggarwal was one of those who received his stolen cellphone at the event. However, receiving the phone was perhaps the last hoop he had to jump through. His first challenge was getting an FIR registered. "My phone was stolen at Kashmir Gate Metro station a month ago... I didn't know where to go to file a complaint... The Kashmir Gate police station took my application but said it won't register an FIR," said the 20-year-old BBA student. Delhi metro Officials at the programme emphasised that it was this complex process that often stopped phone owners from pursuing a case to recover their devices. Aggarwal's friend would try to file an e-FIR but could not figure out the process. Seeing no other way, Aggarwal gave up. However, a call from the police reminding him to get the FIR lodged made him give the process another chance. "A few days later, we got a call saying my phone had been recovered but to claim it, we needed to go to the Tis Hazari court, submit documents and then get a release order to be handed over to the police... Following this, we got a call from the police saying we can't claim the phone now but have to wait for a week for this event," Aggarwal said. Officials at the programme emphasised that it was this complex process that often stopped phone owners from pursuing a case to recover their devices. "We have established a Court Facilitation Unit to work directly with judicial magistrates. This unit has streamlined the process by enabling virtual appearances for complainants, thereby eliminating the need for physical court visits. Furthermore, we have ensured that victims are not burdened by legal fees, which have previously acted as a deterrent to seeking justice."

CBI files charge-sheet against its own DSP, ED officer



GNS News Agency, Feb 25

The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) filed a charge-sheet against an ED officer, its own DSP, and two others, in connection with a corruption case. The charge-sheet has been filed against CBI DSP Balbir Singh, Enforcement Directorate (ED) Assistant Director Vishal Deep, his relatives Vikas Deep and Niraj, under Section 7 of the Prevention of Corruption Act, and Section 61 (criminal conspiracy) of the BNS. The CBI had registered two FIRs against Deep based on complaints lodged by Bhupinder Kumar Sharma, chairman of Dev Bhumi Group of Institutions, Una, and Rajneesh Bansal, chairman of Himalayan Group of Professional Institutions, Sirmour. Both accused Deep and other ED officials of "demanding bribes for not arresting them" in cases registered against their institutions.

However, according to Deep, while he was investigating the proceeds of crime in the alleged Himachal Pradesh scholarship scam, he was induced by DSP Balbir and the complainant in one of the two FIRs to "accept a bribe amount to lend favours to the complainant by diluting the charges and by not arresting them". Balbir was arrested in the matter after he was questioned in connection with the bribery case linked to the alleged scholarship scam. His role was verified by the agency after Deep levelled charges against him. The CBI, later in its preliminary probe, found that Balbir has active role in the crime as he allegedly mediated the meeting between complainant and accused Deep in Hotel Lalit on December 14, 2024, and also facilitated the delivery of bribe on December 22, 2024 near Aerocity Road in Zirakpur (Mohali).

Need to differentiate between having a Constitution and practising constitutionalism: Delhi HC Chief Justice D K Upadhyaya

GNS News Agency, Feb 25

Delhi High Court Chief Justice D K Upadhyaya on Friday drew a line between "having a Constitution" and "practising constitutionalism", stressing that even authoritarian regimes "have a Constitution but sans constitutionalism". He made the remarks while speaking at the 29th Justice Sunanda Bhandare Memorial Lecture in Delhi.

"We need to differentiate between having a Constitution and practising constitutionalism. What separates these two is the rule of law. Even authoritarian regimes may have a Constitution but sans constitutionalism. The best example of this is the rise of Hitler, after the First World War, in Germany. Everyone knows he was an elected Chancellor of Germany at the time but he amended the laws or law-making procedure in such a manner that he became, by following the law, a dictator.

A missing baby, a mystery woman, an auto ride to Badarpur: How police busted a child kidnapping gang in Delhi



GNS News Agency, Feb 25

It was early morning on January 21. The flurry of activity at New Delhi Railway Station was yet to begin. The calm was punctuated by a 30-year-old woman, in dishevelled clothing, sobbing as she ran in circles on Platform 1. "Someone stole my child... someone stole my child," she cried, pleading for help. Her four-month-old baby girl was missing. She knew the entire premises of the railway station very well. She worked here, selling pens, every day. She also lived inside the station. She kept searching till noon. She was exhausted. Her older daughter, aged seven, held her hand as she sat in a corner.

She finally decided to go to the police. She knew there was a police station on the premises. This woman had come to the Capital from a village in Bihar. She didn't have a place to stay and lived inside the railway station, sleeping in the waiting hall or any other corner. She was married and had two children — a boy and a girl — when she arrived in Delhi. Her son, now a 14-year-old, is in a de-addiction centre while her daughter accompanies her. Four months ago, she told police, she gave birth to a baby girl, days after her husband had died. Subsequently, she said, she married a man who works in a tea stall at Old Delhi Railway Station. "At 7 pm (on January 20), I went to the waiting hall on Platform 1 along with my two daughters. We ate there, and around 1 am, I slept. My daughters were already asleep. Around 5 am, I woke up and saw that my four-month-old daughter wasn't there. I looked around for her but couldn't find her," the woman told police. The case was taken up by Inspector Vijay Samaria. The first step was to scan footage from CCTV cameras around the waiting hall.

"We saw a woman holding a baby in the footage," Inspector Samaria said. "When we looked at the footage again, we were startled. The woman's gait matched the kidnapper in another case where a two-and-a-half-year-old boy was taken from the railway station. There was another striking similarity. In both cases, the woman kidnapper had gone to Badarpur (bordering Haryana) in an auto-rickshaw." Inspector Samaria was talking about a case that his police station had registered last October and was yet to be solved. A 24-year-old woman from Prayagraj (UP) was on her way to Punjab in search of work. Her husband, she told police, had abandoned her and her child a year ago. Her two-and-a-half-year-old son was accompanying her. She laid a blanket on the floor near the reservation counter and slept, her son lying next to her. "When I woke up, my son was not there," she told police.

At that time, CCTV footage had shown a woman kidnapping the child and getting into an auto rickshaw. Police traced the vehicle to its final destination — Badarpur. Once the woman got out, she vanished. Police had picked up the auto-rickshaw driver but he didn't know anything. This time around, when police found that the same woman was involved in another kidnapping case, senior officers got involved. "We suspected that these two kidnappings are linked and are part of a larger racket," Inspector Samaria said. According to the police records, there have been 11,869 kidnapping/abduction cases of children in Delhi in the last three years: 3,948 cases in 2024, 3,974 cases in 2023 and 3,947 cases in 2022. Data shows that 18,246 children were reported missing in the last three years. In 80% of the cases, police said, these children were traced and reunited with their families.

Deputy Commissioner of Police, Railways, KPS Malhotra, formed a team comprising ACP Sanjeev Chahar and Inspectors Samaria and Vishwanath Paswan to tackle the case. He asked the team to rope in the policemen involved in probing the earlier case (of October 17, 2024) where the trail had gone cold. "The auto-rickshaw that had taken the woman to Badarpur was identified. This time, too, the driver didn't know a thing. But he gave us a piece of information that proved significant," Inspector Paswan said. "He told us that as they got close to Badarpur, the woman called someone on the phone and asked the person on the other end to come and pick them up." delhi kidnapping cases Like several hawkers, a 30-year-old woman took to living and sleeping inside the railway station premises. It was while she was sleeping one night that her four-month-old baby girl went missing. (Express Archive) Police asked the auto-rickshaw driver to show them the exact spot where he had dropped the kidnapper. "In earlier cases, too, we had identified the place where the autorickshaw had dropped her off. Then we matched data dump from the two spots and scanned every number that was active at that particular time," Inspector Paswan said. "One IMEI (International Mobile Equipment Identity) number popped up twice but with two different phone numbers. This means the handset used was the same even as the user changed the number." Police then scanned call detail records of both numbers. "Both were found active at the crime scene... inside New Delhi Railway Station," Inspector Paswan said.

Finally, the kidnapper's identity was established: 35-year-old Aarti. Police traced her to a house in Faridabad, where she lived with her husband Suraj. She wasn't home. Police started tracking Aarti's phone. "It was traced to the Maha Kumbh mela, and as luck would have it, her phone was suddenly switched off," Inspector Samaria said. "This was exactly the time when there was a stampede there... when we couldn't trace her phone, we thought she may have been a victim (of the stampede)." Police, however, scanned through her call details records and zeroed in on a couple of numbers she was constantly in touch with before her phone was switched off. These numbers were active in Faridabad. "We called one of the numbers and took the person into confidence... he told us Aarti was alive and her phone was stolen in Kumbh," Inspector Samaria said.

Aarti, who is from Bardhaman district in West Bengal, told police she had married a man named Shakoor 17 years ago and they had two sons. They were together for seven years before they separated. She left her children with her first husband after the divorce and moved to Faridabad with an "acquaintance".

In 2017, she married Suraj, a resident of UP's Badaun district, who is a daily wage labourer. They have two children — a six-year-old son and a 15-month-old boy — she told police. Before she married Suraj, she told police, she went by the name Rajina. "My name was changed by the

priest during our wedding ceremony," she told police.

According to police, Aarti told them that two years ago, she met a woman named Priya in Faridabad. "She said she was a doctor and ran her own clinic... and knew several childless couples who are ready to pay a handsome amount to adopt a child... she also told me she knows several gangs who steal children and deliberately break their limbs and make them beg," Aarti told the police. delhi kidnapping Police scanned CCTV footage at the railway station and found that the same woman was behind both kidnappings. "Priya told me that if I could arrange for a child, I would be paid a good amount. She told me if I wished to sell my own child too, she could arrange a buyer," Aarti claimed. Aarti decided to join hands with Priya. "My husband couldn't manage household expenses... we have been facing a severe financial crisis... I desperately needed money," she told police. The next character in this racket was Nirmala alias Nimmi who worked at a lawyer's office in Delhi. Her job, police said, was to arrange for legal documents of adoption so the entire process looks legitimate. Police made Aarti call Nimmi and tell her she had arranged yet another child. Nimmi fell for the bait and was arrested.

Police, meanwhile, found out that Priya's real name was Kanta Bujhel and she was a nurse at a private hospital in Faridabad. A police team reached the hospital. They were aware that she rode a scooter. "Her scooter was in the parking lot. We came to know she was assisting in a childbirth and was in the operation theatre. So our team, who were in civil clothes, waited outside," Inspector Samaria said. "Some people there mistook them as officials who had come for road construction-related work. The team waited for around three hours. Finally, she came out and was arrested." Once Kanta was picked up, the entire racket unravelled.

"We found photos of at least 18 children on the phones of Nimmi and Kanta... we know there are more suppliers in this ring; they are being identified," Inspector Samaria said. "So far, we have identified two more suppliers and three-four buyers in Delhi as well as other parts of the country. There are also two other middlemen who would fix the deals." Police said Nimmi and Aarti, both five months pregnant, were produced before a court and sent to judicial custody. Multiple layers of this child kidnapping and trafficking racket have been exposed during the police probe. "This racket is like a web... each time we make an arrest, we find the involvement of more people... it keeps branching out. We have already arrested four and a dozen more are under our surveillance," said Samaria.

Police found that Aarti's role was to arrange the children. She would mostly kidnap toddlers from poor, down-trodden and homeless people because "nobody will search for their children after a while". Once she kidnapped a child, she would send pictures to both Kanta and Nimmi. After a deal was struck, Aarti and Suraj would pretend to be the biological parents of the child and sign the adoption papers when the child was handed over to the foster parents to make it look legitimate. Kanta, police said, was in touch with a few doctors and several childless couples. She has also been buying newborn babies from women in desperate need of money. "Kanta would use codes while communicating with Aarti and other suppliers. 'Chota file' was used to refer to a baby girl. A baby boy was called 'bhadi file'. While a girl child was sold for Rs 50,000 to a lakh, the price for a baby boy was fixed between Rs 2 lakh and Rs 4 lakh," Inspector Samaria said. Kanta had even told Aarti that she would compensate her with a piece of land worth Rs 2.5 lakh, if she gave her newborn child after delivery, police said. Police said they have identified another chain linked to Nimmi and suspect she was involved in supplying kidnapped children to begging gangs in Delhi. This chain, police said, was unearthed after scanning Nimmi's mobile phone. "Apart from Aarti, she was in touch with another supplier in Malka Ganj, Old Delhi, who has been identified only as PB. Nimmi was also in touch with a woman who arranged her buyers," Inspector Samaria said. Police, meanwhile, have recovered the two children kidnapped by Aarti from New Delhi Railway station. Aarti had sold the two-and-a-half-year-old boy, kidnapped last year, to Nimmi, who asked a contact to find a buyer. The deal, police said, was struck with a man in Loni for Rs 3 lakh. This man, police said, further sold the boy to a couple in Loni. The couple had two daughters and were desperate to have a son, police found.

"We recovered the boy from Loni and seized the fake adoption documents," Inspector Samaria said. "The child is at a shelter home and we have already informed his mother who will soon arrive from Prayagraj." The four-month-old girl was recovered from a woman in Paharganj. "Aarti had handed over the child to Kanta, who subsequently sold her," Inspector Samaria said. Police have found pictures and documents of four other children sold to a couple based in Pathankot, two doctors and a childless woman respectively. "We are still verifying the identity of the children," Inspector Samaria said.

Harish Rao accepts Revanth Reddy's challenge, calls for open debate on 14-month Congress rule

Hyderabad: Former Minister and senior BRS MLA T Harish Rao has thrown down the gauntlet to Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy, accepting his challenge for an open debate on the Congress government's 14-month rule. He declared that he is ready for the discussion at any time and place of Revanth Reddy's choosing — the latter's Kodangal constituency, his residence or any other place. "Let's debate on the six guarantees and all 420 guarantees of your government," he dared, charging the Congress with misleading people.

In a fiery rebuttal to Chief Minister Revanth Reddy's remarks on Palamuru's development, Harish Rao castigated the Congress government over its failure to protect the State's share of Krishna waters. He criticized the Congress for failing to stop Andhra Pradesh from diverting Krishna River waters and instead targeting the BRS to shift blame. "Instead of peddling to blatant lies and blaming the opposition, the government should focus on providing governance that actually benefits the people," he remarked.

In a direct attack, the former Irrigation Minister said the Congress government had completely neglected the Palamuru-Ranga Reddy Lift Irrigation Scheme which is on the verge of completion. He criticised it for betraying the Palamuru region, stating that Palamuru, once a land of migration and drought under Congress rule, was transformed by former Chief Minister K Chandrashekhar Rao into a prosperous region with completion of pending irrigation projects.

AAP's flagship mohalla clinics on Delhi health minister radar, he promises action if corruption is found



GNS News Agency, Feb 25

A day after taking oath, newly appointed Health Minister Pankaj Kumar Singh directed the Special Secretary of the department to submit a report on the Aam Aadmi Party's flagship mohalla clinics in a week. He directed that strict action should be taken if any corruption or loopholes are found. After a meeting with health department officials, Singh said, "I held a meeting on mohalla clinics and have given special instructions to the special secretary health and other officials to submit a report on the number of mohalla clinics that are functioning, how many are situated on Delhi government land and how many of them are running on rent;

do the doctors come and work. In case they don't, how are bills raised?" "I believe 30-40% of these mohalla clinics never even open for the public... If we find any loopholes and corruption, action will be taken and the person concerned will be charged..." he said. Asked if he, as a minister, has launched an investigation into mohalla clinics, Singh said, "Yes, you can definitely say that... This is an investigation and action will be taken..." The health minister also said they will rename the mohalla clinics as Ayush Arogya Mandirs. "We will upgrade and develop all the clinics constructed on government land and make them better with facilities like Ayurveda and daycare systems... We will invest in it and generate revenue... Delhi will see a big change and development in the coming 100 days," he said. Singh will visit Rao Tula Ram Hospital on Saturday. "I will also meet doctors to understand the current situation and the problems they are facing in the hospital... I've also sought a status report on the hospitals under construction and other pending projects..." Singh, who is also the Transport minister, said free bus rides for women on DTC and cluster buses will continue and the city will see 11,000 electric buses in the next year. "We also discussed the misuse of funds in the DTC and Transport department in the last 10 years. I will work on bringing the DTC out of revenue losses," he said.

Delhi police bust 2 gangs siphoning money by carrying out UPI transactions on stolen cellphones, 2 held

GNS News Agency, Feb 25

With the arrest of two persons, the Delhi Police on Friday claimed to have busted two gangs that siphoned money by carrying out UPI transactions with the help of stolen cell phones, and then supplied over 12,000 of the phones to Nepal and Bangladesh via Munger in Bihar and Malda in West Bengal, respectively. The police identified the accused as Vishal alias Raaz (24), Ravi (30), Ramesh (36) and Munni Lal (30). While Vishal was arrested on February 9, Ravi and Ramesh were "bound down" (to be required to appear before the investigating officer or the court on a given date) between February 13 and 14. Munni Lal was arrested on January 30. The gangs came under scrutiny after two cases of cellphone theft were lodged at Chandni Chowk and Gulabi Bagh in January. On January 16, shopowner Jagdish Aggarwal from Chandni Chowk filed a complaint at Roop Nagar police station alleging that his phone was stolen. "Following this, Rs 5,32,349 were debited from his Punjab National Bank accounts and one IDFC First Bank credit card. A case was lodged on January 22," said DCP (North) Raja Banthia.

During probe, another case registered at Gulabi Bagh police station on January 5 came to light, where the complainant alleged that his cellphone was stolen and a subsequent transaction of Rs 2.5 lakh made from his UPI ID. According to the police, Aggarwal's UPI ID was also used by an accused to recharge a cellphone number, which was found active in Munger. However, the police traced the accused, Vishal, to a spot near the Bara Hindu Rao Hospital in Delhi. Vishal, who hailed from Munger, was arrested. During questioning, Vishal revealed that he belonged to a gang that was running a supply chain of cellphones from Munger to Nepal, fed by stolen phones from Delhi-NCR, police said.

"Vishal said he received cellphones from snatchers and pickpockets and attempted financial transactions with victims' UPI IDs using common passwords such as '123456' and the first six digits of their mobile numbers," the DCP said. "As soon as he got access to the digital wallets of a victim, he would transfer money to the account he would create with the same number on Olymp app. Vishal would then move the money to his own Olymp app account and



withdraw it." Vishal's associate in Munger would send Ravi every fortnight to collect the stolen consignment, police said. "After Ravi was arrested, he revealed that he also worked under Mr X's (associate) instructions to hand over the packages to a courier service in Chandni Chowk," the DCP said. After the police questioned the employees of the courier service, it came to light that Ramesh was to arrive to receive a parcel sent by Vishal and Ravi's associate or handler in Munger. The packet, containing 31 stolen phones, was seized and Ramesh was arrested. In connection to the Gulabi Bagh case, Banthia said, "It was found that the SIM card from the stolen cellphone of the complainant in the case had been installed in another device with a different IMEI (International Mobile Equipment Identity) number. Probe revealed that multiple SIM cards from stolen phones had the same IMEI number, and attempts were made to withdraw money from all stolen phones.

"The phones and the IMEI number were traced to Gokulpuri and Jyoti Nagar in Delhi, leading to the arrest of Munni Lal (30) with stolen 112 cellphones, police said. A resident of Sahabganj in Jharkhand, Munni Lal revealed that he, along with another person from Jyoti Nagar brought minor children from Jharkhand and made them steal the phones, police said. A raid was conducted at Jyoti Nagar but as Munni's alleged associate managed to escape, they added. "Munni Lal disclosed that he and 'Mr Y' (associate) had transported around 1,000 kg of cellphones from Delhi to Kaliachak in Malda in the last year from Delhi," the DCP said.

Empty courtrooms as lawyers' strike in Delhi's lower courts enters Day 5



Chants of 'Vakeel Ekta Zindabad' fill the air as lawyers burn an effigy that has 'kaale kanoon wapas lo' written on it with black paint. "We will not stand still if our rights are trampled upon..." said advocate Raman Sharma, Shahdara Bar Association (SBA) Secretary, who is leading the protests.

The strike is in part organised by the coordination committee of all district court bar associations across Delhi's lower courts, which have drafted circulars stating that lawyers will unanimously abstain from work to protest against the "proposed unjust, unfair and biased" Bill. "The proposed Bill is not only against the unity, integrity and dignity of advocates but also draconian in nature. It will directly affect the autonomy of all bar associations and bar councils," read one such circular published on Monday. "Today is the day to show that lawyers will never back down. Even if they shatter our skulls, we will be ready," advocate and Delhi Bar Association president Nitin Ahlawat said outside Tis Hazari court complex. According to the lawyers, the proposed draft changes could jeopardise the independence and autonomy of the profession. One provision that they flag as the most contentious is Section 35 A. According to the section, no advocate or association of advocates shall give a call for boycott or abstinence from courts' work or cause obstruction in courts' functioning... Any violation would invite disciplinary action, the draft added. The draft allows advocates to participate in a strike only when it does not impede the administration of justice, "such as strikes intended to bring attention to legitimate concerns about professional conduct, working conditions, or administrative matters and may include symbolic or one-day token strikes". Another problematic change, as per lawyers, was the insertion of Section 45 B, titled "Liability for misconduct in certain cases". As per the section: "If any person suffers loss either caused deliberately or by the misconduct of the

advocate, then, such person may make a complaint of misconduct against the advocate... for deciding the liability of the advocate." "If any client loses a case, he can file a complaint of misconduct against the advocate. Can an advocate be held responsible for the loss of a client? Aren't the rights of all lawyers being crushed here? The worst thing is we cannot even agitate," Dwarka Bar Association president N C Sharma said. In Rohini court, courtrooms are deserted with only the judge and the Court staff inside. Close to 100 lawyers are found sitting on a sheet inside the complex. They chant amid loud coordinated claps — "Jab jab zulmi zulm karega satta ke galiyaro se, chappa chappa goonj uthega inqalab ke naaro se (The slogans of revolution will be raised whenever a tyrant sitting in power unleashes tyranny)."

2 sanitation workers die cleaning sewage tank in Delhi's Narela

GNS News Agency, Feb 25

The deceased, identified as Vijay Mochi (36) and Nandu (44), were cleaning inside the tank near Mansa Devi Apartment, the police said. The deceased, identified as Vijay Mochi (36) and Nandu (44), were cleaning inside the tank near Mansa Devi Apartment, the police said. Two sanitation workers died and another was injured Friday while cleaning a sewage tank in the Narela area of outer-north Delhi. Police suspect that the persons fell unconscious after inhaling poisonous gas from the tank. The deceased, identified as Vijay Mochi (36) and Nandu (44), were cleaning inside the tank near Mansa Devi Apartment before they fell unconscious, the police said. A third worker, Anil Kumar, who was outside, entered the tank to check on them and also collapsed.

The other workers informed the fire department and rushed the three of them to a nearby hospital where Vijay and Nandu were declared dead. Anil is recovering. A case under section 125 (Doing any act endangering human life or personal safety of others) and 106 (causing death by negligence) has been registered against unknown persons. Further probe is underway, the police added.

By 2029, UP will be country's biggest economy: Adityanath at Budget session



GNS News Agency, Feb 25

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath claimed on Friday that Uttar Pradesh will not just be able to achieve the 1-trillion dollar economy target by 2029 but will also become the country's biggest economy by then. The CM said this in reply to a question by Samajwadi Party MLA Ragini Sonkar in the state Assembly when she questioned the government's efforts to achieve the 1-trillion dollar economy mark. "In the past eight years, our government brought 6 crore people above the poverty line. Changes have taken place in every section of society and the entire world is witnessing the state's potential. You can connect it with organising the Maha Kumbh, which is going to give a boost of over Rs 3 lakh crore," he said. The Opposition parties work with a negative mindset when they say that UP will not be able to achieve the 1-trillion dollar economy target, he said, adding that it was turned into a BIMARU state by the SP government.

Earlier, quoting RBI data, SP MLA Sonkar alleged during the question hour that the "double-engine government is failing in fulfilling its promise of making the state a 1-trillion dollar economy. Instead of claims to turn the country into a 'vishwaguru' (world leader), it was being made a world leader in 'economic disparity', she said. The RBI data showed that in 2010-2012, GDP, which was 25 per cent for middle class, is merely 5.1 per cent, she added. She asked the government to share information about departments, which were on the top in achieving the targets and

the ones on the bottom. Replying to her, Adityanath said, "The state's economy has grown from Rs 12 lakh crore to a projected Rs 27.5 lakh crore. Those who refuse to accept India's progress as a developed nation also question UP's economic growth. We worked on a plan by identifying 10 key sectors to give a boost to the state's economy and to achieve the 1-trillion dollar economy mark."

These sectors, he added, are industrial development, agriculture, social security, urban development, revenue collection, education, health, tourism, and the service sector. Of the Rs 40 crore worth proposals received during the Global Investors Summit in 2023, projects worth Rs 15 crore have materialised on the ground, he claimed. UP's credit-deposit (CD) ratio, which once stood at 44%, has now exceeded 60%, indicating that its capital is being reinvested within the state, he added. The RBI report has pointed to UP as the leading state in banking transactions over the last five-year plan, the CM claimed. "Uttar Pradesh leads the country in MSME units. Schemes like One District One Product (ODOP) have revived the MSME sector in the state," he said. For young entrepreneurs, Adityanath said, the government recently launched the 'CM Yuva Udyam Yojana' on Uttar Pradesh Foundation Day (January 24), under which bank loans up to Rs 5 lakh are provided at zero interest in the first phase and loans up to Rs 10 lakh in the second phase. The government has already received over 96 lakh applications for this, he said. Nearly 20% of all UP Police recruitments have been reserved for women, creating employment opportunities in various sectors, he added. Replying to the Opposition's question about health infrastructure and availability of doctors in government health centres and hospitals, Deputy Chief Minister Brajesh Pathak, who also holds the health portfolio, pointing towards SP MLAs Kamal Akhtar and Mohd Faheem Irfan and asked their "community to use family planning measures". "You talked about arrangements but you did not tell when will you stop Khuda ki niyamat (a reference to producing more children). Till you keep on increasing the population, problems would keep growing," he said, requesting the SP MLAs with folded hands. On this, the SP MLAs asked him to check government records to check which community's population is actually large and who is in minority in the country.

In new Delhi Cabinet, old faces get priority over three former ministers

GNS News Agency, Feb 25

Exhibiting what BJP insiders said was an emphasis on organisational loyalty over any other factor, two first-time legislators who have been with the party since the beginning were chosen for as many berths in the Delhi Cabinet compared to two former Congress ministers and an AAP minister. The Sangh's choice is writ large on both the choices — Ravinder Indraj Singh and Pankaj Kumar Singh, who represent the reserved Bawana Assembly and Vikaspuri, respectively. Former AAP minister Kailash Gahlot, who switched to the BJP months before the Assembly polls, is now the Bijwasan MLA. Gandhi Nagar MLA Arvinder Singh Lovely and Mangolpuri MLA Rajkumar Chauhan, who were part of successive Congress government cabinets with Sheila Dikshit at the helm, have been left out in the cold, at least for the time being. Gahlot was the most senior minister in the AAP government who quit and joined BJP. Sources said he was being considered to head a government board or authority. Apart from cabinet positions, key posts in autonomous bodies and boards, such as the Delhi Jal Board vice-chairperson, Delhi Commission for Women Chairperson, and Delhi Commission for Protection of Child Rights, are yet to be filled.

In 1998, Lovely became the youngest Delhi MLA and five years later, at the age of 30, became the youngest minister in the Dikshit government. Considered the then Chief Minister's confidant, he received key portfolios such as Education, Transport and Urban Development during his three tenures. It was during his tenure that Delhi's infamous Blue Line buses were replaced with the green, red, and orange low-floor buses. Lovely was the education minister when Delhi became the first to implement 25% reservation for children from the Economically Weaker Section in private schools. He was the Urban Development Minister when the approval to regularise unauthorised colonies was first made in 2012-13. The plan, however, took a long time to get the Centre's approval and implemented on the ground, which happened in 2018-19 when the BJP was in power at the Centre. Though targeted by the AAP over alleged cor-



ruption, Lovely played a part in giving "outside support" to the AAP in 2013, enabling it to form a government that lasted for 49 days. He was heading the Delhi Congress when the AAP handed the party a crushing defeat in the 2015 Assembly polls. Subsequently, Lovely resigned as DPC president for the first time and joined the BJP. Within months, he returned to the Congress fold but left for the BJP again before the Lok Sabha polls in 2024.

The other leaders from the Congress to have joined the BJP between 2022 and before the 2024 Lok Sabha elections include Tarvinder Singh Marwah, who defeated the AAP's Manish Sisodia in Jangpura, Neeraj Basoya who got elected from Kasturba Nagar and Naseeb Singh who did not get a ticket this time. A senior political leader, who joined the BJP recently, said, "There is no issue like that (with regard to exclusion from the seven-member cabinet)... We were neither expecting any cabinet berth nor was it communicated to us (that we would get one). We had joined the BJP because we were in agreement with Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision for the country, not for personal benefit." BJP sources said senior leaders — both who had been with the party since the beginning as well as those who had joined it later — were likely to be accommodated in positions such as Parliamentary Secretaries, Boards and autonomous institutions under the Delhi government.

Chargesheet filed in six of 12 FIRs, says seized arms made in Pakistan, UK, US, Germany

GNS News Agency, Feb 25

Sambhal violence Chargesheet, Sambhal violence Chargesheet filed, Sambhal violence, Sambhal violence deaths, Sambhal violence probe, UP Sambhal district, Sambhal violence, Sambhal clashes, Sambhal district clashes, mob and police clash, stone pelting, Sambhal stone pelting, UP stone pelting, Indian express According to the chargesheet, the weapons and cartridges recovered from the site of violence and at other places were manufactured in Pakistan, United Kingdom, US, and Germany. The UP Police's SIT on Friday filed a 4,025-page chargesheet in a court in six of the 12 FIRs registered for the November 24 Sambhal violence that took place in the wake of a court-ordered survey of sixteenth-century Shahi Jama Masjid.

Four people were killed and at least 30, including nearly a dozen police personnel, were injured in the violence. Of a total of 159 persons named in the FIRs, 80 have been arrested. Quoting the chargesheet submitted in the court of Judicial Magistrate Archana Singh, Sambhal SP Krishan Kumar said Shariq Satha, a Dubai-based fugitive from the district who runs a gang of auto-lifters, was the mastermind of the violence. "Two of his arrested gang members, Ghulam and Afroz, admitted to have received WhatsApp messages from him (to orchestrate violence). We have sought details regarding him from the concerned agency abroad. Once we get details, another chargesheet will be filed... Action will be taken against Satha under BNS Section 48," Kumar said.

According to the chargesheet, the weapons and cartridges recovered from the site of violence and at other places were manufactured in Pakistan, United Kingdom, US, and Germany. The chargesheet, however, does not mention the names of local Samajwadi Party MP Ziaur Rahman Barq and party MLA Iqbal Mehmood's son Sohail Iqbal against whom cases were filed. While the MP was booked for allegedly delivering provocative speeches before the violence, the FIR against the MLA's son was lodged for allegedly being a part of a mob which attacked police



According to the chargesheet, the weapons and cartridges recovered from the site of violence and at other places were manufactured in Pakistan, United Kingdom, US, and Germany

and torched their vehicles. Of the six cases in which the chargesheet was submitted, four involve attack on the police or administration officials and one for setting a police vehicle on fire. SP Kumar said, "We are awaiting more details of WhatsApp messages from mobile phones of the MP and are collecting more evidence to establish the involvement of the MLA's son..." "We have identified the suspects through various channels, including CCTV footage, pasting posters and through interrogation of those arrested."

The policemen who sustained pellet injuries on November 24 were Deputy Superintendent of Police (Kotwali) Anuj Chaudhary and Sanjeev Suman, the SP's public relations officer (PRO). Sub-Divisional Magistrate (SDM) Umesh Yadav also sustained a fracture in his leg that day. Sub-Inspector Shah Faisal had lodged an FIR claiming that an attempt was made to set his personal motorcycle and a police vehicle ablaze. "The police vehicle was completely burnt but his bike was somehow saved." While eleven FIRs were registered Sambhal, one was lodged in Moradabad but it was later referred to Sambhal police.

Behind 3 deaths & car crash: A Kolkata family's dwindling fortunes



GNS News Agency, Feb 25

The three-storey house of the Dey family on Atul Sur Road has been drawing several onlookers, curious to get a glimpse inside. A prominently displayed nameplate that says 'PK Dey', accompanied by two smaller nameplates — saying 'Ma-Babar Ashirwad' (parent's blessing) and 'Chita Nibas' (consciousness/spirit home) — can be seen at the house. The house in Kolkata's Tangra neighbourhood, a glove-making factory, properties, cars and round-the-clock watchmen were all symbols of their prosperity. Local residents saw them as a family blessed with good fortune.

PK Dey, the father, who had set up the business, was known as 'chotu da' in the locality and had provided employment to many in the area when the family business was at its peak. The family was among the highest contributors towards the Durga Puja/Kali puja celebrations of the locality. The recent deaths of the three women members of the Dey family, whose bodies were recovered from a house in the Tangra neighbourhood of east Kolkata on Wednesday, sent shockwaves across the city. On February 19, a car with three men — Pranay Dey, his younger brother Prasun Dey, and Pranay's minor son — crashed into a pillar near Abhisikta More on Kolkata's EM Bypass. During questioning later, Pranay allegedly made a startling admission: that they had intentionally crashed the

car in a "suicide attempt" and that his family members — his wife and teenage A police team that was dispatched to their house found the bodies of two women — Pranay's wife Sudeshna Dey and Prasun's wife Romi Dey — and Pranay's minor daughter, all in separate rooms in a flat on the first floor.

The Dey family, known for their upscale lifestyle and apparent vast wealth, was in reality drowning in debt, said police, adding that their house and the car had, in fact, been mortgaged. The Dey family's once-thriving business, which employed 200-300 workers, had dwindled to a mere 30-40 employees. The factory located nearby has been shut since the incident. Lately, they could not even pay the rent of the factory, sources said. The police investigation revealed that the Dey family had accumulated crores of rupees in debt, taking loans from seven banks and private lending agencies. "They managed loans from multiple sources by showing a higher turnover than the actual numbers," said a police officer.

"A drastic reduction in staff painted a clear picture of their sliding fortune, ultimately leading to their inability to even pay the rent for their factory," said a police officer. Kailash Das, the family's driver, said that he was unexpectedly told not to report for duty on Tuesday and that he would be notified when his services were needed again. Das said that he was paid his salary on the 5th of every month, and based on this, he never suspected that the family was facing financial difficulties.

"The Dey family meeting such a tragedy... That too because of financial problems is tough to believe," said Dr C K Chang, who has been running a dental clinic in the adjacent building said. "I never saw them fighting. The ladies of the house would mostly stay indoors. The two brothers would never make any commotion," Chang said. Hospital sources reveal that Pranay Dey's minor son sustained severe injuries in the car accident. The teenager remains unconscious and may undergo another surgery, according to hospital officials. According to sources, there are inconsistencies in the statements of the two brothers. Initial police investigations had revealed that the family had first unsuccessfully tried to kill themselves on February 17 by lacing their dessert with poison. "However, this attempt failed, as everyone was found conscious the following day.

Not just mother tongue, respect all other languages as well, says Mamata Banerjee

GNS News Agency, Feb 25

Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Friday said people should respect other languages as much as they respect their mother tongue. Addressing a programme on the occasion to celebrate International Mother Language Day, organised at Deshapriya Park in Kolkata, the chief minister said that Bengali is the fifth most spoken language in the world, and every Bengali should be proud of it. While Banerjee read out a poem she wrote dwelling on the need to spread the message of peace, unity and harmony among the people she said, "I will not say anything about any other country. I will only talk about our country."

CM Banerjee pointed out that besides Bangla, her government has recognised various languages including Kurmal, Rajbangshi, Kamtapuri, Alachiki. "I am paying tribute to every language on this occasion. No one can buy any language. Whoever speaks, whichever language that is his or her mother tongue and everyone has a sentiment with their mother tongue. We respect this emotion," the CM said. In addition to this, CM Banerjee also paid homage to the late singer Pratul Mukherjee, who passed away at the SSKM hospital in Kolkata last Saturday. "Every time he at-



tended the event... However, he remains in our heart. His 'Song on Bangla' will remain," CM Banerjee said. In the presence of his wife, the Chief Minister announced that the name of the Lansdowne Place will be 'Pratul Mukherjee Sarani' from now on. International Mother Language Day commemorates the fight for the recognition of the Bengali language in Bangladesh, when five protesters lost their lives. However, this year's celebrations in Bangladesh were noticeably subdued, lacking the grandeur of previous years.

5 NSUI members held for 'extorting money from educational institutes'

GNS News Agency, Feb 25

Surat city president of the National Students' Union of India (NSUI), Dhirendrasinh Solanki, state vice-president Mitesh Hadiya and three others members of the city's NSUI unit have been arrested for their alleged involvement in a case of alleged extortion. Surat police said that the accused would tell private educational institutes that they would frame the authorities in false cases by alleging that the institutes gave fake marksheets to students. The authorities, who feared closure of the institutes and arrest, would fall into the trap.

Hasmukh Rafariya, who runs Red and White Multimedia institute, on Thursday lodged a complaint against the five NSUI members. The institute has 8 branches in Surat and over 22 across the state. Rafariya alleged that the accused had demanded Rs 1 crore from him and two other institutes in Surat — Creative Design and Multimedia Institute owned by Keyur Varasadiya, and Editech Education Institute owned by Dhaval Lungariya — for not putting up posts related to their institutes on social media. The accused threatened them that they would submit a memorandum to the District Collector, organise press conferences, get them caught by the police, and get the institutes shut.

The complaint was filed at Saroli police station and a case was registered under BNS Sections 308(2), 308(6), 61(1), and 356(1)(2) against the accused. Rafariya had in his complaint alleged that the accused had taken Rs 1.5 lakh from them in mid-January and had asked them to pay collect Rs 5 lakh on Thursday. They had struck a deal of Rs 60 lakh. Acting on the complaint, Saroli police inspector V S Vekariya and his team on Friday arrested Mitesh Hadiya (25) of Godadara and native of Amreli, Dhirendrasinh Solanki (28) of Amroli and native of Panchmahal, Ravi Puchadiya (28) of Udhna and native of Junagadh, Udhna resident Preet Chavda (24), and Morbi resident Tushar Makwana (31). Reacting to the arrests, Gujarat NSUI president Narendra Solanki said, "We have suspended all five (accused) from their posts for six years. We will not entertain such people in our party. We will cooperate with the Surat police in the probe." "Vekariya said, "We have arrested the five accused who had threatened owners of three private educational institutes. They had demanded Rs 1 crore from Rafariya, on behalf of the three institutes and finally the struck a deal of Rs 60 lakh. The gang had collected Rs 1.5 lakh from them in January. They were pressurising Rafariya to pay the remaining amount. Acting on the complaint lodged by Rafariya, we formed a trap. We told them to collect Rs 5 lakh Friday. They turned up and we caught them with the amount handed over by Rafariya. Further investigation is under way." Meanwhile, Surat city Congress



president Dhansukh Rajput said, "We support the action taken by the police. We also want the police to probe if the three institutes are affiliated with any university. If the institutes are found running illegally, strict actions should be taken."

Telangana demands halt to Andhra Pradesh's water draws after postponement of KRMB meeting

GNS News Agency, Feb 25

Hyderabad: In response to the postponement of the emergency meeting convened by the Krishna River Management Board (KRMB), the Telangana government has demanded that Andhra Pradesh halt all water withdrawals from the joint projects of Srisaillam and Nagarjuna Sagar forthwith. In a stern communication to the KRMB, the State Irrigation officials stated that Andhra Pradesh's claims for additional water are unacceptable. "AP has already utilised far in excess of their entitlement as per the KRMB records and therefore cannot draw any water from the common reservoirs," they asserted. The emergency meeting, initially scheduled for Friday, was postponed at the last minute upon Andhra Pradesh's request and has been rescheduled for Monday, February 24. Despite the postponement, Telangana's Principal Secretary of Irrigation Rahul Bojja, ENC General G. Anil Kumar, and NSP CE Ajay Kumar engaged in an hour-long interaction with KRMB officials. During this interaction, they voiced their protest against Andhra Pradesh's excess draws, which they argued are detrimental to Telangana. Telangana state has submitted an indent for the release of 107 TMC of water to meet the state's irrigation needs and an additional nine TMCs for meeting drinking water needs until May 25.

Trump says Zelenskyy and Putin must 'get together'



GNS News Agency, Feb 25

U.S. President Donald Trump said that Ukraine's Volodymyr Zelenskyy and Russia's Vladimir Putin will have to "get together" to end the war between Moscow and Kyiv. Mr. Trump's comments marked a shift from criticising Mr. Zelenskyy as a "dictator," after the Ukrainian president complained that his country — invaded by Russia in 2022 — had been left out of talks between U.S. and Russian officials. "President Putin and President Zelenskyy are going to have to get together. Because you know what? We want to stop killing millions of people," Mr. Trump told reporters in the Oval Office. Mr. Trump added Kyiv would "hopefully in the next fairly short period of time" sign a deal handing Washington preferential access to Ukraine's mineral deposits. "They're very brave, in every way you can imagine. But we are spending our treasure on some country that's very, very far away," Mr. Trump said of Ukraine. Mr. Trump wants Ukraine to give U.S. companies access to its vast natural resources as compensation for

the tens of billions of dollars of aid delivered under his predecessor Joe Biden.

In return, Ukraine is seeking security guarantees from the United States for signing away the precious rights. Mr. Zelenskyy — who had rejected the agreement — said Friday he hoped for a "fair result." "Trump: Ukraine has no 'cards'. The minerals deal has become a major sticking point in the increasingly fraught relations between Washington and Kyiv. In a public spat, Mr. Trump this week called Mr. Zelenskyy a "dictator without elections" and blamed Ukraine for starting the war. Earlier Friday, Mr. Trump described Ukraine as at a disadvantage in the negotiations — further alarming allies who think he will offer concessions to Mr. Putin.

"I've had very good talks with Putin, and I've had not such good talks with Ukraine. They don't have any cards," Mr. Trump said at the White House. His call for Mr. Zelenskyy and Mr. Putin to work together came despite him saying in a Fox News interview that it was not "very important" for Mr. Zelenskyy to be involved in U.S.-Russia talks. Mr. Trump again declined to blame Russia for the February 2022 invasion, saying that Mr. Putin "attacked but they shouldn't have let him attack." The U.S. president added that Mr. Putin — the Russian strongman for whom he has repeatedly expressed admiration — faced no pressure to make a deal. "He doesn't have to make a deal, because if he wanted, he'd get the whole country," Mr. Trump said. French President Emmanuel Macron and British Prime Minister Keir Starmer — who are both due at the White House next week for potentially tricky discussions — have been accused by Mr. Trump of doing nothing to end the war.

India calls Erdogan's Kashmir remarks 'unacceptable', lodges 'strong protest'

GNS News Agency, Feb 25

Nearly a week after Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan spoke on the issue of Kashmir during his visit to Pakistan, New Delhi on Friday (February 21, 2025) said such "unwarranted" statements on India's territorial integrity and sovereignty were "unacceptable", adding that it has lodged a "strong protest" on the matter with the Turkish ambassador here. "We reject such objectionable comments on matters which are internal to India," MEA spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said in response to a query on Mr. Erdogan's remarks. Mr. Jaiswal also reiterated India's position that Jammu and Kashmir "is an integral part of India, it always has been, and it will remain so". There should be no doubt or confusion on this, the MEA spokesperson said.

"Jammu and Kashmir is an integral part of India. No other country has any locus standi to comment on it. Instead of commenting on internal affairs of another country, it would have been appropriate if Pakistan's policy of using cross-border terrorism against India, which remains the biggest threat for the people of Jammu and Kashmir, had been called out," Mr. Jaiswal said. "We reject such objectionable comments on matters which are internal to India. We have



lodged a strong protest with the Turkish ambassador in Delhi. Such unwarranted statements on India's territorial integrity and sovereignty are unacceptable," he added. During his two-day visit to Pakistan last week, Mr. Erdogan said, "The Kashmir issue should be addressed according to the UN resolution through dialogue and keeping in mind the aspirations of the people of Kashmir." "Our state and our nation, as in the past, stands in solidarity with our Kashmiri brothers today," the Turkish president said.

Kash Patel sworn in at White House as new FBI director, calls it the 'greatest honour'

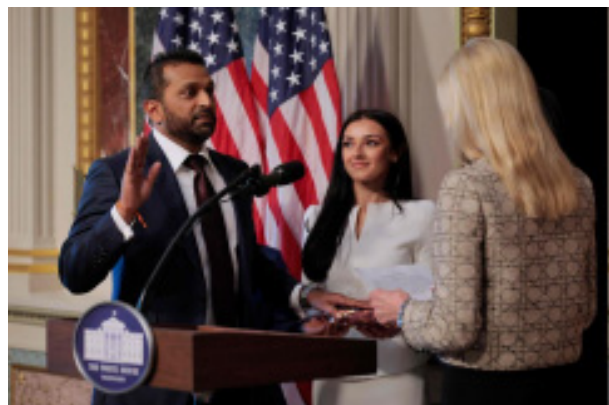
GNS News Agency, Feb 25

Kash Patel was sworn in on Friday (February 21, 2025) as the FBI director, calling the opportunity to lead the nation's premier federal law enforcement agency the "greatest honour" of his life. He took oath with his hand on the Bhagavad Gita. Mr. Patel was confirmed by the Senate on Thursday by a 51-49 margin, with two Republican lawmakers, Susan Collins of Maine and Lisa Murkowski of Alaska, breaking party ranks and voting against him.

U.S. Attorney General Pam Bondi swears in the new Federal Bureau of Investigation Director Kash Patel as his girlfriend Alexis Wilkins holds the Bhagavad Gita in the Indian Treaty Room in the Eisenhower Executive Office Building on February 21, 2025 in Washington, DC. U.S. Attorney General Pam Bondi swears in the new Federal Bureau of Investigation Director Kash Patel as his girlfriend Alexis Wilkins holds the Bhagavad Gita in the Indian Treaty Room in the Eisenhower Executive Office Building on February 21, 2025 in Washington, DC. | Photo Credit: Getty Images via AFP. I think he'll go down as the best ever at that position," President Donald Trump told reporters on Friday ahead of the White House swearing-in, which was conducted by Attorney General Pam Bondi and attended by Republican supporters in Congress, including Sen. Ted Cruz of Texas and Rep. Jim Jordan of Ohio. Mr. Patel will inherit an FBI gripped by turmoil as the Justice Department over the past month has forced out a group of senior bureau officials and made a highly unusual demand for the names of thousands of agents who participated in investigations related to the January 6, 2021, riot at the U.S. Capitol.

Democrats had sounded the alarm about the appointment, saying they fear Mr. Patel will operate as a loyalist for Mr. Trump and abuse the FBI's law enforcement powers to go after the president's adversaries. They've cited past comments such as his suggestion before he was nominated that he would "come after" anti-Trump "conspirators" in the government and media. Mr. Patel sought to assuage those concerns at his confirmation hearing last month, saying he intended to follow the Constitution and had no interest in pursuing retribution, though he also said at his swearing-in Friday that reporters had written "fake, malicious, slanderous and defamatory" stories about him. Republicans angry over what they see as law enforcement bias against conservatives during the Democratic Biden administration, as well as criminal investigations into Mr. Trump, have rallied behind Mr. Patel as the right person for the job.

Mr. Patel has spoken of his desire to implement major changes at the FBI, including a reduced footprint in Washington and a renewed emphasis on the bureau's traditional crime-fighting duties rather than the intelligence-gathering work that has come to define its mandate over the past two decades as national security threats have proliferated. He said Friday that the FBI's "national security mission" was equally as important as its efforts to fight violent crime and drug overdoses. Kash Patel has told senior officials that he plans to relocate 1,000 employees at FBI headquarters to field offices around the country and move an additional 500 to a bureau facility in Huntsville, Alabama, according to a person with knowledge of the discussions. They reflect his long-stated determination to reduce the FBI's footprint in Washington and have more of a presence in offices in other cities. "Anyone that wishes to do harm to our way of life and our citizens, here and abroad, will face the full wrath of the DOJ and FBI," Mr. Patel said. "If you seek to hide in any



corner of this country or planet, we will put on the world's largest manhunt and we will find you and we will decide your end-state." A former Justice Department counterterrorism prosecutor, Mr. Patel was selected in November to replace Christopher Wray, who was picked by Trump in 2017 and who resigned at the conclusion of the Biden administration to make way for his chosen successor. Mr. Wray infuriated Mr. Trump throughout his tenure, including after FBI agents searched his Mar-a-Lago estate in Florida in August 2022 for classified documents in one of two federal investigations that resulted in indictments against Trump that were dismissed after his election win. FBI directors are given 10-year terms as a way to insulate them from political influence and keep them from becoming beholden to a particular president or administration. But Mr. Trump fired the FBI director he inherited, James Comey, after Comey had spent over three years on the job and replaced Wray after more than seven years in the position.

Zelenskyy says Ukraine won't recognise deals made without Kyiv participation

GNS News Agency, Feb 25

Ukraine President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said Monday (February 17, 2025) that Kyiv was not informed of upcoming talks between Russia and the United States, adding that Ukraine would not recognise agreements made without its participation. Mr. Zelenskyy said that Kyiv "did not know anything about" the talks this week, adding in comments carried by the Interfax-Ukraine news agency that the country "cannot recognise any things or any agreements about us without us. And we will not recognise such agreements." Meanwhile, the Kremlin, on Monday (February 17, 2025), said that top Russian officials will hold talks with U.S. counterparts on restoring ties, negotiating a peaceful settlement to the war in Ukraine and preparing a meeting between Russian President Vladimir Putin and U.S. President Donald Trump. Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said that Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov and Putin's foreign affairs adviser Yuri Ushakov will fly to the Saudi capital later in the day to take part in the talks set U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio will lead the U.S. delegation. Mr. Trump's envoy Steve Witkoff told Fox News .

BJP, Congress spar over USAID fund allocation



GNS News Agency, Feb 25

The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) on Friday (February 21, 2025) dismissed media reports claiming — as a "cover-up attempt" — that the \$21-million USAID fund allocation in 2022 was for Bangladesh and not for India, and accused Leader of Opposition (LoP) Rahul Gandhi and the Congress party of being involved in "anti-India" activities. The Congress, on the other hand, cited a news report published in an English daily to demand an apology from the BJP. The Opposition party claimed that the BJP's narrative was aimed at diverting attention from its own use of foreign funds to destabilise Congress governments in the past. At a press conference, BJP national spokesperson Gaurav Bhatia cited the remarks of U.S. President Donald Trump and an X post by Elon Musk-led Department of Government Efficiency to assert that the fund allocation (since cancelled) was intended for "voter turnout in India".

India on Feb 21 said that the United States' administration's information regarding funding in India is "deeply troubling" and has led to concerns regarding foreign interference in India's internal affairs. Addressing a weekly press briefing on Friday, the Ministry of External Affairs spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said that relevant departments and agencies are looking into the matter and it would be premature to make a public comment at this stage. Asked about President Donald Trump's remarks about the funding of USD 21 million for "voter turnout in India", Jaiswal said, "We have seen information that has been put out by the US administration regarding certain US activities and funding. These are obviously very deeply troubling. This has led to concerns about foreign interference in India's internal affairs. Relevant departments and agencies are looking into this matter." "It would be premature to make a public comment at this stage. So, relevant authorities are looking into, and hopefully we can come up with an update on that

subsequently," the MEA spokesperson said. | Video Credit: Businessline "Since morning, the so-called fact checkers linked to Gandhi family — who are also being funded — have been claiming that \$21-million funding is not linked to India... their job is to propagate Rahul Gandhi's lies as truth," he said. Telling Mr. Gandhi a "traitor", Mr. Bhatia accused the senior Congress leader and his party of acting as a "stimulus" for anti-India forces to interfere in the country's electoral process. "This, because their hate for Mr. Modi has turned into a hate for Bharat, for its citizens. They cannot defeat Mr. Modi electorally, therefore they are banking on foreign forces. In Mr. Modi, the country has got a strong leadership, which is not liked by Mr. Gandhi," he said. The BJP leader said: "From 2004 to 2013, over \$2,115 million funding was received by the Congress-led government. And, just \$1.5 million came during Mr. Modi's term. This, because they know that Narendra Modi will not sell India's interests to any foreign power."

Addressing a press conference at the Congress party's 24, Akbar Road office, senior spokesperson Pawan Khera alleged that the entire "USD-21 million USAID funds narrative" perpetrated by the BJP, Modi government's Ministers, its economic adviser, the party's IT department head, the RSS-BJP ecosystem and a section of the "BJP-friendly media" was done to divert attention from their "own sins" of using foreign funds to destabilise Congress governments of the past. He claimed that P.N. Dhar's book *Indira Gandhi, the "Emergency" and Indian Democracy* chronicles how "the US showered praise on J P (Jayaprakash Narayan) and his role in fighting the Indira Gandhi government in 1974" as the Nixon administration wanted to punish her for defying the U.S. in 1971 and conducting India's first nuclear test later. "Is it not true that exactly a month ago, on January 21, former Union Minister Smriti Irani attended a panel discussion organised by the USAID [the United States Agency for International Development] in Davos under the U.S.-India Strategic Partnership Forum? Is it not true that Smriti Irani herself has stated that she has served as the USAID goodwill ambassador to India for four years?" Mr. Khera asked. If collaborations with U.S. agencies amounted to deep-state activities, then why did Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnis discuss opportunities on a collaboration with the USAID on November 10, 2022, the Congress leader asked. Mr. Khera further alleged that the RSS orchestrated the Anna Hazare-Arvind Kejriwal "India Against Corruption" movement to overthrow the Congress-led United Progressive Alliance (UPA) government with the help of foreign aid, especially from Ford Foundation and USAID.

Hadi Matar, who stabbed Salman Rushdie, found guilty of attempted murder

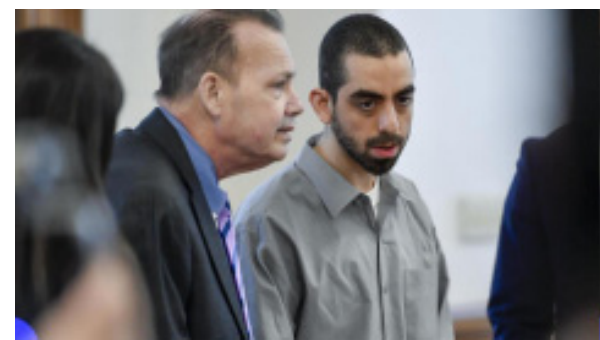
GNS News Agency, Feb 25

A New Jersey man was convicted Friday of attempted murder and assault for stabbing author Salman Rushdie multiple times on a New York lecture stage in 2022. A jury found Hadi Matar, 27, guilty after a little less than two hours of deliberations following a trial in Chautauqua County Court. Matar ran onto the stage at the Chautauqua Institution where Rushdie was about to speak on Aug. 12, 2022, and stabbed him more than a dozen times before a live audience. The attack left the 77-year-old prizewinning novelist blind in one eye. Another man was injured.

Rushdie was the key witness during seven days of testimony, describing in graphic detail his life-threatening injuries and long and painful recovery. Matar could be sentenced to up to 25 years in prison. Jurors began deliberating Friday in the trial of a New Jersey man charged with stabbing and trying to kill Salman Rushdie on a New York lecture stage. The jury got the case after lawyers delivered closing arguments to wrap up seven days of testimony in Chautauqua County Court. Hadi Matar, 27, faces up to 25 years in prison if he's found guilty on charges of attempted murder and assault. District Attorney Jason Schmidt played a slow-motion video of the attack for the jury Friday, pointing out the assailant as he emerged from the audience, walked up a staircase to the stage and broke into a run toward Rushdie. "I want you to look at the unprovoked nature of this attack," Schmidt said. "I want you to look at the targeted nature of the attack. There were a lot of people around that day but there was only one person who was targeted." Assistant public defender Andrew Brautigam told the jury that prosecutors have not proved that Matar intended to kill Rushdie. The distinction is important for an attempted-murder conviction. "You will agree something bad happened to Mr. Rushdie, but you don't know what Mr. Matar's conscious objective was," Brautigam said. "The testimony you have heard doesn't establish anything more than a chaotic noisy outburst that occurred that injured Mr. Rushdie."

Matar had with him knives, not a gun or bomb, his attorneys have said previously. And in response to testimony that the injuries were life-threatening, they have noted that Rushdie's heart and lungs were uninjured. Schmidt said while it's not possible to read Matar's mind, "it's foreseeable that if you're going to stab someone 10 or 15 times about the face and neck, it's going to result in a fatality." Rushdie, 77, was the key witness during testimony that began last week. The Booker Prize-winning author told jurors he thought he was dying when a masked stranger ran onto the stage and stabbed and slashed at him until being tackled by bystanders. Rushdie showed jurors his now-blinded right eye, usually hidden behind a darkened eyeglass lens. Schmidt reminded jurors about the testimony of a trauma surgeon, who said Rushdie's injuries would have been fatal without quick treatment. He also slowed down video showing Matar approaching the seated Rushdie from behind and reaching around him to stab at his torso with a knife. Rushdie raises his arms and rises from his seat, walking and stumbling for a few steps with Matar hanging on, swinging and stabbing until they both fall and are surrounded by onlookers who rush in to separate them. Rushdie is seen falling on the ground, waving a hand covered in bright red blood. Schmidt freezes on a frame showing Rushdie, his face also bloodied, as he's surrounded by people.

The recordings also picked up the gasps and screams from audience members who had been seated to hear Rushdie speak with City of Asylum Pittsburgh founder Henry Reese about keeping writers safe. Reese suffered a gash to his forehead, leading to the assault charge against Matar. From the witness stand, institution staff and others who were present on the day of the attack pointed to Matar as the assailant. Stabbed and slashed more than a dozen times in the head, throat, torso, thigh and hand, Rushdie spent 17 days at a Pennsylvania hospital and more than three weeks at a New York City rehabilitation center. He detailed his long and painful recovery in his 2024 memoir, "Knife." Throughout the trial, Matar often took notes with a pen and sometimes laughed or smiled with his defense team



during breaks in testimony. His lawyers declined to call any witnesses of their own and Matar did not testify in his defense. Public Defender Nathaniel Barone said Matar likely would have faced a lesser charge of assault were it not for Rushdie's celebrity. "We think that it became an attempted murder because of the notoriety of the alleged victim in the case," Barone told reporters after testimony concluded Thursday. "That's been it from the very beginning. It's been nothing more, nothing less. And it's for publicity purposes. It's for self-interest purposes." A separate federal indictment alleges that Matar, of Fairview, New Jersey, was motivated to attack Rushdie by a 2006 speech in which the leader of the militant group Hezbollah endorsed a decades-old fatwa, or edict, calling for Rushdie's death. Iranian leader Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini issued the fatwa in 1989 after publication of the novel "The Satanic Verses," which some Muslims consider blasphemous. Rushdie spent years in hiding. But after Iran announced that it would not enforce the decree, he had traveled freely over the past quarter century.

China backs Trump's Ukraine peace bid at G20 as U.S. allies rally behind Zelenskyy

GNS News Agency, Feb 25

China came out in support of U.S. President Donald Trump's bid to strike a deal with Russia to end the war in Ukraine, at a G20 meeting in South Africa while U.S. allies rallied around Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy. Less than a month into his Presidency, Mr. Trump has upended U.S. policy on the war, scrapping a campaign to isolate Moscow with a phone call to Russian President Vladimir Putin and talks between senior U.S. and Russian officials that have sidelined Ukraine. Mr. Trump on Wednesday then denounced Zelenskyy as a "dictator," prompting statements of support for the Ukrainian President from G20 members such as Australia, Germany and the United Kingdom. "China supports all efforts conducive to peace (in Ukraine), including the recent consensus reached between the United States and Russia," Wang Yi told other G20 Foreign Ministers gathered in Johannesburg, according to a statement from his Ministry. "China is willing to continue playing a constructive role in the political resolution of the crisis," he added. Mr. Wang did not reiterate the point he made at the Munich Security Conference last Friday that all stakeholders in the Russia-Ukraine conflict should participate in any peace talks. Beijing wants to ensure its involvement in whatever deal Trump seeks to strike with the Kremlin to prevent a currently diplomatically-isolated Russia from slipping out from under its influence, and because its ties to Russia offer China an "in" with European officials worried about being frozen out of any talks, analysts say. "By going straight to Putin, President Trump has erased what Beijing had hoped could be a key piece of initial leverage," said Ruby Osman, a China expert at the Tony Blair Institute for Global Change. "Instead, China might turn its attention to discussing a Chinese role in eventual reconstruction and peacekeeping — something that would give Beijing a significantly more vested interest in European security architecture," she added.

Kerala's investor summit brings the Left, BJP and Congress on the same stage



GNS News Agency, Feb 25

Union Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal, Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan, Leader of Opposition in the state's Legislative Assembly VD Satheesan, Union Minister Jayant Chaudhary — these were the speakers on the first of the Invest Kerala Global Summit on Friday. Their collective message to investors: bet on the state. These rival political fronts presented a united outfit at the ongoing investor summit in the state, battling for the economic prosperity of Kerala, with the Union Ministers offering full solidarity and Centre's support to Kerala's efforts at attracting businesses.

The Kerala government is organising the two-day summit in a bid to attract domestic and internal investors to the state, with a particular focus on tourism, food processing, health innovations, fintech, aerospace, defence, and sustainable technologies. With the summit, the state is also making an attempt at shunning its old image of being a destination that may not have been the friendliest to big businesses. Organised by the Kerala government's industries department, the event is scheduled to have 28 sessions that will be attended by representatives from six countries. More than 3,000 people are attending the conference.

Kerala has to find an identity of its own among southern states, many of whom have stolen a march over it in

drawing investments in new economic sectors. Tamil Nadu and Karnataka have become major areas for electronics manufacturing in the country, with Telangana continuing to move forward in the IT/ITeS sector. It is in that context that the coming together of multiple political ideologies to sing in one tune highlights the push to promote investments and infrastructure development in Kerala. Chief Minister Vijayan said that the state has done a clean up of its bureaucratic set up to make Kerala more investor-friendly. "The changes we have brought about now are not incremental, but substantial... We have ensured that no investor coming to Kerala will have to face the cobweb of procedural delays and meet the barriers of red tape. We have made major strides in simplifying procedures as regards investments," he said. "We are working with the spirit of cooperative federalism. There is also competition. But that is the sheer recipe for further development of the state," Goyal said at the event. Minister for Skill Development Jayant Chaudhary emphasised India's shift from a "back office of the world" to a hub of innovation, calling Kerala the "gateway to a developed India." Union Minister of Road Transport and Highways Nitin Gadkari, who joined the conference via a video message, said road projects worth Rs 3 lakh crore will be completed in the state, as he also announced 31 new road projects for Kerala worth Rs 50,000 crore. Congress's VD Satheesan said, "regardless of political affiliations, our collective goal is to propel Kerala into a future of economic prosperity and industrial excellence".

"I am very much proud to declare that the Opposition is taking an initiative for the beginning of a new culture, we are giving our full support... I am happy to say we have not conducted any hartals (strikes) for the past four years. My request to the government is that when you will be in the Opposition, you have to continue the same culture," Satheesan added. The Adani Group plans to invest Rs 30,000 crore in Kerala over the next five years, with a particular focus on the state's port and airport infrastructure, said Karan Adani, managing director, Adani Ports and SEZ.

India's composite flash PMI rises for first time after three quarters

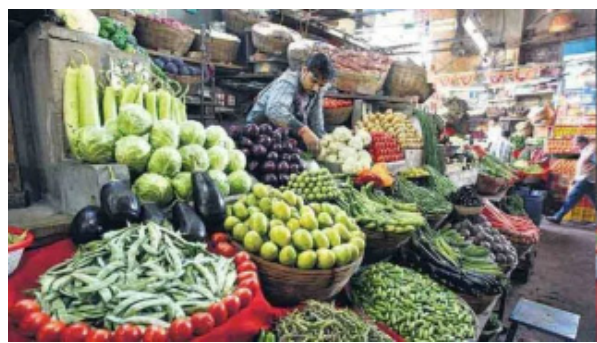
PMI Rapid restocking around the world continues to lift new export orders, which rose at an elevated pace for manufacturers. Rapid restocking around the world continues to lift new export orders, which rose at an elevated pace for manufacturers. After softening for three quarters in a row, the Composite flash Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI) rose at a faster pace in February, showing an uptick in the growth of the private sector in the current quarter, says an HSBC report. Composite flash PMI came in at a strong 60.6, higher than last month's reading of 57.7, led by a sharp acceleration in services sector activity. "Manufacturing flash PMI, too, reported a healthy acceleration, albeit at a soft pace than last month. January and February combined data suggests that after softening for 3 quarters in a row, the PMI composite index may tick higher in the current quarter," HSBC said.

It said rapid restocking around the world continues to lift India's new goods export orders. Meanwhile, recent currency depreciation may prove to be another shot in the arm for the fast-growing services exports sector. "Input prices eased, improving margins; we expect a 25 bps rate cut in the April policy meeting," the HSBC report said. The February flash India PMIs provide an advance indication of the final manufacturing, services and composite PMI data for the ongoing month, and are released approximately one week prior to the release of the final PMI indices, HSBC said. The flash PMI is typically based on approximately 80-90 per cent of total PMI survey responses that are received each month, all of which are used in the final release, it said.

"Rapid restocking around the world continues to lift new export orders, which rose at an elevated pace for manufacturers. Firms responded to an elevated order-to-inventory ratio by raising employment," it said. "Service providers,

Food inflation outlook pressures likely to witness significant easing: RBI Governor

Robust kharif harvest arrivals, correction in vegetable prices in winter season and good prospects for rabi crop are likely to ease pressure on food inflation going ahead, RBI Governor Sanjay Malhotra said in the minutes of the Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) meeting held during February 5-7. The RBI Governor, who voted for a 25 basis points (bps) cut in the repo rate, wrote in the minutes that given the macroeconomic outlook when inflation is expected to align with the target, and recognising that monetary policy is forward-looking, a lower policy rate would be more appropriate at the current juncture. "Going forward, food inflation pressures are likely to see significant easing on robust kharif harvest arrivals, winter season correction of vegetables prices and a promising rabi crop outlook. The food inflation outlook is turning decisively positive," Malhotra wrote in the minutes. These were his first MPC minutes after taking charge as the RBI governor in December last year. In January, the consumer price index (CPI) of inflation fell to a five-month low of 4.31 per cent from 5.22 per cent in December. The Budget proposals on agriculture and the commitment to fiscal consolidation were positive for price stability and would help anchor inflation expectations over the medium term. These would provide greater impetus to disinflation of headline CPI inflation and its eventual alignment with the target rate in FY 2025-26, Malhotra said. In the monetary policy, all MPC members unanimously decided to reduce the repo rate — the key policy rate — by 25 bps to 6.25 per cent, and retain the policy stance as neutral. "Monetary policy easing, coupled with good agricultural sector growth and various growth supportive measures in the Union Budget, would boost household consumption, investment in housing, capital expenditure, etc thereby strengthening the pick-up in aggregate demand," the Reserve Bank of India Governor said. At the same time, rising uncertainties on global financial markets and trade policy front, coupled with the continuing challenges from adverse weather events pose risk to the inflation and growth outlook. "We need to be watchful of how these forces play out. Hence, I vote to continue with the neutral stance of monetary policy. This will provide the flexibility to respond to the evolving macroeconomic environment," the Governor said. RBI Deputy Governor Rajeshwar Rao said that the inflation outlook is turning out to be more benign. "A correction in food inflation is necessary for a durable softening of headline inflation. Reassuringly, recent data is signalling a favourable rabi season," he said. This, along with the kharif market arrivals and the ongoing winter season correction



in vegetables prices, should lead to a significant easing of food inflation pressures in the coming months, Rao wrote in the minutes. Core inflation (inflation in CPI excluding food and fuel) pressures are also expected to remain muted. "At the current juncture, with a further alignment of headline inflation towards the 4 per cent target, there is greater space to address concerns regarding growth by way of reduction in the policy repo rate," Rao said. One of the external MPC members, Saugata Bhattacharya, voted for a 25 bps cut in the repo rate, which he believed was an appropriate policy response. "I am now cautiously optimistic about the downward trajectory of inflation. I believe that, at this point, the required policy response on the inflation-growth trade-off — even factoring in significant margins of error from emerging risks — seems skewed in favour of the latter," he said.

"Given the forecast inflation trajectory, the policy repo rate might soon, if not even as of now, become excessively restrictive, thereby increasing the risk of cumulatively damaging growth impulses," Bhattacharya added. Another external member of MPC Ram Singh said given the demand boost from Budget 2025, a rate cut powered by a commensurate increase in liquidity will decrease the risk premium demanded by investors, thereby boosting private investment to support growth. MPC member and Reserve Bank of India's Executive Director Rajiv Ranjan said, "a policy rate cut in February 2025 is the most rational and appropriate next step as we now have greater confidence on the disinflation path." External MPC member Nagesh Kumar said in the Union Budget 2025-26, the fiscal policy has done its bit by sustaining the public investment (capex) and through income tax concessions to the middle-income groups to enhance disposable incomes to augment consumption. "It is now monetary policy's turn to support economic growth through a rate cut.

Which fruit has the most and least amount of protein? Find out here



For many, adulthood may feel like an endless quest to meet daily protein requirements. While we often associate protein intake with vegetarian and non-vegetarian food sources, did you know that some fruits can also help you reach your protein goals? Let's explore the fruits that are highest and lowest in protein content. Deepalakshmi, registered dietitian at Shree Balaji Medical Centre, Chennai, said that while fruits are generally not considered primary sources of protein, some varieties contain more than others and can contribute modestly to daily intake.

"Among commonly consumed fruits, guava stands out as the fruit with the highest protein content, providing approximately 2.6 to 3 grams of protein per 100 grams. It is also rich in dietary fibre, vitamin C, and antioxidants, all of which support digestive health, immune function, and overall well-being," she said. According to her, consuming one medium-sized guava, approximately 150 to 200 grams per

day, can provide 4 to 6 grams of protein, along with essential micronutrients. This makes guava a great addition to the diet, especially for those looking to increase their protein intake from plant-based sources while benefiting from its vitamins and fibre.

Which fruit has the least amount of protein?

Watermelon is on the other end of the spectrum according to Deepalakshmi, offering only 0.6 grams of protein per 100 grams. "While it is not a significant source of protein, watermelon is highly hydrating and provides key nutrients such as vitamins A and C, potassium, and antioxidants like lycopene. Due to its high water content, it serves as an excellent option for maintaining hydration, especially in hot climates or after physical activity," she said. Consuming one to two cups, approximately 200 to 300 grams, of watermelon daily can support hydration, electrolyte balance, and antioxidant intake, but it should not be relied upon as a protein source.

Key takeaways While fruits alone do not provide sufficient protein for meeting daily dietary requirements, incorporating protein-rich fruits like guava can contribute to overall intake. However, for individuals aiming to increase protein consumption, Deepalakshmi advised complementing fruit intake with other high-protein foods such as yogurt, nuts, seeds, or plant-based protein sources like legumes. By strategically pairing protein-rich fruits with nutrient-dense foods, you can maintain a well-balanced diet that supports muscle health, metabolism, and overall nutrition.

Aadar Jain marries long-time sweetheart Alekha Advani in traditional ensembles; first pictures out

Aadar Jain—legendary actor Raj Kapoor's grandson and cousin to Ranbir Kapoor and Kareena Kapoor Khan—got hitched to his long-time girlfriend Alekha Advani in a traditional Hindu ceremony in Mumbai on Friday. The intimate celebration was attended by close friends and family from the Hindi film industry. For the special occasion, Jain chose a silver-embroidered sherwani, paired with a gold turban and juttis, complemented by emerald jewellery. Next to him, Alekha stunned in a classic red lehenga with intricate gold embroidery, accessorised with a matching emerald necklace, maang tika, and earrings. The couple, glowing with happiness, were seen cutting their wedding cake and later posing for the paparazzi.

Ahead of the wedding, Alekha had shared glimpses from their intimate mehendi ceremony on social media. The couple twirled in pastel peach outfits—Jain in a sherwani and Advani in a lehenga with diamond jewellery. The celebrations saw Kareena and Ranbir joining in the revelry, dancing alongside the newlyweds.

Last September, Jain popped the question to Advani in a picturesque beachside proposal in the Maldives. At their engagement a few weeks later, Jain gave an emotional speech that captured the Internet's attention. He confessed, "I have always loved Alekha and always wanted to be with her." However, their journey to marriage was not without its share of hurdles. Recalling their love story with a touch of humour, the groom admitted that Advani had kept him waiting for years. "I have always loved her since then, and I have always wanted to be with her, but never got a chance to be



with her. So, she sent me on this long journey of years through 'time-pass'. But at the end of the day, it was worth the wait because I get to marry this beautiful, beautiful woman, who looks like a dream." "I love you, and it was worth the wait. It's a secret, I have always loved her. I have done time-pass for 20 years of my life. But now I'm with you, baby," Jain said, as his friends and family cheered on.

What happens to the body when your day starts with health drinks?



Fermented malt-based beverages support gut health, reduce bloating and constipation, and improve bone health and immunity.

For many, childhood mornings were incomplete without a glass of health drink before rushing to catch the school bus or after an evening of play. But what happens when you start your day with a health drink every morning for two weeks straight? Indianexpress.com spoke to health experts to find out. C V Aishwarya, a clinical nutritionist and lecturer at Sri Ramachandra Institute of Higher Education and Research, Chennai said that starting the day with a health drink or malted beverage can have both positive and negative effects on the body, depending on its composition. "Many malted beverages contain refined sugars or malt extracts, which can cause a rapid spike in blood glucose levels, followed by a crash that leads to fatigue and hunger soon after. However, health drinks with low glycaemic index (GI) ingredients, such as protein- or fibre-rich components, help maintain stable blood sugar levels and promote longer satiety," she said.

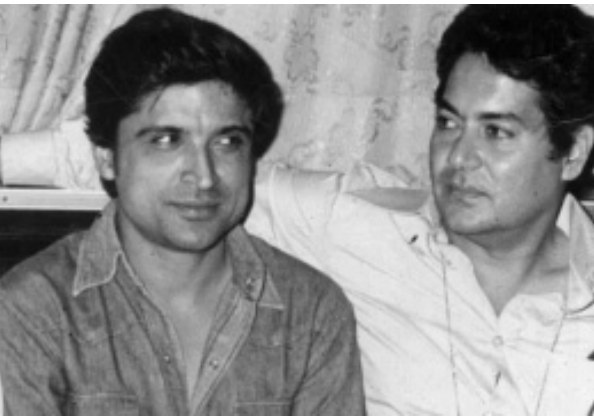
According to her, if the drink contains probiotics, prebiotics, or fibre, it can support digestion and gut health by fostering the growth of beneficial gut bacteria. However, beverages high in sugar or artificial additives may contrib-

ute to acidity, bloating, and gut inflammation over time.

Aishwarya said that health drinks and malted beverages are rich in complex carbohydrates such as malt extracts, whole grains, and oats that provide gradual energy release, preventing fatigue. Protein-rich health drinks containing whey, casein, soy or plant-based proteins aid in muscle repair, growth, and maintenance. Drinks containing dietary fibre, prebiotics and probiotics enhance digestion and nutrient absorption.

There are also fermented malt-based beverages that contribute to gut flora diversity, reducing bloating, constipation and also improves bone health, immune system. However, she warned that a lot of commercial malted beverages contain refined sugars, malt extracts or high fructose corn syrup leading to excess calorie intake and weight gain. "Frequent consumption can cause insulin resistance, increasing the risk of Type 2 Diabetes and metabolic syndrome," she said. Added sugars feed harmful oral bacteria, leading to tooth decay and cavities. Acidic components in some formulations may erode tooth enamel, increasing sensitivity and risk of dental caries.

'Salim-Javed were offended when I refused to do their film, asked for equal pay,' recalls Zamana director: 'Pagal ho kya?'



Salim Khan and Javed Akhtar, who wrote films such as Sholay, Deewaar, Yaadon Ki Baarat, among many others in the 1970s, were the highest-paid screenwriters of the Hindi film industry. After delivering several hits, Salim-Javed developed an unshakable confidence that no one could say no to them. So, when a director refused to do their film, they were offended. Director Ramesh Talwar, who worked as an assistant with Yash Chopra for many years, and later directed films such as Doosara Aadmi, Baseraa, Sawaal, Duniya, among others, recently recalled an incident when he asked for the same payment as the writers, and left them shocked.

In a chat with the YouTube channel Friday Talkies, Ramesh recalled that Salim-Javed wanted him to direct their film Zamana, because they wanted to cast Rishi Kapoor and Rajesh Khanna together, and Ramesh was friends with both of them. It was well known that Rishi and Rajesh did not get along with each other, because of Dimple Kapadia. "They didn't get along because Dimple did her first film with Rishi and she got married to Rajesh. So, because of that,

there was a little discomfort between them," he said. But, Ramesh wasn't interested in doing Zamana, as it was based on the 'lost and found' trope that was commonly seen in Hindi films in those days. Films like Waqt, Yaadon Ki Baarat, in which kids get separated in their childhood and reunite as adults, all utilised the same trope. Ramesh shared, "Zamana was one of those 'lost and found' films. And I didn't want to do that. When I told them I wasn't interested, they said, 'How can you say that? We've written an original story'. Salim-Javed wielded a lot of power at that time, so they said, 'We have written this, how can you question us?'"

Ramesh said that he agreed to do the film on the condition that he get paid as much as them. "I said, 'Okay, if you want me, then pay me the same as yourselves'. They were shocked. They said 'Pagal ho kya? (Are you mad?)' We charge Rs 14 lakh, Rs 7 lakh each". So I said, 'Give me Rs 7 lakh', he recalled. At this point, Salim-Javed said that they had directors who were ready to do the film for just Rs 2.5 lakh, and Ramesh told them clearly that they should go ahead with the alternatives. He continued, "I used to actively discuss their films with them, even as an AD, and I was always very honest about my reaction. So they knew that I know my job. But I just wanted to charge the money because at that time, I was being offered films for Rs 10 lakh. I was friends with them, so I would have agreed to do what they said, but they were giving very less money," he recalled.

But the film did not produce the desired results because it was delayed for years. In fact, it was actually released in 1985, years after Salim-Javed had parted ways. Ramesh said that the financiers were not from the film industry and after shooting 80 percent of the film, they had to halt production because the financiers said that their money was stuck elsewhere. In this mess, they lost the dates from Rishi and Rajesh, and the film got pushed. Salim-Javed separated in 1982.

Broken Rage movie review: The weirdest movie of the year, courtesy Takeshi Kitano; no wonder Amazon buried it

In a recent interview, actor Rajiv Thakur admitted that audiences that have seen him as a fixture on Kapil Sharma's comedy shows will have no idea that he played a menacing terrorist in the spectacular streaming series IC 814: The Kandahar Hijack. And those who discovered him through IC 814 wouldn't know that he has spent years as a part of Sharma's silly troupe. In the Venn diagram of Indian entertainment, these audiences will never intersect, even though both IC 814 and The Great Indian Kapil Show are available on Netflix. Similarly, it is possible that cinephiles familiar with Takeshi Kitano through his art-house yakuza movies, or his memorable appearance in the hyper-violent Battle Royale, will collapse in shock they are told that he was so central to the game show Takeshi's Castle that they named it after him. Kitano gets to play with his two creative personalities — the Golden Lion-winning filmmaker and the court jester — in his latest movie, Broken Rage, which was released on Prime Video with less fanfare than what you'd find at funerals in certain cultures.

Somewhat similar to its fellow Japanese film One Cut of the Dead, a micro-budget comedy about a film crew making a zombie thriller, Broken Rage is quite literally two films that Kitano somehow fuses into one through conviction alone. It's only 66 minutes long, including a couple of 'filler' segments that are injected into the story to humorously pad up the run-time. In these scenes, as the screen cuts to black, a string of comments mimicking the chat-box during a live-stream complain about the pointlessness of it all. It's a highly self-referential bit, as if Kitano knows exactly how obtuse his new film will be to certain audiences.

Some comments reference the strangeness of the plot, while others demand a gunfight or two. Interestingly, the first time that the black screen pops up is after the movie has introduced and explained its central conceit. Broken Rage is divided into two halves — Kitano essentially tells the same story twice; but while the first half is a dreary noir, the second is a surreal comedy. In both parts, which are divided by an inter-title that reads 'spin-off', Kitano plays a hitman for hire. Known as the Mouse, the character makes nightly trips to a local cafe, where he mechanically refuses the waiter's offer for some coffee and accepts his latest assignment. On his third trip to the cafe, the Mouse is arrested by two Tokyo detectives, played by Tadanobu Asano and Naomichi Omori. They tell him that he's cornered, but offer him a way out if he agrees to spy for them on a local yakuza boss. Through it all, Kitano weaponises his trademark deadpan acting style, barely moving a facial muscle as the Mouse enters the gangster's inner circle, proves his worth, and rises up the ranks. In the second half, however, while the



broad storyline remains the same, the style changes drastically.

Kitano's performance becomes more physical, more Chaplin-esque. The gags are ridiculous; the jazzy score from the first half is replaced by something that Salim-Sulaiman might have composed for Hum Tum. Broken Rage is an interesting experiment in dissecting cinematic language, but does it work as a cohesive whole? Absolutely not. Scrutinised individually, the two halves have plenty to admire. The film noir portion works like a dream, mainly because the clinical aesthetic suits Kitano's natural filmmaking style.

The comedic half is weirder. The dour tone seems to be at odds with the absurdity unfolding on screen. For instance, the Mouse is a killer shot in the first half, but he fires a bullet through his colleague's head by mistake in the second. The Mouse also has a letter read out loud to him by a little man hiding inside a duffel bag. Towards the end, several characters participate in an overlong game of musical chairs. Difficult as this might be to explain, both halves seem to bear the stamp of Kitano's filmmaking. And because it serves as one man's singular vision, you can't even appreciate Broken Rage as an experiment to prove that art is subjective, and that the same script could be interpreted differently by two directors. Around a decade ago, there was a reality show called The Chair that put this theory into practice. A producer handpicked two filmmakers on either end of the creative spectrum — the indie-minded Ana Martemucci and the YouTube Shane Dawson — and watched them turn the same screenplay into a Sundance-friendly drama and an American Pie rip-off. It was fascinating. More fascinating, one could argue, than Broken Rage.

'Intimidating' Amitabh Bachchan said nobody cares about the background when his face is on a big screen: 'You think anyone gives a sh*t?'

Amitabh Bachchan said that in an extreme close up, no one would care what is happening in the background. Amitabh Bachchan said that in an extreme close up, no one would care what is happening in the background.

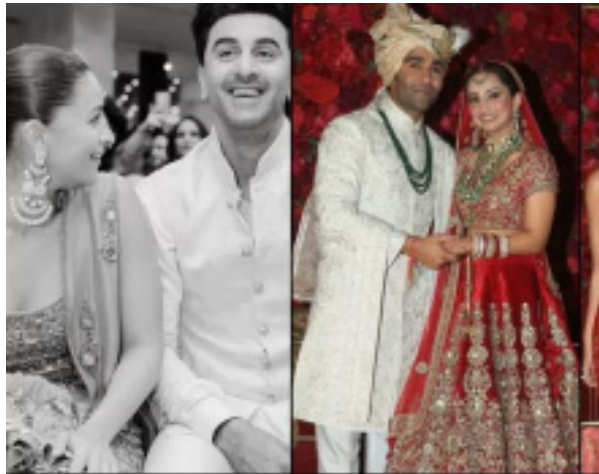
Amitabh Bachchan has been a superstar since the 1970s, and when the actor started the second phase of his career in the 2000s, he quickly regained his star status. In those days, Amitabh shot with director Apoorva Lakshia for the film Ek Ajnabee, and in a recent interview, the filmmaker recalled feeling "intimidated" while shooting with the legend. Apoorva also recalled that while shooting a scene in Bangkok, Big B reminded him that no one would care about what's happening in the background if his face is in the frame.

In a chat with Friday Talkies, Apoorva shared that this was his second film as a director, and he realised during the shoot that Amitabh doesn't go back to his van in between the shots, but sits outside and observes the proceedings. "And you are thinking what he must be thinking of you," he said, and added, "It's very intimidating." He then recalled shooting a scene in Bangkok where Bachchan was walking

towards the camera. "We shot the wide shot, then we shot the mid shot and we shot it twice, just for safety. Then there was a close-up and then a 100 mm lens (extreme close-up). We asked him to walk again and he asked why? So I said 'sir, in the background there was a Thai guy who ran across the frame when I said action'. He said okay and we did one more. After the shot, he called me. He asked 'what lens are you on?' So I said 100 mm. He said 'now imagine, you are in Chandan (theatre), 70 mm screen and Amitabh Bachchan is on 100 mm. You think anyone gives a sh*t about who walked in the background? Kisko padi hai haathi bhi peeche se jata hai? (Who cares even if an elephant walks by in the background)? But you got your shot?' he recalled.

In the same chat, Apoorva said that he waited for months to give a narration to the star, but Big B couldn't find the time, so ultimately, he was asked to give a narration during a flight from Mumbai to Jaipur. "Amit ji was going to shoot Eklavya in Jaipur. And they booked me the seat next to him so I can give him the narration on the flight. It was a business class seat and a one and a half hour flight. As soon as the flight took off, Amit ji went to sleep. Now I am thinking, how to wake him up? a

Aadar Jain-Alekha Advani wedding: An emotional Kareena Kapoor-Saif Ali Khan reunion, a tongue-in-cheek Ranbir Kapoor-Alia Bhatt win hearts.



One cinema-related event that garnered the spotlight over the past few weeks is Aadar Jain's wedding to Alekha Advani. After tying the knot in a Christian wedding in Goa, they got married in accordance with Hindu traditions in Mumbai this Friday. Pictures and videos of the stars graced the momentous occasion were shared online. While Aadar donned a white sherwani with an emerald necklace, Alekha wore a red lehenga with golden embroidery. Some of the guests included Ranbir Kapoor, Kareena Kapoor Khan, Karisma Kapoor, Neetu Kapoor, Saif Ali Khan, Alia Bhatt, Akash Ambani, Shloka Mehta, Anil and Tina Ambani, Nikhil and Agastya Nanda, Suhana Khan, Gauri Khan and Rekha.

The event was filled with a lot of warm moments that

won the hearts of netizens. Take, for instance, Saif Ali Khan's presence, which is his first big family event after the unfortunate stabbing incident at his residence earlier this year. While Kareena was her stunning self in an orange saree, Saif was at his regal best in a black sherwani. During the event, Saif was seen participating in the rituals as the brother-in-law of Aadar, the cousin of Kareena. It was an emotional moment for Kareena, on multiple levels, as her cousin was getting married, and her husband was back in the thick of things. Notably, Saif was absent for the roka function that had happened when he was recuperating from the incident.

And when the Kapoor khandaan in full attendance, there can be no paucity of entertainment. One such incident happened when Ranbir and Alia were posing for the shutterbugs at the event. When Ranbir was asked to stand for solo pictures, he instantly replied, "Pagal ho kya?" that left not just the paparazzi but Alia too in peals of laughter. Another beautiful incident that added a touch of organic proceedings to the well-orchestrated event was when the bride and groom stepped out of the mandap to pose for photos. And in between the various clicks and flashes, Alekha had to take a break to sneeze before putting on the smiles for the cameras. Aadar and Alekha also took to their Instagram handles to share photos from their mehendi and sangeet ceremony. In a video from the event, we can see Karisma Kapoor and Kareena Kapoor Khan getting mehendi, and another with Ranbir Kapoor grooving to Kajra Re. Oh, and when there's a wedding, there needs to be a cake, and there was a three-tiered one at their wedding. From the videos of the event, it is clear that Aadar and Alekha not just had the cake, but ate it too.

Arjun Kapoor, Bhumi Pednekar-starrer delivers the second worst opening of 2025, makes Rs 1.5 cr

Mere Husband Ki Biwi box office collection Day 1: The Arjun Kapoor, Bhumi Pednekar and Rakul Preet Singh-starrer Mere Husband Ki Biwi was released in theatres on Friday. The film was promoted extensively across many cities, where the three stars engaged with the audience while performing their promotional song. But, as it turns out, this has not helped boost the film's collections at all. Mere Husband Ki Biwi made Rs 1.5 crore on its opening day.

The recent film Azaad, which starred newcomers Rasha Thadani and Aaman Devgan, made Rs 1.5 crore at the box office and was declared a flop within a week's time. The Kangana Ranaut-starrer Emergency, which made Rs 18.35 crore during its run, opened at Rs 2.5 crore. This makes Mere Husband Ki Biwi one of the weakest Bollywood openers of the year; the only mainstream Hindi film that made less money was the Khushi Kapoor and Junaid Khan-starrer Loveyapa, which made Rs 1.15 crore. Mere Husband Ki Biwi has been directed by Mudassar Aziz, who previously directed the Akshay Kumar-starrer Khel Khel Mein. That film was a flop at the box office despite scoring a release on the coveted Independence Day weekend. It couldn't even manage to cross Rs 40 crore at the box office despite a big star cast.

In 2024, Arjun Kapoor starred in Singham Again, along with Ajay Devgn, Kareena Kapoor, Akshay Kumar, Ranveer Singh, Deepika Padukone, Tiger Shroff, and many saw it as his 'comeback'. The actor himself spoke about his return in several interviews, and shared that he was starting a new chapter in his cinematic journey. Arjun and Bhumi were last seen together in a film called The Lady Killer, which



was released without any promotions, directly on YouTube. It was said that the film was released in an incomplete state. Before that, Bhumi appeared in films such as Afwaah, Bheed, Raksha Bandhan and Badhaai Do. None of these films performed well at the box office. For Rakul Preet Singh, who is married to the producer of the film, Jackky Bhagnani, this is her first release after Kamal Hassan-starrer Indian 2, which was a flop as well. Before that, Rakul appeared in 2022's Thank God, which also starred Ajay Devgn and Sidharth Malhotra. The film ended its run with less than Rs 40 crore at the box office. Mere Husband Ki Biwi has released at a time when Vicky Kaushal's Chhaava is dominating the box office, with more than Rs 200 crore in the bank so far.

Preity Zinta hits back at trolls for their 'cynicism'; asks what's wrong with appreciating PM: 'If you are a proud Hindu or Indian...'

It seems that Preity Zinta's reaction was inspired by the comments one of her earlier posts received, where she shared her experience interacting with Grok3, seeing which some wondered if it was part of some paid promotion. Preity Zinta recently questioned the state of social media, expressing surprise at how cynical people have become.

Finding fault with netizens' alleged tendency to quickly categorise people, assign labels and contribute to online toxicity, actor Preity Zinta on Friday penned a long post condemning such actions. She also urged people to relax and engage in open conversations instead of rushing to conclusions. It seems that her reaction was inspired by the comments one of her earlier posts received, where she shared her experience interacting with the AI chatbot Grok3, seeing which some wondered if her post was part of some paid promotion.

Taking to X (formerly Twitter) on Friday, Preity questioned the state of social media, expressing surprise at how cynical people have become. She also pushed back against the tendency to assume that anyone who appreciates Prime Minister Narendra Modi must align with his political ideology. "If one talks about their first chat with an AI bot then people presume it's a paid promotion. If you appreciate your PM, then you are a bhakt and god forbid, if you are a proud Hindu or Indian, then you are an andh bhakt! Let's keep it real folks and take people for who they are and not who we think they should be! Maybe we all need to take a chill pill and just be happy to communicate with each other," she wrote.

Anticipating that her post might invite comments about her American husband Gene Goodenough, she preemptively addressed it, saying, "Now don't ask me why I married Gene. I married him because I love him. Kyuki sarhad par ek aisa shaks hai, jo mere liye aapni jaan de sakta hai, samjhe (Because there is one person across the border who can give his life for me). If you know you know. Ting!" Preity tied the knot with Gene Goodenough at a private ceremony in Los Angeles in 2016. They are currently parents to twins. Earlier in the day, Preity Zinta had shared her thoughts on interacting with Grok3, a flagship AI model launched by Elon Musk-owned xAI. Mentioning that she spent over two hours having "the most fun conversation", the actor shared that the experience felt so real and unfiltered that she almost forgot she was speaking to a machine. "It's both scary and fascinating," she remarked, while also commending the developers for their work. However, some users quickly questioned the authenticity of her excitement, suspecting the post was part of a paid promotion. She, however, clarified that it was not. Preity is currently



working on director Rajkumar Santoshi's period actioner Lahore 1947, sharing the screen with Sunny Deol. The film is produced by Bollywood superstar Aamir Khan and will mark Preity's return to Bollywood after seven years. She was last seen in the action comedy Bhaiji Superhit (2018).

Diljit Dosanjh professes his love for coffee

Mumbai: Punjabi sensation Diljit Dosanjh has expressed his love for a hot cup of Joe in a hilarious video on social media. Diljit took to his Instagram, where he shared a video of himself sitting in a cafe and enjoying some breakfast. The video starts with Diljit first gorging on a smoothie bowl and then having some mashed potatoes with scrambled eggs and bread. The video then shows the singer-actor enjoying a hot cup of coffee. For the background score, Diljit chose his song "Water" and captioned the post: "Lokaan ne Ki Kehna? P.S - I am in LOVE With The Coffee." Earlier this month, Diljit revealed how he keeps his bad mood at bay especially when he is surrounded by good people. The actor posted his stylish photos where he was seen dressed in a black outfit paired with a matching black turban and sunglasses. On the professional front, Diljit is gearing up for the release upcoming movie "Punjab 95." A few days ago, he treated fans to his first look from the film and captioned, "I Challenge the Darkness. Punjab 95." The film is inspired by the life of human rights activist Jaswant Singh Khaira, who served as the director of a bank in Amritsar, Punjab, during the turbulent period of militancy in the state.

Shubman Gill deserves to be the No. 1 ranked batsman in the world: Ricky Ponting



GNS News Agency, Feb 25

India's Shubman Gill plays a shot during the third one day international cricket match between India and England in Ahmedabad, India, Wednesday, Feb. 12, 2025. (AP Photo) India's Shubman Gill plays a shot during the third one day international cricket match between India and England in Ahmedabad. Former Australia skipper Ricky Ponting has said India's sensational batter Shubman Gill surely deserves to be at the top of ICC ODI batting rankings. Gill dethroned Pakistan's Babar Azam from the top spot in the ICC ODI rankings. In the latest rankings list, Gill has 796 rating points while Babar has

773. India skipper Rohit Sharma is ranked third with 761 points. South Africa's Henrich Klaasen and New Zealand's Daryl Mitchell at fourth and fifth respectively. Gill's dominance in ODIs has been highly praised and he lived up to the expectations in India's Champions Trophy opener against Bangladesh where he scored a match-winning century (101*). It was also his fourth successive 50+ score, making him one of the most persistent batters. Ponting said Gill's rise to the No. 1 ranking is commendable and deserving. "He thoroughly deserves to be the number one ranked batsman in the world at the moment. It's a great sign for India that he's got his account underway early in the first game of a Champions Trophy," Ponting shared on ICC Review podcast. Ponting also acknowledged Gill's presence in limited-overs cricket, even though he struggled to showcase his white-ball success in Test cricket. "He's been a very, very good international player for several years. His white-ball cricket over the last three or four years has been outstanding," he said. The World Cup-winning skipper also pointed out why Gill's style of game is ODI cricket. "One-day cricket allows him to be aggressive early in the powerplay with the field up. He plays good, natural shots and scores boundaries at will," he added. Gill has accumulated a massive 2,688 runs in 51 ODIs with an average of 62.51, which includes eight centuries.

Basit Ali takes a jibe on Pakistan's cricket team and economy: 'Ab TV bhi nahi tootenge...'

GNS News Agency, Feb 25

Former Pakistan cricketer Basit Ali has made a scathing attack on Pakistan's national cricket team and country's economy ahead of their must-win game against India in the ongoing Champions Trophy. Pakistan will face their arch-rivals India at the International Cricket Stadium in Dubai

"Agar one-sided hota hai, toh ab TV bhi nahi tootenge kyunki Pakistan mei mehangaai bahut zyada hai. Ab zabaan se hi har cheez hogi (If Pakistan will lose one-sided against India, now the fans will not thrash their TV sets because of country's economic situation. Now there will be only voiced opinion," Basit Ali, who has played 19 Tests and 50 ODIs for Pakistan said on his Youtube Channel. Basit Ali also admits if Pakistan will manage to beat India in Dubai then it will be a big upset. "India are favourites. There is no doubt about that. In my opinion, if Pakistan manage to beat India, it will be an upset because our cricket has gone down and is at all time low," he said.

Basit Ali pointed out the issues in the current Pakistan squad picked for the Champions Trophy. "Who will bat at No 3, nobody knows. They might ask Usman Khan to open with Imam and bring Babar Azam at No 3," he said. "Fakhar Zaman is out. Now Pakistan's batting line-up from number one to five is similar. If there is a running in the third gear, then it will stay in the third gear. It won't be able to switch into turbo mode in the last five or 10 overs," he added. India



have won their first match against Bangladesh by six wickets in Dubai. Meanwhile, Pakistan the defending champions and hosts lost their opening match against New Zealand by 60 runs in Karachi.

"Pakistan should now play cricket with bat and brain, not with the mouth," said Basit. The 54-year-old also took a sly dig on Pakistan Cricket Board's effort to renovate the stadiums instead of building a strong team. "The amount of money they spent in building the stadiums, they could have built a good team in half of that amount. "But to build a team you need intelligence. What is your vision? What's your thinking? How do you view a player's talent? These are the important things."

When Vishy Anand handed Magnus Carlsen a reality check: 'Realised I was delusional'



GNS News Agency, Feb 25

Magnus Carlsen during a FIDE chess match at the Tata Steel Chess India Rapid and Blitz at the Dhono Dhonyo Auditorium in Kolkata. (Express photo by Partha Paul) Magnus Carlsen during a match at the Tata Steel Chess India Rapid and Blitz at the Dhono Dhonyo Auditorium in Kolkata. Few weeks after his stinging criticism of his predecessor Viswanathan Anand over the jeans controversy, former world champion Magnus Carlsen has praised the Indian legend and spoken about the time when he was blown away by the five-time world champion.

Carlsen was talking about a time he was invited by Anand for a training camp as the Indian was readying himself for a world championship title bid in 2008 against Vladimir Kramnik. Carlsen had in fact visited Anand's home in Madrid and played training games with him, where Anand handed him a reality check. "I've been very fortunate about being able to study with Gary Kasparov and (Viswanathan) Anand, who was a world champion before me. It's only then when you study, like you talk to them, that you understand how good they really are and how much they, they under-

stand. For instance, with Anand, I had a training session in 2008, where we had both played a tournament where I'd done decently while he had sort of, towards the end, he had nailed it in. But he was preparing for the classical world championship.

"I went to Madrid for a couple of days to his house. As soon as like that training camp started, it's like something just switched on with him and he was, he was just so focused. We played a bunch of training games and from being this guy who seemed completely disinterested in this other tournament, all of a sudden, like he was crushing me. He had a massive plus score in our games and it felt like everything we analyzed, he just had a much deeper understanding of the game, seeing that he was fast tactically and everything. And it made me appreciate like how good he actually was," Carlsen narrated on the Joe Rogan Experience podcast where he was guest recently.

"It was just a reality check for me because I thought that that point that I was ranked, I think, third in the world. I was very briefly ranked number one already at that point, for like a week. I thought before that training camp I was maybe one of the best two, three players in the world. It made me realize that I wasn't, and that maybe I was able to have better results than my actual level because of youth energy and optimism. That made me realize that I have a lot to learn and that I should be patient and not expect everything to come that fast. "At that point, I had a year of more or less constant rise. I was just winning tournaments. Every time I would lose a game, I would just believe that I could strike back immediately. I realized now that I was just delusional. I thought that was a lot better than what I was. That was probably why I was having such good results because you're so confident. But having a little bit of a reality check, I think, helped me later to actually understand the game a bit better."

India stronger side, Pakistan needs collective effort for victory: Afridi

GNS News Agency, Feb 25

Dubai: Legendary Pakistan all-rounder Shahid Afridi firmly believes India is clearly the stronger side given that it has more match-winners compared to its arch-rivals, and the best way to negate that advantage in the upcoming Champions Trophy marquee clash would be to put in a collective effort. Pakistan are in a must-win situation when it takes on India here on Sunday after suffering a massive 60-run defeat against New Zealand in the Champions Trophy opener in Karachi. India, on the other hand, will come into the high-voltage contest on the back of a sure-footed performance against Bangladesh. "If we talk about match-winners, I'd say that India has more match-winners compared to Pakistan. A match-winner is someone who knows how to win the game single-handedly. Right now, we don't have such players in Pakistan," former Pakistan skipper Afridi said on JioHotstar.

He said that India's middle and lower-order had played vital roles in the team's wins, while the same could not be said about Pakistan. "India's strength lies in its middle and



lower order, which has been winning them matches. For a long time, we have been giving opportunities to players, but no one has stepped up consistently. "Some have performed in a few games, but we don't have players who have sustained their performance for a year or two or across 50-60 matches.

No war, no shooting; just fight to be Miandad, Joginder, not Chetan Sharma, Misbah



GNS News Agency, Feb 25

However hard the TV broadcasters try to beat the war drums, India vs Pakistan cricket, these days, is anything but 'war minus the shooting'. However hard the billboard artists try to photoshop Rohit Sharma and Mohammad Rizwan to make them appear menacing, the two naturally congenial captains still can't pass off as ruthless generals leading bloodthirsty armies. That old narrative promoting cricket's most storied derby has got boring and inaccurate but, somehow it has survived. The caricaturing of this high-stakes sporting contest needs to stop. Indo-Pak cricket needs to be saved from the marketers who seem hell-bent on reducing this many-layered rivalry into a one-dimensional cliché.

It is these unimaginative war references that justify the mixing of sports and politics and the slamming of the cricket door between the two neighbours, whose players famously get along and whose fans have never waged pitched battles in the stands. This Sunday, India and Pakistan will meet again and those familiar voices are on air again. Netflix has timed the airing of its documentary 'The Greatest Rivalry' with the ICC Champions Trophy's showcase game. Its promo video has visuals of tanks blasting shells on the border and lung-busting cries by high-on-aggro guards at the Wagah ceremony every evening. Javed Miandad mocks Kiran More, Kiran More vs Miandad, Miandad jumps hilariously, Kiran More's hilarious mocking, India vs Pakistan moments Javed Miandad mocks Kiran More (Express File). JioHotstar flashes images of a Pakistani player with a bloodied face. It also has scary close-ups of angry fans with war paint on their faces. Even MS Dhoni is seen extolling fans to sledge. How long can Javed Miandad mimicking Kiran More's jumping-jack routine be interpreted as some Kargil-like confrontation? Well, it has been more than 30 years but Miandad is still leaping on the screen. Have a heart, he is 67 now.

Why has it taken the world so long to realise that the arenas where these storied Blue vs Green games are played aren't battlefields but theatres of dreams. These sporting face-offs are chess over 22 yards, exhibition of exquisite cricketing skills and an opportunity for players to be permanently housed in the memories of fans. Nothing inspires a sportsman more than a packed house and a chance to make a lasting impression on those who have invested in them.

On such days, runs and wickets carry more weight and value. These are the games where legends are made and myths shaped. These are the contests that give teams and players their identity that get pasted on memories for years and sometime for ever. Most times unfairly. Take two much-discussed Indo-Pak finals – the 1986 Austral-Asia Cup and the 2007 ICC World T20. Miandad, the manipulator of strike with an expert at nicking singles, is remembered as a six-hitting finisher. Chetan Sharma, with a World Cup hundred and hat-trick to his name, can't get the 'last ball full-toss' albatross off his neck.

History will see Joginder Sharma, a man with a very modest international record, as a nerveless bowler. As for Misbah-ul-Haq, the highly skillful batsman blessed with a calm cricketing mind, he carries on his back forever the 'brain fade' monkey. This is what India-Pakistan games are all about and that's why the pressure. Joginder Sharma rep-

resented India in four ODIs and four T20Is over the course of his career. (FILE) Joginder Sharma represented India in four ODIs and four T20Is over the course of his career. So India might have sailed past Bangladesh and Pakistan might have rolled over without a fight against New Zealand in their opening games, but only the naive would get into predicting the result of the most-watched game of the tournament. It's the attention of the millions of eye-balls that makes even untested players do extraordinary feats on days when streets go empty in the sub-continent. Go to the Indo-Pak cricket archives to find out why Manzoor Elahi or Saleem Yousuf still get free lunches in Pakistan for the match-winning 50s they scored against India or why Atul Bedade still gets asked about the four sixes he hit in a Sharjah game which India lost. This is why the newbies – Pakistan's Salman Agha, Khushdil Shah, Abrar Ahmed or India's Harshit Rana – will fancy their chances to scoop the perks on offer at the Dubai game.

Even a single magical stroke or a dream ball can get tagged to a cricketer forever. Virat Kohli's backfoot six down the ground, Sachin Tendulkar's stunning upper cut, Mohammad Amir's cutter, Shaheen Afridi's in-swing ... they are still shared on WhatsApp groups of cricket fans. This Sunday, Kohli, Rohit, Babar Azam, Rizwan would want immortality in winning games. Over the years, the changing trends in India-Pakistan cricket results would go a long way in how the world perceived them. These games were the markers that decided the collective psyche and character of the two teams. So around the mid-1980s – post Miandad's and subsequently Elahi's match-winning efforts – Pakistan was seen as a team with a chip on the shoulder and a firm belief that they could get the better of India regardless of the match situation. Pakistan were called aggressive, India mild-mannered and nifty. The latter lost to Pakistan on Fridays and at Sharjah – India banked on this pessimism to make peace with their serial defeats. The wheels would move with time. The 90s brought about a change. That was the time when war and regional geo-politics would see the snapping of ties between India and Pakistan. Sharjah would get boycotted and ICC events would be the meeting stage for the two teams. The decade would expose Pakistan cricket's ugly belly. Their top cricketers would have match-fixing stains on them. Political uncertainty would further impact the game.

Pakistan's captain Babar Azam, right, and India's captain Rohit Sharma walk into the field before the start of the ICC Men's T20 World Cup cricket match between India and Pakistan at the Nassau County International Cricket Stadium in Westbury, New York. Pakistan's captain Babar Azam, right, and India's captain Rohit Sharma walk into the field before the start of the ICC Men's T20 World Cup cricket match between India and Pakistan at the Nassau County International Cricket Stadium in Westbury, New York. (AP | PTI) The last two ICC events – 2023 World Cup, 2024 T20 World Cup – show that the shoe is now on the other foot. It is Pakistan that suffers from an inferiority complex. Now India has the confidence to turn any game. They didn't let the pressure of winning overwhelm them in front of over a lakh spectators at the Narendra Modi Stadium and at New York's Nassau County International Cricket Stadium, they performed a Houdini act in the final overs.

This sporting pattern isn't quite unique to Pakistan. Other teams too have been in this terrible place. But this isn't a dead end. Back in the day, Manchester City was a no-hoper team in the English league when neighbours Man United ruled. Losses in big games and their frequent acts of 'snatching defeat from jaws of victory' would be received by a familiar groan of 'typical City'. It was a chronic disorder that was given a name – City-itis. These days, 'typical Pakistan' is often heard on the international cricket circuit. This Sunday, they have a chance to cure Pakistanitis. But India wouldn't oblige. This is no war, no shooting, just an engrossing sporting contest where two proud cricketing nations play to preserve their legacy. This is a more civilised theme which has potential to revive sporting ties that the war-monger tribe has snapped.

Champions Trophy: South Africa rides on Rickel'ton', trounces Afghanistan

GNS News Agency, Feb 25

Karachi: South Africa defeated Afghanistan by 107 runs in their Champions Trophy match with opener Ryan Rickelton smashing a century and pacers Lungi Ngidi and Kagiso Rabada doing the maximum damage here. Electing to bat, the Proteas put up a mammoth 315 for 6 in 50 overs before dismissing Hashmatullah Shahidi's side for 208 runs to begin their campaign in the marquee event on a blazing note.

Opener Ryan Rickelton scored his maiden ODI hundred (103) as half-centuries from skipper Temba Bavuma (58), Rassie van der Dussen (52) and Aiden Markram (52 not out) propelled South Africa to 315/6 in 50 overs against Afghanistan in the ICC Champions Trophy Group B clash at National Stadium. South Africa's lineup for the match was missing both Heinrich Klaassen and Tristan Stubbs. Cricket South Africa later confirmed that Klaassen had been sidelined as a precaution due to a soft tissue injury in his left elbow. Meanwhile, Stubbs was unlikely to have been in contention for the first-choice XI regardless.

Opting to bat first, South Africa had a steady yet cautious start, with Afghan pacers Fazalhaq Farooqi and Azmatullah Omarzai extracting significant movement off the surface. Tony de Zorzi struggled to get going and was the first to depart, falling to Mohammad Nabi for 11 after an attempted drive resulted in a mistimed shot straight to mid-on. With South Africa losing their first wicket early, Bavuma joined Rickelton at the crease, and together they navigated the testing conditions. Rickelton, fresh from impressive performances in SA20 and the New Year's Test against Pakistan, looked in sublime touch. He rotated the strike well and capitalised on loose deliveries, bringing up his half-century in 48 balls. Bavuma, initially circumspect, grew into his innings, ensuring South Africa's run rate remained stable. The duo stitched a crucial 129-run stand, frustrating Afghanistan's bowlers.

The introduction of spin brought some respite for Afghanistan, with Mohammad Nabi striking at a key moment. Bavuma, attempting to up the ante, mistimed a shot straight to deep midwicket and departed for 58 off 76 balls. Despite the breakthrough, Rickelton remained composed, crafting an authoritative innings. His hundred – his first in ODIs – came in fine fashion, making him the first South African to score a century on Champions Trophy debut. Ryan Rickelton (run out) 103, Tony de Zorzi c Omarzai b Nabi



Electing to bat, the Proteas put up a mammoth 315 for 6 in 50 overs before dismissing Hashmatullah Shahidi's side for 208 runs to begin their campaign in the marquee event on a blazing note.

11, Temba Bavuma c Atal b Nabi 58, Rassie van der Dussen c Shahidi b Ahmad 52, Aiden Markram (not out) 52, David Miller c Rahmat b Farooqi 14, Marco Jansen b Omarzai 0, Wiaan Mulder (not out) 12

Extras: (W-13) 13; Total: (50 overs, 6 wickets) 315; Fall of wickets: 1-28, 2-157, 3-201, 4-248, 5-298, 6-299; Bowling: Fazalhaq Farooqi 8-0-59-1, Azmatullah Omarzai 6-0-39-1, Mohammed Nabi 10-0-51-2, Rashid Khan 10-0-59-0, Gulbadin Naib 7-0-42-0, Noor Ahmad 9-0-65-1

Afghanistan: Rahmanullah Gurbaz c Maharaj b Ngidi 10 Ibrahim Zadran b Rabada 17 Sediqullah Atal run out 16 Rahmat Shah c Rickelton b Rabada 90 Hashmatullah Shahidi c Bavuma b Mulder 0 Azmatullah Omarzai c Rickelton b Rabada 18 Mohammad Nabi c Rabada b Jansen 8 Jansen 8 Gulbadin Naib c Bavuma b Ngidi 13 Rashid Khan c Markram b Maharaj 18 Noor Ahmad b Mulder 9 Fazalhaq Farooqi not out 0

Extras: (B-2 NB-1 W-6) 9; Total: (All out in 43.3 overs) 208 Fall of wickets: 1/16 2/38 3/50 4/50 5/89 6/120 7/142 8/169 9/208 10/208 Bowling: Marco Jansen 8-1-32-1, Lungi Ngidi 8-0-56-2, Kagiso Rabada 8-3-1-36-3, Wiaan Mulder 9-0-36-2, Keshav Maharaj 10-0-46-1