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5th convocation ceremony of NAARM's PGDM-ABM

Hyderabad, April 25 (NSS): The Academy is going to conduct 5th Convocation Ceremony of Post Graduate Diploma in Management (Agri - Business Management) (PGDM-ABM) on April 26 (Saturday) at 10am at NAARM auditorium. The Chief Guest of the ceremony is Padma Bhushan Awardee Dr R.S. Paroda, who is Former Secretary, DARE and DG, ICAR, and Chairman, Trust for Advancement of Agricultural Sciences, New Delhi. Dr A Janaiyah, Vice Chancellor, PJTAVU, Hyderabad, N K Rajavelu, CEO-Crop Protection Business, Messrs Godrej Agrovet Limited and Dr Mangi Lal Jat, Secretary DARE and DG, ICAR will be the Guests of Honour during the ceremony. Around 176 students from the 2021, 2022, and 2023 batches are set to be conferred with their degrees.

Amit Shah calls meeting to discuss future action on Indus Waters Treaty 'abeyance'

GNS News Agency, April 25

Union Home Minister Amit Shah will hold a key meeting on Friday (April 25, 2025) to discuss the future course of action on the Indus Waters Treaty of 1960 with Pakistan, which has been kept 'in abeyance', sources said. Union Jal Shakti Minister C R Paatil and senior officials of several Ministries will take part in the meeting, sources said. The meeting is expected to discuss the future course of action and how to implement the decision of keeping the treaty in abeyance, they said. India has already informed Pakistan of its decision to keep the Indus Waters Treaty 'in abeyance' with immediate effect, saying Pakistan has breached its conditions.

India's Water Resources Secretary Debashree Mukherjee said in a letter addressed to her Pakistani counterpart, Syed Ali Murtaza, that sustained cross-border terrorism by Pakistan targeting Jammu and Kashmir impedes India's rights under the Indus Waters Treaty. "The obligation to honour a treaty in good faith is fundamental to a treaty. However, what we have seen instead is sustained cross-border terrorism by Pakistan targeting the Indian Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir," the letter read. India's decision to suspend the decades-old treaty follows the killing of 26 people, mostly tourists, in a terror attack in Jammu and Kashmir's Pahalgam on Tuesday. "The resulting security uncertainties have directly impeded India's full utilisation of its rights under the treaty," the letter read. The communication to Pakistan also highlighted "significantly altered population demographics, the need to accelerate the development of clean energy, and other changes" as reasons necessitating a re-assessment of the treaty's obligations.



To give effect to the decision, the government has also formally issued a notification to suspend the Indus Water Treaty. The treaty brokered by the World Bank has governed the distribution and use of the Indus river and its tributaries between India and Pakistan since 1960. The Indus river system comprises the main river, the Indus, and its tributaries. The Ravi, Beas, Sutlej, Jhelum and Chenab are its left-bank tributaries, while the Kabul river, a right-bank tributary, does not flow through Indian territory. The Ravi, Beas and Sutlej are collectively referred to as the eastern rivers, while the Indus, Jhelum and Chenab are known as the western rivers. The water of this river system are crucial to both India and Pakistan. At the time of Independence, the boundary demarcation between the two newly-formed nations -- India and Pakistan -- cut through the Indus Basin, leaving India as the upper riparian and Pakistan as the lower riparian state.

NDSA report on Kaleshwaram is an indictment of BRS govt: Uttam



Hyderabad, April 25 Irrigation and Civil Supplies Minister N Uttam Kumar Reddy said the National Dam Safety Authority's (NDSA) report on the Kaleshwaram Project was a direct indictment of the previous BRS government, exposing serious flaws in its design, construction, and maintenance. Speaking to media persons on the sidelines of Bharat Summit 2025 at HICC on Friday, Uttam Kumar Reddy launched a blistering attack on the BRS leadership, stating, "BRS leaders should have some shame. The NDSA report clearly stated that the design was faulty, construction was faulty, operation and maintenance were faulty. Soil testing was not done properly, and no proper geophysical investigations were conducted." Highlighting the report's findings, he pointed out that the sand piping phenomenon, cavity formation un-

derneath the raft, construction defects, design deficiencies, structural distress, and other downstream damages had rendered Block-7 of the Medigadda Barrage unserviceable. The Minister added that the NDSA committee noted similar issues in other blocks as well, based on geophysical investigations that revealed cavity formation under multiple sections of the barrage.

Uttam Kumar Reddy accused the previous BRS government of mortgaging Telangana's future by borrowing over Rs.1 lakh crore at high interest rates to build a project that failed under their own watch. "You claimed you were creating wonders with Kaleshwaram. But you designed it, you built it, and it collapsed during your regime," he charged. He alleged that key barrages - Medigadda, Annaram, and Sundilla - were barely functional, even though the BRS government projected the project as a monumental success. "Despite these structures being non-functional, Telangana achieved record paddy production during Vanakalam season. That was due to the resilience of our farmers, not because of your failed structures," he remarked. Uttam Kumar Reddy further said BRS leaders were misleading the public and attempting to survive on "lies and mistakes. He stated, "BRS wants to deceive the farmers yet again. But that will not work anymore. They betrayed the very people they claimed to serve. Countering allegations that the NDSA report was politically motivated, Uttam Kumar Reddy clarified that the NDSA is a central agency comprising the country's top dam safety experts."

Terrorism grim reminder of need for unified global response: Vice Prez Dhankhar

GNS News Agency, April 25

New Delhi: Vice President Jagdeep Dhankhar on Friday said the Pahalgam attack is a grim reminder that terrorism is a global menace to be addressed by humanity in unison. Addressing the Inaugural Session of the Conference of Vice-Chancellors of State, Central and Private Universities of Tamil Nadu, Dhankhar expressed confidence that under Prime Minister Narendra Modi's leadership, the nation's rise would not be handicapped by any situation -- internal or external. "We must take a resolve to always keep nation first, national interests cannot be intertwined with partisan interests, it has to be uppermost. This cannot be subservient to any interest -- political, personal or for a group," he said. Touching upon the transformative National Education Policy, the Vice President said: "After three decades, taking into consideration input from the widest spectrum of stakeholders, there was the evolution of the National Education Policy. This policy aligns with our civilisation ethos. It encour-

ages multidisciplinary learning. It gives priority to Indian languages. It envisions education as the development of the person, not just employability." Highlighting the policy's features, he said: "The most significant aspect of the National Education Policy is that it allows students to learn in their mother tongue." Vice President Dhankhar said the policy has got us out of the colonial regime. "Even medicine and engineering in local languages, which could not be entertained even in dreams, is getting shape on the ground," he said. Calling upon institutions to study and adopt the policy in full spirit, he urged: "I beseech you all and the faculty and directors, wherever they are to please do a thorough study of National Education Policy to realise its real intent and purpose so that we reap the harvest of it." He further underscored the importance of changing academic landscape saying: "Today, not only Bharat but the entire world is faced with formidable challenges, rapid technological disruption... one challenge which the vice-chancellors must be facing is faculty. Faculty availability, faculty retention, and sometimes faculty addition.

Revanth govt showing negligence in procurement of paddy: Harish Rao

Hyderabad, April 25 Former minister Harish Rao today alleged that the State government was showing extreme negligence in the procurement of paddy in the State. He visited a paddy procurement center in Palamakula village of Nangunur mandal from Siddipet distri Speaking on the occasion, he alleged that the farmers were selling their paddy to middlemen due to the State government not setting up the paddy procurement

centers in districts like Khammam, Nalgonda and Suryapet. While the support price per quintal is Rs 2,320, they are forced to selling the paddy to middlemen for only Rs 2,000 and Rs 2,100 per quintal. The farmers are in a dire situation of selling the paddy to middlemen in the fields due to fear of untimely rains and hailstorms. Last year, it was said it would collect a total of 1.53 lakh metric tons of paddy during the monsoon season, but it was able to collect only 52,000 metric tons.

Fire breaks out in records room at Satavahana University in Karimnagar

Karimnagar: Fire broke out in the records rooms of Satavahana University on Friday. Exact reason for the fire accident is not yet known. Though the university authorities tried to shift records to other rooms, question papers and other important records were burnt in flames. Knowing about the incident, fire service department officials rushed to the spot and calmed down flames by deploying two fire engines.

On Thursday, there was also a fire accident that took place in the forest area of the university and flames had spread near the commerce building, boys hostel and health center.

C M Revanth Reddy mourns the passing of eminent scientist Dr Krishnaswamy Kasturirangan

GNS News Agency, April 25

Hyderabad: The Chief Minister of Telangana, A. Revanth Reddy, has expressed deep sorrow over the demise of renowned scientist and former ISRO Chairman, Padma Vibhushan Dr Krishnaswamy Kasturirangan.

He paid tribute to Dr Kasturirangan's invaluable services to India's space research sector. He fondly recalled his instrumental role in the successful launches of the PSLV and GSLV during his tenure as Chairman of ISRO from 1994 to 2003, stating that the nation will never forget his contributions. Revanth Reddy further noted that Dr Kasturirangan had served the nation with distinction in various prominent roles, including as a Rajya Sabha member, Vice Chancellor of Jawaharlal Nehru University, Secretary of the Department of Space, and a member of the Planning Commission. He said that India has lost a great astrophysicist and a visionary leader in the field of science and



technology. He prayed for the departed soul to rest in peace and extended his heartfelt condolences to Dr Kasturirangan's family during this time of grief.

Kashmiri locals demand peace, developments over war and conflicts



GNS News Agency, April 25

Hyderabad: Immediately after the Pahalgam attack, Jammu and Kashmir witnessed a show of unity and resilience, as locals stood in solidarity with the victims. Front pages of major newspapers in the State were printed in black as a mark of protest while the entire region was shut observing a black day in order to seek justice for the victims. In videos that went viral on social media platforms, the locals were seen expressing their grief and collectively rejecting the violence and accusations against them. They criticized the attempts by a section of the media and a narrative that tried to unfairly blame the locals, accusing them of links with acts of terrorism. In one of the videos that are now go-

ing viral, the locals were heard saying: "The attackers have no religion and lack humanity. We too want peace and development." In another video, a local was seen asserting that the people of Pahalgam too were Indians who were hurt by the incident.

"We strongly condemn the accusations of colluding with the terrorists. We are Indians," he said. The locals also vocally blamed the security lapses and absence of adequate checkpoints and police personnel in tourist-heavy areas as a major reason behind the attack. "Kashmiri locals also died during the attack. We are not responsible for the heinous attack, we are a Union Territory and the security is the responsibility of the government," said a local while talking to a leading news channel. Meanwhile, the tourists expressed happiness over the locals extending help and providing them with food and shelter. The tourists, in videos on social media, said the locals and hotel owners opened their houses for shelter, while the autos and taxis offered free rides to the railway stations and airports. Many locals, highlighting that tourism was vital to Kashmir's economy, advocated for safety and security and called for a strict action against the attackers. Every Kashmiri, irrespective of their religion echoed the same emotion- desire for peace and development. Their voice is now getting louder than a few television channels who have been trying to create religious divides using the Pahalgam attack.

India's steel industry poised for global growth, focus on FTAs and self-reliance: Piyush Goyal

GNS News Agency, April 25

Mumbai: India's steel industry is set to play a significant role in meeting both domestic and global demand, Union Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal said on Friday. The minister emphasised India's position as a highly efficient, cost-effective, and high-quality producer of steel, asserting that the sector will not only cater to India's growing needs but also contribute significantly to global demand in an increasingly competitive environment. "The country is actively pursuing free trade agreements (FTAs) with countries and regional blocs, including the European Union (EU), the United Kingdom (UK), the United States (US), and New Zealand, to gain greater access for its steel products," Goyal said at the sidelines of the Steel India 2025 event here. "India is consistently focused on self-reliance (Atmanirbharta). But when we talk about Atmanirbharta, we are not closing the doors to the world. We are, in fact, opening the doors wider because every country will have its competitive advantages for different products," the minister said. India is currently negotiating 10-12 such agreements to ensure that its steel, known for its cost-effectiveness and high quality, is avail-



able to international markets, the Union Minister added.

Goyal also mentioned that India's steel industry is well-positioned to contribute to the growing needs of the world while also addressing the needs of domestic consumers. "The government remains vigilant and proactive in protecting the steel industry against unfair trading practices," he stated.

Pakistan doing West's dirty work for decades: Pakistan Defence Minister

GNS News Agency, April 25

Pakistan Defence Minister Khawaja Asif has admitted the country's history of supporting, training and funding terrorist organisations as "dirty work" for the West, a mistake for which he said Pakistan had suffered. In an interview with Sky News aired overnight, news presenter Yalda Hakim questioned Mr. Asif on Pakistan's response and stance on terrorism in the aftermath of the terrorist attack in Pahalgam that killed 26 people earlier this week. "You do admit, sir, that Pakistan has had a long history of backing and supporting and training and funding these terrorist organisations," asked Ms. Hakim. "Well, we have been doing this dirty work for the United States for about three decades, you know, and the West, including Britain," replied Mr. Asif. "That was a mistake, and we suffered from that, and that is why you are saying this to me. If we had not joined

the war against the Soviet Union and later on the war after 9/11, Pakistan's track record... was an unimpeachable track record," he said.

Asked if Pakistan fears an escalation as a result of the Pahalgam terrorist attack, the Minister said the country is prepared to respond "in kind". "We will measure our response to whatever is initiated by India, according to that.

It would be a measured response, if there is an all-out attack or something like that, then obviously there will be an all-out war," he said in the virtual interview.

Terrorists opened fire in Pahalgam on Tuesday afternoon, killing 26 people, mostly tourists, in the deadliest attack in the Valley since the Pulwama strike in 2019. The Resistance Front (TRF), a proxy of the banned Pakistan-based Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT), claimed responsibility for the attack.

Indian Chronicle

English Daily

Pahalgam aftermath

The Pahalgam terror attack is an act of sheer desperation that bears the stamp of the usual suspect — Pakistan. A nation itself being lacerated by terrorism is persisting with its nefarious policy of bleeding India with a thousand cuts through state and non-state actors. The Resistance Front, a proxy of the banned Pakistan-based Lashkar-e-Taiba, has claimed responsibility for the dastardly assault on civilians, mostly tourists. The audacity of it all is a chilling throwback to the Lashkar-plotted carnage that rocked Mumbai — and India — in 2008. It's no coincidence that the attack comes in the wake of 26/11 accused Tahawwur Rana's extradition from the US and Pakistan Army Chief Gen Asim Munir's anti-India tirade. Gen Munir virtually prepared the ground for the April 22 horror when he described Kashmir as his nation's "jugular vein" last week. Even as Baloch insurgency is giving him and his military sleepless nights, he chose to rake up the wo-nation theory and claimed that Hindus and Muslims had nothing in common. Targeting of non-Muslims — and that too during US Vice-President JD Vance's India visit — makes it obvious that the terrorists and their handlers have thrown down the gauntlet at the BJP-led government. Notably, Pakistan has condoned the deaths of tourists, but stopped short of condemning the attack. The terror incidents in Uri (2016) and Pulwama (2019) were followed by a fierce cross-border retaliation from India. Will the Pahalgam massacre trigger a similar enough-is-enough response? The Modi government, which prides itself on its muscularity, is under intense pressure to teach Pakistan a lesson all over again. On the diplomatic front, it's a big opportunity for New Delhi to name and shame Islamabad in the international arena. Rana's interrogation is expected to reaffirm India's consistent stand that Pakistan is an incorrigible epicentre of terrorism. The outcome of the Pahalgam probe will lend even greater weight to Delhi's argument.

Oilseed cultivation should be encouraged: District Collector Jitesh V. Patil.



"April 24, Indian Chronicle, Bhadrachalam" District Collector Jitesh V. Patil said that the cultivation of oilseeds should be encouraged in the district and the cultivation area should be increased. On Thursday, a review meeting of the Oilseed Mission District Level Committee was held. Speaking on the occasion, the Collector said that farmers should be made aware of the cultivation of oilseeds such as groundnut, sunflower, sesame, etc. in the financial year 2025-26. He ordered the Agriculture Department officials to take steps to increase the area under oilseed cultivation in the district and achieve high yields and ensure economic development of farmers. He said that by increasing the cultivation of oilseeds, the income of farmers will also increase.



He said that farmers should be made aware of the fact that the land can be fertilized by alternating the cultivation of oilseeds with the cultivation of other crops. He said that the use of water and fertilizers in the cultivation of oilseeds is less compared to other crops, and through this, farmers can achieve higher profits.

The Collector suggested that oilseed cultivation is beneficial for the farmers in all respects, as it is less costly to cultivate and less prone to pests. Agriculture Department Officer Baburao, Horticulture Department Officer Kishore Babu, KVK Scientist Narayanamma, Lead Bank Manager Ramireddy, and other concerned officials participated in this meeting.

The OP Smartphone – OPPO K13 5G Goes on Sale

Hyderabad:OPPO India's recently launched smartphone, the OPPO K13 5G has made its mark as an "OP Performer" in the segment and now it's ready to go on sale starting tomorrow i.e. 25th April 2025 on the OPPO e-store and Flipkart from 12 PM onwards. Engineered to deliver an OverPowered performance with class-leading power efficiency and premium user experience, the OPPO K13 also comes with exciting limited-time offers for early buyers.

Pricing and Launch Offers

Priced at INR 17,999 for the 8GB+128GB variant and INR 19,999 for the 8GB+256GB variant, the OPPO K13 5G will be available for purchase starting tomorrow i.e. 25th April 2025 on the OPPO e-store and Flipkart from 12 PM onwards, in two colour options – Icy Purple and Prism Black. Consumers purchasing the smartphone can avail an INR 1000 instant discount only on the sale day with select bank offers or with an exchange bonus of INR 1000, bringing the effective price at INR 16,999 and INR 18,999, respectively. Additional launch offers include No Cost EMI for up to six months, further enhancing the overall value proposition of the OPPO K13 5G. Segment-Leading 7000mAh Graphite Battery Backed by 80W SuperVOOC Fast Charging

Setting a new benchmark in its class, the OPPO K13 features a massive 7000mAh graphite battery that's not only large but engineered for the long run. With over 1800 charge-discharge cycles and an estimated lifespan of five years, the battery outperforms traditional silicon and carbide-based alternatives, offering better thermal management, safety, and longevity. The 80W SUPERVOOC™ fast charging charges the phone to 62% in 30 minutes, reaching 100% in under an hour. Just a 5-minute charge can deliver up to 4 hours of gaming. Real-world usage includes 49.4 hours of talk time, 10.3 hours of gaming, 15.1 hours of video stream-



ing, and 32.7 hours of music playback, making the OPPO K13 a true battery champion.

OverPowered Performance with Snapdragon® 6 Gen 4 Under the hood, the OPPO K13 is just as impressive. Powered by the Snapdragon 6 Gen 4 platform, it delivers an AnTuTu score of over 790,000—outperforming competing MediaTek Dimensity 7300 and 7300 Ultra chipsets. Whether you're gaming, streaming, or switching between apps, the K13 offers a smooth, responsive, and energy-efficient experience that makes it ideal for multitaskers and power users.

EGS WORKERS STAGERALLY DEMANDING RELEASE OF PENDING WAGES.



"P.S.ASHOKAN"INDIAN CHRONICLE"MANTHANI. APRIL 26. "Eglaspor (Manthani Mandal): Employment Guarantee Scheme (EGS) workers organized a large rally on Thursday under the banner of the Agricultural Workers Union, demanding the immediate release of pending wages. "Addressing the gathering, union representative Mr. Boodida Ganesh stated that despite three months having passed since the commencement of EGS works, workers have not received their wages. He expressed concern over the financial hardship faced by laborers who rely solely on daily earnings for survival. "Mr. Ganesh further added that not only workers, but also field assistants and other staff employed under the scheme, have been waiting for their salaries for the past four months, which has caused significant distress. "He urged the state government to respond without delay, take into account the difficulties being faced by agricultural workers, and ensure the immediate release of all pending payments, including wages for both laborers and scheme staff. "A large number of EGS workers participated in the rally, raising slogans and demanding justice.

FARMERS WILL GET MINIMUM SUPPORT PRICE ONLY AT GOVERNMENT PROCUREMENT CENTRES: KOTHA SRINIVAS.



"P.S.ASHOKAN"INDIAN CHRONICLE"MANTHANI APRIL, 26. "Manthani: The Minimum Support Price (MSP) for paddy will be available to farmers only through the government-established procurement centres, said Kotha Srinivas, Chairman of the Manthani Single Window Committee. "On Friday, Mr. Srinivas inaugurated paddy procurement centres at Potharam and Mallepalli villages. These centres have been set up under the supervision of the Primary Agricultural Cooperative Society, Manthani. "Speaking on the occasion, he advised farmers not to sell their paddy to private agents or middlemen. Instead, he urged them to utilize the official centres to ensure they receive the MSP—Rs. 2,320 per quintal for Grade-A paddy and Rs. 2,300 for the common variety. "He also stated that, acting on the instructions of Minister for IT, Industries, and Legislative Affairs, Duddilla Sridhar Babu, a total of 35 procurement centres have been opened across the mandal through cooperative societies to ensure hassle-free procurement. "The inaugural event saw participation from PACS Directors Dasari Lakshmi—Mondayya, Udutha Madhavi—Parvathal Yadav, Devalla Vijay Kumar, Kisan Cell District President Muskula Surender Reddy, former Municipal Chairperson Pendli Rama—Suresh Reddy, and local leaders Jagiraji Sadanandam, Erukala Madhu, Edda Premeela, Thallapalli Satyanarayana, among others.

Mr. Uday Krishna Reddy Visits RC Reddy IAS Study Circle to Inspire Future Aspirants



Hyderabad:Mr. Uday Krishna Reddy, who recently achieved All India 350 Rank in the UPSC CSE 2024 examinations, visited RC Reddy IAS Study Circle to share his inspiring journey from Constable to IPS Officer. His visit was warmly welcomed by Mr. RC Reddy, Founder of the study circle, and Mrs. Sanghamitra, Assistant Director. Mr. Uday Krishna Reddy, hailing from a small rural village in Prakasham District, Andhra Pradesh, began his IAS preparation at RC Reddy IAS Study Circle as a Group 2 Telugu medium student in 2015. He claims that the group 2 coaching he received at RC Reddy IAS Study Circle was his strong foundation to achieve Civil Services. Despite facing setbacks in his first attempt in 2019, where he narrowly missed qualifying by just 9 marks, he persevered to achieve his goal. He credited his grandmother, a humble vegetable seller, with instilling the importance of education and supporting him throughout his academic journey. During his visit, Mr. Uday Krishna Reddy offered words of encouragement to the youth, emphasizing the importance of willpower and dedication. "Don't leave your willpower until you achieve your goals. If you aspire to become an IAS or IPS officer, remain resolute and focused," he urged. Addressing concerns about corruption, he outlined his commitment to transparency, stating, "After taking office, I will display my direct contact number to be accessible to the public and address their problems directly, ensuring a corruption-free approach." Additionally, Mr. Reddy announced his plans to initiate a pet service similar to ambulance services for humans, reflecting his dedication to community welfare. Mr. Uday Krishna Reddy's visit served as a powerful reminder of the potential within every aspirant and the transformative impact of perseverance and integrity.

Bharat Summit begins on grand scale, showcases Telangana culture

Hyderabad, April 25 The two-day 'Bharat Summit 2025', a prominent global event, commenced on a grand scale at HICC Novotel on Friday. Over 450 representatives from more than 100 nations participated in this international conference. Upon arriving at Bharat Summit, the delegates received a remarkable welcome that showcased the culture of Telangana. Senior leaders of the Congress party greeted them with traditional culture of bonalu and dappu sounds. During the event, a dedicated stall was established to provide information about the various welfare initiatives being carried out by the Telangana government, offering attendees a detailed overview of the state's policies and programs. On the first day, discussions centered around topics such as Gender Justice and Feminist Futures, Facts vs Fiction (countering disinformation), Youth and politics of tomorrow and Shaping New Multilateralism. Congress senior leaders, including Salman Khurshid, Digvijay Singh, Telangana AICC In-charge Meenakshi Natarajan, TPCC President Mahesh Kumar Goud, Deputy Chief Minister Bhatti Vikramarka, Ministers Ponnamp Prabhakar, Duddilla Sridhar Babu, Jugal Krishna Rao, Ponguleti Srinivasa Reddy, MPs, MLAs, MLCs and senior leaders attended the first-day event.

Sagara Sangam President Shekhar Sagar holds a candlelight rally in protest against the Pahalgam attack.



"Gachibowli April 25: Telangana Sagara Sangam State President Uppari Shekhar Sagar said that the attack by Pakistan-inspired terrorists on tourists in Pahalgam, Jammu and Kashmir, on the country's border, was a cowardly act. Under the auspices of Sagara Sangam, a candlelight vigil was held in Gachibowli Anjaiah Nagar to protest the terrorist attacks and displayed placards against the terrorists. After organizing a candlelight rally, Telangana Sagara

Sangam State President Uppari Shekhar Sagar said that the world needs to isolate Pakistan, which is encouraging terrorist organizations that are creating genocide. He appealed to the Center not to establish diplomatic relations with Pakistan, which has created genocide by brutally shooting dead 28 tourists. He opined that India should not cooperate in any way with the Pakistani government, which is promoting terrorist organizations. He said that all Hindus in this country should understand that identifying and killing Hindus without any hindrance is a necessity and there is a need for awareness even now. "They demanded that individuals who support Pakistan-sponsored terrorist organizations be identified and expelled from the country. They declared that their community fully supports the central government in any tough action taken against Pakistani terrorists. The program, held under the auspices of Anjaiah Nagar Sagara Sangam President Chennaiya Sagar, was attended by Greater Hyderabad Sagara Sangam President Modala Ravi Sagar, State Vice President Anjaneyulu Sagar, Greater Hyderabad Sagara Sangam General Secretary Avula Venkat Ramulu Sagar, Treasurer Dindi Ramaswamy Sagar, Greater Youth Association President Erram Shetty Sitaram Sagar, Sagara Sangam Anjaiah Nagar General Secretary Gaddapara Ravinder Sagar, Treasurer Ravikumar Sagar, State Women's Association Executive Secretary Chandrakala Sagar, Anjaiah Nagar Women's Association President CH Radha Sagar, Association senior leaders Gouni Manyamkonda Sagar, Anjaiah Nagar Youth Association President KP Venkatesh Sagar, General Secretary Gouni Satyam Sagar and others.

AMIT SHAH DIRECTS STATES TO DEPORT PAKISTANI NATIONALS; OVER 200 IDENTIFIED IN HYDERABAD.

"P.S.ASHOKAN"INDIAN CHRONICLE"MANTHANI APRIL 26. "In response to the recent terrorist attack in Pahalgam, Union Home Minister Amit Shah has issued clear instructions to all state governments to identify and deport Pakistani nationals living illegally in India. "Amit Shah personally contacted the Chief Ministers of several states, urging them to take immediate action on the matter.

"In Hyderabad, police have identified over 200 Pakistani nationals living in the city. Authorities have declared a high alert and have begun the process to send these individuals back to their home country.



pays tributes to padma vibhushan Dr KrishnaSwamy kasturirangan “



“April 25, Indian Chronicle Rayalaseema coordinator” Sri Venkateswara University expresses its profound grief on the passing of Padma Vibhushan Dr. Krishnaswamy Kasturirangan, former Chairman of the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) and eminent architect of India’s space and education policies. Dr. Kasturirangan passed away earlier today in Bengaluru at the age of 84. “Recalling the long-standing association with Dr. Kasturirangan, the Hon’ble I/c Vice-Chancellor, Prof. Ch. Appa Rao, stated that Sri Venkateswara University had the honour of conferring upon him the honorary degree of Doctor of Science (D.Sc.) during its convocation in 1996, in recognition of his outstanding contributions to

Space Science and National Development. “Further cementing his relationship with the University, Dr. Kasturirangan graciously accepted the invitation to serve as the Chief Guest for the convocation held in June 2022. At the time, he was serving as the Chairman of the committee responsible for formulating the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 — a landmark reform initiative aimed at transforming India’s education system for the 21st century. His address during the ceremony inspired the academic community and students alike with his visionary insights. “Dr. Kasturirangan’s distinguished tenure at ISRO from 1994 to 2003 marked a transformative era in India’s space programme, with significant strides made in satellite technology, launch vehicle development, and strategic space missions. His subsequent roles, including as a Member of the Planning Commission, Member of Parliament (Rajya Sabha), and Chancellor of prestigious institutions, reflect his unwavering commitment to National progress through Science and education.”

“The Nation has lost one of its most revered scientific minds and thought leaders,” said Prof. Ch. Appa Rao. “Dr. Kasturirangan was not only a titan in the field of space science but also a cherished well-wisher of Sri Venkateswara University. His passing is an irreparable loss to the scientific and academic communities.” Sri Venkateswara University extends its heartfelt condolences to the bereaved family and joins the Nation in mourning the loss of an exceptional visionary whose contributions will continue to guide generations to come.

old condolence meeting for Pahalgam victims

“April 25, Indian Chronicle Rayalaseema coordinator” A condolence meeting was conducted today at Sri Venkateswara University to mourn the tragic loss of innocent lives in the recent terrorist attack on tourists at Pahalgam. The meeting, held on today at 9:00 AM at the Administrative Building, was attended by the Prof. Ch. Appa Rao, I/c Vice-Chancellor, Prof. M. Bhupathi Naidu, Registrar, faculty, non-teaching staff, and students of the University. “Prof. Ch. Appa Rao, I/c Vice-Chancellor of University expressed deep sorrow over the tragic incident, extending heartfelt condolences to the victims’ families. He emphasized the importance of National Unity, compassion, and solidarity during such difficult times. “This is not a time for blame, but for coming together as a Nation,” he stated. “Registrar Prof. M. Bhupathi Naidu also addressed the gathering, calling the incident a heartbreaking tragedy. He conveyed solidarity with the bereaved families and reiterated the importance of standing united during such moments of National crisis. “In respect for the departed souls,



the entire University community observed a one-minute silence. “The event highlighted the university’s unwavering commitment to peace, unity, and the values of humanity.

Olectra Greentech Ltd launches its cutting-edge GFRP Rebar

Hyderabad, April 25 In a major technological breakthrough for the infrastructure sector, Olectra Greentech Limited, a pioneer in electric mobility solutions in India, has launched its cutting-edge GFRP Rebar (Glass Fiber Reinforced Polymer Rebar) during the prestigious MEIL Budget Meet. This innovation marks a paradigm shift in concrete reinforcement, offering unmatched strength, durability and sustainability.

The revolutionary GFRP Rebar was officially launched by MEIL Managing Director P.V. Krishna Reddy, in the presence of Olectra CMD KV Pradeep, MEIL Group Directors CH. Subbiah and B. Srinivas Reddy. Engineered with ECR Glass and Epoxy Resin, the Olectra FRP Rebar offers significant advantages over traditional steel reinforcement. It delivers an impressive ultimate tensile strength of 950–1100 MPa, making it nearly twice as strong as traditional steel

reinforcement. Being four times lighter than steel, it ensures ease of handling and transportation. Additionally, its non-corrosive, non-magnetic, non-conductive, and water-resistant properties make it an ideal choice for a wide range of applications, especially in harsh and demanding environments, said K.V. Pradeep, Chairman and Managing Director of Olectra. Olectra’s GFRP Rebar is poised to transform the concrete reinforcement landscape with its wide range of applications, including marine structures, pavements, bridge decks, industrial flooring, precast elements, Substation Civil Structures and drainage facilities. In 2024 alone, India consumed nearly 50 million tons of TMT steel rebar. With its advanced properties and unmatched durability, Olectra’s GFRP Rebar presents a strong and sustainable alternative, ready to meet the evolving demands of modern infrastructure.

Mango farmers suffer due to low yield



Hyderabad, April 25 : We all know that the king of fruits is mango. It is not an exaggeration to say that there are people, who are waiting for the arrival of summer just for the sake of the mangoes that feast their eyes with various colors in the bright sun. No matter how many types of fruits are in the market, mango is at the top. Such a king has faced many difficulties during this season. Adverse weather conditions have become an obstacle to the mango cultivation. Even though mid-summer has arrived, mangoes are not seen in the market very much. The Mangoes are grown in a total area of 3 lakh acres in the state and in 24,584 acres in the undivided Nalgonda district. The Mangoes are grown in 11,460 acres in Suryapet district, 10,874 acres in Yadadri district, and 2,250 acres in Nalgonda district. In the joint district, the Banginapalli variety is grown the most with a 95 percent coverage. The mango varieties like Daseri, Himayat, Kesari, Mallika are being used for eating and juice varieties and sugarcane juices, like Jalal, Neelam, and Tella Gulabi varieties are being used for pickles. A farmer from Kollapur of Mahabubnagar district. Chandrudu said this year was a tough time for Kollapur in Nagarkurnool district of the State although it is famous for its mangoes.

The Banginapalli mango grown in this area is called Benisa. The Mangoes are mostly exported to other countries from this area. Banginapalli is also being grown in the joint district. The farmers have suffered losses this year due to the expected level of yield. Normally, when the month of March arrives in summer, the arrival of mangoes start. This time, although the month of April is ending, these fruits are not seen in the market at the expected level. This year, it has been a tough time for the mangoes. The Mangoes reach the flowering stage in January. This time, the blossoming took place in February. The Scientists say that due to the snowfall until March, honeydew and powdery mildew caused severe damage to the fruits during the blossoming stage. Usually, mango yields 5-6 tons per acre. This year, the yield did not exceed 2-3 tons,” he said. He said that Problems in mango ownership, water shortage, and inability to withstand the weather as most of the orchards were

planted about 20 years ago had become the main problems for the low production of the mangoes. The Farmers say that due to high temperatures and strong winds this summer, even after the fruit reaches the size of the fruit, the main problem was that the fruits fall from the fruit stage. They are expressing their grief that the investments made by them had not been received due to the low yield. Due to the unseasonal rains, the mango farmers in Kollapur have suffered heavy losses and are appealing to the government to bail them out of the crisis. The Mangoes are extensively cultivated in the district covering an area of over 33,000 acres. Of these, nearly 23,000 acres fall under the limits of four mandals in Kollapur region. Although the yields are decreasing every year, the prices of the mangoes in the market have increased to some extent, which has helped the farmers. Currently, there is no large quantity of the mangoes in the market, but the price has gone down. Last year, the price of the mangoes was up to Rs. 150 per kg but today the mangoes are being sold for up to Rs. 100 per kg depending on the size. The Traders are saying that the price is not increasing due to lack of demand for the mangoes. The Farmers are saying that there is no surplus for them as they are getting only Rs. 30-40 per kg as their earning.

Donation of Rs.One Crore to SV Annaprasadam Trust



April 25, Indian Chronicle Rayalaseema coordinator” Hyderabad based, Aparna Enterprises Limited (Vitero Tiles) has donated Rs.One crore to the Sri Venkateswara Annaprasadam Trust on Friday. “A DD for the same amount was handed over to the TTD Chairman Sri B.R. Naidu at his Camp Office in Tirumala by the company representative Sri B Ramesh.

Student loses Rs 2.6 lakh to scammers!

Hyderabad, April 25 (NSS): A 23-years-old student from city was searching for avocados to buy online via the Just Dial app and came across a supplier named Balaji Traders, who claimed to deliver avocados from Vijayawada. The victim was contacted by representatives of Balaji Traders, who later turned out to be scammers.

The scammers initially claimed that the avocados would be delivered, but requested money to cover fuel expenses. The victim agreed and transferred the amount. Subsequently, the scammers stated that their delivery vehicle had broken down and required repairs, they even sent a photo claiming to be from the scene of an accident and requested more money, which the victim again paid. The scammers then said they were just 10 km away from the delivery location but had been stopped by traffic police, for which they again asked for money. The victim complied. Later, the scammer claimed that his son had misused the

earlier transferred funds, and he urgently needed money for personal emergencies. To gain the victim’s trust, the scammer apologized and even sent a photo of a cheque to assure repayment. The victim was asked to provide his bank account details for the refund.

Despite initial hesitation, the victim eventually transferred more money, believing the cheque was genuine. However, the scammer continued asking for money under various pretexts, including additional charges and GST avoidance by involving a third-party intermediary. When the victim finally refused to send any more money and confronted the scammer, he was threatened with dire consequences and told the cheque would not be sent unless further payments were made. Fearing repercussions and hesitant to inform his parents, the victim continued making transfers under pressure. Thus, the victim lost ₹2,60,000/-. The victim has now filed a complaint and is seeking assistance.

MANAGE achieves 100% Placements for its Agri-Business Management students

Hyderabad, April 25 MANAGE continues its outstanding legacy of 100% placements since two decades, successfully concluding the final placements for the 28th batch of its Post Graduate Diploma in Management (Agri-Business Management) - PGDM (ABM) for 2023-2025. Despite a significant increase of 51.5% in batch size from 66 to 100 students, the institute once again demonstrated its excellence by securing placements for all students across leading agribusiness sectors. This dual success reflects the relentless efforts of our students, faculty, and the placement team.

A felicitation ceremony was held on campus on March 27, graced by Dr Sagar Hanuman Singh, IPOS, Director General, MANAGE; Dr K. Anand Reddy, Principal Coordinator, PGDM-ABM; Dr K. Krishna Reddy, Director (ICT), Head (SABM), MANAGE and P. Bharathi Rani, Placement Coordinator. The highest CTC offered is ₹21.00 LPA, with an average CTC of 12.38 LPA and a median of ₹12.00 LPA.

Britannia Industries Ltd emerged paying recruiter.

Other premier recruiters included ITC (FBD), Olam, Amul, EY India, and CRISIL, alongside top agri-input companies such as BASF, Coromandel, PI Industries, and KRIBHCO. Companies from sectors like animal nutrition (DeHeus India, Nutreco), renewable energy (Reliance Bio Energy), commodity trading (Arya.ag, NCEL), and BFSI (IndusInd Bank, IDFC First Bharat, Tyger Capital) also participated. A total of 45 companies recruited, including 20 new recruiters. The sector-wise distribution of placements is as follows: Agri-Input: 32.00%, FMCG: 18.00%, Animal Nutrition: 12.00%, BFSI: 11.00%, Commodity Trading: 9.00%, Renewable Energy: 9.00%, Consultancy: 4.00%, F&V Procurement: 4.00%, and Development: 1.00%. Dr Sagar Hanuman Singh congratulated the Placement Committee, faculty, alumni, and staff for this collective achievement. He also extended gratitude to the recruiters for their continued trust in MANAGE’s academic strength and its industry-ready professionals. We extend our best wishes to the graduating batch (PGDM-ABM 2023-2025) for their future endeavours

OATH CEREMONY OF MANTHANI TOWN ARYA VYSYA ASSOCIATION.



“P.S.ASHOKAN”INDIAN CHRONICLE”MANTHANI APRIL,26.”“The Manthani Town Arya Vysya Association held its oath-taking ceremony on April 24th, marking the formal induction of its newly elected executive members. The event was attended by prominent community members and well-wishers who extended their support and best wishes to the new team.”“During the ceremony, the following individuals officially assumed their responsibilities:”“President: Ellanki Vamsidhar, who will lead the association with a focus on unity, service, and commu-

nity development.”“General Secretary: Keshhetti Ramesh, entrusted with managing the administrative activities and coordinating community programs.”“Treasurer: Ravikanti Manohar, responsible for handling the financial matters of the association with transparency and accountability.”“The newly appointed office bearers expressed their gratitude to the community for their trust and pledged to work collectively for the upliftment and welfare of the Arya Vysya community in Manthani. The association aims to organize various cultural, social, and welfare initiatives in the upcoming term.

Journalists of Telangana invited to participate in “Sundays on Cycle” under Fit India Mission

Hyderabad, April 25 The Fit India Mission, a flagship initiative by the Government of India, continues to inspire citizens towards healthier lifestyles by promoting regular physical activity and fitness. In alignment with the Prime Minister’s call to combat lifestyle-related health challenges, the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports announced a special edition of “Sundays on Cycle” to be held on April 27, across the State of Telangana. As part of the ongoing Fit India Cycling Drive, which was inaugurated by the Union Minister of Youth Affairs and Sports, Mansukh Mandaviya, on December 17, 2024, this special edition aims to further encourage the adoption of cycling as a sustainable, envi-

ronment-friendly, and health-conscious mode of transport. The campaign is designed to bring communities together through cycle rallies and fitness events, promoting awareness about physical well-being, environmental care, and social cohesion. In this regard, the Secretary (Sports), Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports, requests all journalists across Telangana to actively enroll and participate in this important event. All participating journalists are requested to register at the official FIT INDIA portal: <https://fitindia.gov.in/fit-india-cycling-drive>. Upon successful completion of the event, participants will receive an official Participation Certificate.

DA case registered against MVI Mohd Ghouse Pasha

Hyderabad, April 25 : Case of Disproportionate Assets registered against Mohd Ghouse Pasha, Motor Vehicle Inspector FAC District Transport Officer, Mahabubabad District (under suspension). A case of Disproportionate Assets to the known sources of income was registered against Mohd Ghouse Pasha, Motor Vehicle Inspector, FAC District Transport Officer, Mahabubabad (U/s) as he has acquired assets by indulging in corrupt practices and dubious means during his service. Q As this is an offence punishable U/Sec 13 (1) (b) r/w 13(2) of the Prevention of Corruption Act, 1988 (as amended in 2018), searches were conducted on April 25, 2025 at his house and other four various places belonging to him and his family members.

During the searches, property documents related to houses, open plots and agriculture lands were found i.e. two house documents worth Rs 26.85,000/-, 25 open plot documents worth Rs 2,28,29,168/-, documents related to agriculture lands worth Rs 55,98,736/- were found in the names of AO and his family members.

The market value is expected to be much higher than



the official value. Furthermore, household articles worth Rs 7,03,805/-, one Car and two-two wheeler vehicles worth Rs 32,90,000/- were found. The total assets are estimated to be about Rs 3,51,06,759/- Further verification of additional assets is underway.

MLC Kavitha unveils a sculpture of BRS chief KCR Saikata

"Serilingampalli April 25 MLC Kavitha unveiled the Saikata sculpture installed on the shore of Puri in connection with the Silver Jubilee Celebration organized by BRS. Ravinder Yadav of Serilingampalli installed a Saikata sculpture in the name of Chalo Warangal Sabha on the shore of Puri in Odisha. Along with the portrait of the leader KCR, details related to the 25-year reign of Chalo Warangal were mentioned in it. Ravinder Yadav explained the video related to the Saikata sculpture installed requesting everyone in Telangana to come to the gathering together with MLC Kavitha. After watching the Saikata sculpture video, he gave a book saying that it was very good. MLC Kavitha released the video related to it along with Ravinder Yadav. On this occasion, details related to Puri were asked. Also, MLC Kavitha suggested to Ravinder Yadav that people from Serilingampalli should come in large numbers and take care of them from all sides. It was made clear that the Serilingampalli Pink Army should come to show the spirit of the movement. Ravinder Yadav told Kavitha on this occasion that a large number of people would come to the meeting. He made it clear that everyone would come from their constituency to their homes.



DGP swings into action after HM Amit Shah's instructions

Hyderabad, April 25 : On the orders of Union Home Minister Amit Shah, Telangana DGP Jitender got into an alert mode today. After receiving information that there were more than 200 Pakistanis staying in Hyderabad, a high alert was declared. Pakistanis in Telangana were immediately ordered to leave India. They were told that their visas would be cancelled after the 27th of this month. They were ordered to leave immediately. Medical visa holders were given a chance until the 29th of this month. They were also ordered to not stay here even for a moment after the deadline. They were warned that if they want to stay in Telangana illegally, they will not be left alone.

They were also warned that they will be taken out from the city forcibly if they fail to comply with the orders of the

Central government besides taking legal action against them. Attari-Wagah border will be open till 30th of this month for the passage of the Pakistanis. According to the police officials, there are 208 Pakistanis in Hyderabad. DGP Jitender said surveillance had been put on Pakistanis in Hyderabad. Earlier, the Centre had ordered Pakistanis to leave the country within 48 hours. To this end, Union Home Minister Amit Shah spoke to the Chief Ministers of the respective States. He suggested that arrangements be made to identify the Pakistani nationals in the respective States and send them back. He asked that Pakistanis living locally should first be identified and that information should be sent to the Centre in order to cancel their visas. In the past, many Pakistanis were given opportunities to visit India under the India-SAARC Visa Extension Scheme

Two arrested for collecting money in the name of Revenue Minister

Hyderabad, April 25 (NSS): The Nagole police have apprehended two individuals suspected of defrauding unsuspecting victims by impersonating Personal Assistants (PAs) of Revenue Minister Ponguleti Srinivasa Reddy. Bussa Venkata Reddy (34) and Maccha Suresh (30), both hailing from Warangal district and currently residing in Nagole, Hyderabad, are accused of contacting revenue officials and police officers to solicit money by pretending to be the Minister's PA. Upon learning of this fraudulent activ-

ity, the Minister lodged a complaint with the police, who subsequently conducted an investigation and arrested the two suspects involved in this unlawful activity. Minister Ponguleti Srinivasa Reddy has urged the people to reach out to his office at the Secretariat at 040-23451072 or 040-23451073 to report any calls from individuals claiming to be his PA, regardless of the situation. He emphasised that stringent actions would be taken against anyone who exploits his authority in such a manner.

Telugu language be given its due importance as second language'

Hyderabad, April 25 Professors from the Central University submitted a representation to the Director of Intermediate Education, Krishna Aditya, IAS, and the Regional Joint Director, Jayaprada Bal, requesting that the Telugu language be given its due importance as the second language at the Intermediate level in Government Junior Colleges. Regional Joint Director of Intermediate Education Jayaprada Bai clarified that the news being circulated, which claims that Sanskrit is being introduced as a replacement for Telugu, is completely baseless. As part of a recent recruitment conducted by the Telangana Public Service Commission, 10 posts for Sanskrit were filled. To identify which colleges have vacancies and to assess how many students are opting for the subject, the Director of Intermediate Edu-

cation issued a memo to gather internal information from the Principals. This memo was purely administrative in nature and should not be construed as an effort to promote Sanskrit in place of Telugu in Government Junior Colleges. The Department of Intermediate Education holds great respect and regard for the Telugu language. In the same recruitment drive, 60 new posts for Telugu were also filled. Our efforts to uphold the State's official language, Telugu, will certainly continue.

The claim that Sanskrit is being promoted as an alternative to Telugu is a false narrative. We appeal to the public to recognize that the decisions taken by the Intermediate Education Department are always in alignment with the interests and sentiments of civil society

MIM party bags Hyderabad MLC seat with 63 votes, BJP tastes defeat with 25 votes

Hyderabad, April 25 : The MIM party won the Hyderabad district local body MLC elections. In the MLC elections, the MIM party candidate Mirza Riyazul Hassan Effendi got 63 votes, while BJP candidate Gautam Rao got only 25 votes. With this, the MIM candidate won as the MLC with a majority of 38 votes.

The BJP candidate got only 25 votes in the MLC elections as per the party's strength. The MIM party candidate got 49 votes from his party and 14 votes from the Congress party taking the total number of votes polled in his favour to 63 votes. Although the BJP had pinned its hopes on the cross-voting by the Congress party leaders in the elections, no one voted in its favour leading to its humiliating defeat. A total of 78.57 percent polling was recorded in the Hyderabad district local body MLC elections. A total of 88 votes were cast out of a total of 112 votes. 66 corporators and 22 ex-officio members exercised their right to vote in the local body MLC elections. BJP, Congress, MIM corporators and ex-officio members participated in the polling. Meanwhile, the BRS party corporators and ex-officio members abstained from the voting. BJP, however, had hoped for cross-voting from the BRS party as well but suffered defeat as its hopes did not bear fruit. Meanwhile, a heavy police presence was made at the GHMC office in the backdrop of the counting of the votes. The Police forces were deployed at GHMC to prevent any tension.

After his defeat, the BJP candidate Dr Gautam Rao said at a media conference held at the Bharatiya Janata Party State office that the BJP had achieved a moral victory in the Hyderabad local body election results released on Friday. "These elections were held in a way that insulted the people of Hyderabad. It has once again been revealed today that the BRS-Congress parties are working in the footsteps of the MIM party. The Congress party is supporting the MIM party. It is known that the Congress has been in cahoots with the MIM in the last elections as well. In the Hyderabad local body elections, it supported the MIM party even though it did not field a Congress party candidate. Similarly, BRS indirectly helped the MIM party to win. It is understood that Congress-BRS parties are parties working under the watchful eye of MIM. The people of Telangana



are watching the drama of Congress-BRS parties," he said. He said they consider the call of the BRS party to boycott the MLC elections as undemocratic and unconstitutional and added that they had filed a complaint with the Election Commission. "We urge the people to protest if the BRS-Congress parties come before the people again in any election in the coming days," Rao added.

Former ISRO Chairman Kasturi Rangan passes away

"April 25, Indian Chronicle Rayalaseema coordinator" "Former ISRO Chairman K. Kasturi Rangan breathed his last on the morning of the 25th at his residence in Bangalore. Kasturi Rangan served as ISRO Chairman from 1994 to 2003. He contributed a lot to the development of PSLV & GSLV. He was also appointed as the Chairman of the National Education Policy Formulation Committee.



Jagadish Reddy slams NDSA report

Hyderabad, April 25 : Senior BRS party leader and former minister Jagadish Reddy has strongly criticized the Central government and the NDSA report today. He spoke to the media on the issue and about the arrangements for the BRS party silver jubilee meeting to be held in Warangal. He alleged that the report was prepared deliberately to harm former CM KCR. He said the report was not fully functional and added that the report was prepared for short-term pleasure and happiness.

Citing the incident in Gujarat where 150 people died in structures that collapsed before their construction was completed, he asked as to why didn't the NDSF go to Gujarat to probe the incident? Wondering whether NDSA is working only for Kaleshwaram project, he criticized that the report would only be used to throw it in the trash. He said all the

comments made on the Medigadda, Kaleshwaram and Sundilla projects were meaningless and added that the report had been changed due to the political attacks of the Central government. Commenting on the arrangements being made for the party's public meeting, he said the arrangements for the party's silver jubilee meeting to be held on the 27th of this month had been completed. Jagadish Reddy commented that although they had announced it as a BRS party silver jubilee meeting but people were seeing it as an Opposition to the Congress party's rule.

He felt that this meeting was not just a party meeting, but had become a great meeting that would reflect the dissatisfaction of the people. He said no party meeting had received such support and added that everyone knew how successful their meetings had been in the past. He explained that they were now going to rewrite those records.

Badlapur accused 'encounter': Bombay HC pulls up state for failing to register FIR against cops, directs CID to handover probe documents to SIT

GNS News Agency, April 25

Terming it as 'brazen violation' of the court directives, the Bombay High Court on Friday slammed the state government for failing to transfer the probe papers related to custodial death of the accused in Badlapur sexual assault case to the SIT and not registering an FIR, despite nearly 20 days since the high court's April 7 order. After a bench of Justices Revati Mohite-Dere and Neela K Gokhale warned the state Criminal Investigation Department (CID) of initiating contempt proceedings for not complying with its orders, Maharashtra CID chief and Additional Director General of Police (Addl DGP) Prashant Burde said to the court that the case papers will be handed over forthwith, which the court accepted.

A 23-year-old janitor, arrested in August 2024 for the alleged sexual assault of two minor girls at a school in Badlapur in Thane district, was shot dead while he was being transported in a police vehicle on September 23 last year. The HC said the documents related to the accidental death report (ADR) of the magistrate shall be handed over on Friday by Superintendent of Police Prashant Waghunde of CID, an investigating officer (IO) to the Joint Commissioner of Mumbai Police, who was directed to supervise the Special Investigation Team (SIT), so as to enable the SIT to undertake the probe. The magistrate's ADR submitted to the high court in January found that five police officers, including a police driver, were responsible for the death of the accused. The magistrate had said in the report that he "found substance" in the "false encounter" allegations made by the parents of the deceased. On April 7, the high court passed a judgment on a plea by the father of the accused and formed an SIT to be supervised by Additional Joint Commissioner of Police Lakhmi Gautam and to be headed by Deputy Commissioner of Police. It had directed it to probe the death by following principles laid down by the Supreme Court in Lalita Kumari case, which includes mandatory registration of an FIR. It had directed the CID to hand over the case papers within two days. Earlier this week, The Indian Express reported that despite the HC order, neither the SIT had been constituted nor an FIR registered.

On Friday, during the pre-lunch session, the bench said it came to know that the state has not complied with its orders as the HC registry received a letter from a state-appointed judicial commission headed by the retired Chief Justice of the Allahabad High Court seeking copies of the ADR. Expressing displeasure, the judges orally remarked, "You may have filed a Special Leave Petition (SLP) in the



Supreme Court (challenging HC order) on April 9. As on date, there is no stay order from HC. It means our order still holds the ground. Rule of law should be followed... Or else, we will be constrained to issue contempt of court notice." Justice Gokhale orally remarked, "First and foremost, this should not have happened. On your own, the investigation agency should have registered an FIR earlier. But it did not. Now you have not followed our order. What prevents you from transferring papers? Had you been so aggrieved, sought urgent hearing before SC, which was not done. This is the case where the criminal contempt proceedings have to be issued today itself. We are appalled. This is a brazen violation of our order." Justice Mohite-Dere questioned, "Is there any sanctity to our orders or not? What is the problem in handing over papers from one unit of police to another?" In the post lunch session, Gautam said he had constituted his team of officers who will be a part of the SIT and was awaiting papers from the CID. Public prosecutor Hiten Venegaonkar, representing the state government, submitted that CID was under the impression that the Supreme Court proceedings on its SLP would get influenced if it had handed over the papers. The HC bench termed the justification "preposterous." Senior advocate Manjula Rao, appointed as amicus curiae to assist the court, said it was clear that the authorities wanted to protect the persons involved in the case and giving them concessions will send a wrong message to the public. After Waghunde told the bench that he had been instructed by higher authorities not to hand over papers, the high court said it did not intend to make him a "scapegoat" but as an investigating officer, he was bound to follow HC order. The bench then asked CID chief to appear before it through virtual mode, who appeared for a few minutes and said the papers will be handed over "right away". The court adjourned the matter to April 30 for compliance.

Punjab Shahi Imam, Muslims wear black bands during Friday namaz: 'Time to give strong response to enemy'

GNS News Agency, April 25

Muslims, under the leadership of Punjab's Shahi Imam and national president of Majlis Ahrar Islam Hind Maulana Muhammad Usman Rahmani Ludhianvi, offered Jumma Namaz at the historic Jama Masjid of Ludhiana on Friday, wearing black bands, in condemnation of the Pahalgam terrorist attack. On this occasion, the Shahi Imam said that no amount of condemnation is enough for such a heinous attack, as it has wounded millions of hearts. He further stated that even after 75 years, it is increasingly felt that the Partition of the country was a grave mistake, and the consequences of that mistake are still being borne by the nation. He added that the neighboring country has become a festering wound that must be dealt with.

"This is not a time to be passive—it is a time to unite and give a strong response to the enemy," he said. The Shahi Imam also pointed out that while the entire country is standing united against terrorism and Pakistan in the aftermath of the Pahalgam attack, it is unfortunate that some mis-

chievous elements in the country are targeting minorities. He said, "It is wrong to condemn or oppress anyone on the basis of religion by members of the majority community."

He called for a strict stance against those who are trying to create unrest within the country during these difficult times, so that the nation can present a united front against the enemy. Shahi Imam thanks Punjab Police for protection of Kashmiri students. Following the Pahalgam attack, Shahi Imam Maulana Muhammad Usman Rahmani Ludhianvi expressed his gratitude to Punjab Police for ensuring the safety of Kashmiri students studying in various colleges and universities across the state. "It is worth mentioning that there were some reports of mischievous elements trying to harass a few students in Kharar and Dera Bassi. Upon receiving these complaints, I contacted Punjab DGP Gaurav Yadav, ADGP A S Rai, and ADGP Praveen Kumar Sinha. The officers promptly increased police vigilance across Punjab, reassuring that students from outside the state are safe and secure in Punjab," he added.

Strong action against Pakistan citizens overstaying in Maharashtra: CM Devendra Fadnavis

GNS News Agency, April 25

devendra fadnavis, maharashtra, pakistani, "All Pakistani citizens who are in Maharashtra will have to leave in 48 hours as per the Centre's directives... anybody found overstaying will invite strong action," Fadnavis said. (File photo) Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis Friday warned that the government will take strong action against Pakistan citizens if they overstayed in the state following their visa cancellation by the Centre.

The Union Government had Wednesday ordered Pakistan citizens to leave India within 48 hours following the terror attack at Pahalgam in Jammu and Kashmir that killed 26 persons, including six from Maharashtra. Speaking to the media in Mumbai, Fadnavis said, "I spoke to Union Home Minister Amit Shah and under his guidance we are taking the necessary steps... We have accordingly sought the list of Pakistani citizens and also informed all police stations in Maharashtra. "All Pakistani citizens who are in Maharashtra will have to leave in 48 hours as per the Centre's directives... anybody found overstaying will invite strong action." The chief minister further said, "Prime Minister

Narendra Modi does what he says, and after the terror attack, he has already issued a very strong statement signalling the country's resolve to take stern action." During his public rally in Bihar on Thursday, PM Modi had said, "India will identify, trace and punish every terrorist and their backers. We will pursue them to the end of the earth." The punishment will be much more than they would have imagined, he asserted. Meanwhile, CM Fadnavis noted that the Maharashtra Government deployed special flights to bring back 500 tourists from Kashmir to Maharashtra. Fadnavis said, "We reached out to the families of those who lost their kith and kin and those whose family members were injured. Along with them, people who were in a state of panic were also brought back." Earlier, Fadnavis expressed disappointment over some Opposition parties criticising the Modi government for the terror attack. "When the attack is on a nation, you don't do politics. This is the time to stand united," he said. The chief minister also dismissed Shiv Sena (UBT)'s criticism of the BJP-led Centre. "What should one expect from small minds? It shows they want to see and do politics in everything," he said. Fadnavis recalled how, despite having sharp differences.

Pune maestro on how daily actions are actually various mudra forms



GNS News Agency, April 25

Once, when Pune-based Sahitya Natak Akademi-awarded Kathak maestro and teacher Dr Nandkishore Kapote was talking to students, it struck him that "we use many dance mudras every day in our regular life". These mudras can be traced to the Natyashastra and Abhinaya Darpan, the great texts about performance. A new book by Kapote, Elements of Dance in Natyashastra and Abhinayadarpan, which has been published by Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute (BORI), has an interesting section on normal actions that are actually mudras. "When we wake up in the morning and hold a toothbrush in our hands, we perform the Kapittha mudra. When we eat breakfast, we use Mukul Mudra as we join all our fingers to tear a roti. When we tell somebody, 'Wait, I am coming', that is the Pataka Mudra. When a child is born, they dance by throw-

ing their limbs about. We are born with a sense of mudras," said Kapote.

The purpose of the book, which is Kapote's third, also began with children. When he started teaching children a few years ago, he had to read up a lot on Natya Shashtra and Abhinay Darpan as relevant information was rarely found in one book. After going through several tomes, Kapote would extract the information that the children needed. "It was always at the back of my mind to research the traditional hand gestures of the Natya Shashtra and Abhinay Darpan and place them alongside modern practices," said Kapote. Two years ago, he received a fellowship from BORI to research his subject, "Elements of Dance in Natya Shashtra and Abhinay Darpan".

"I started my work, studied a lot of books and became convinced that to this day, we use almost all mudras mentioned in the two great texts. The topic kept increasing in scope and interest and I soon had 22 chapters. Among these is a study into the personality of Bharat Muni, the sage who authored the Natya Shashtra. Nobody really knows what kind of a person he was. Some scholars have said that Bharat Muni was not one person but many. Others say there was nobody of that name. After searching a lot, I have presented many details about him in the book," said Kapote. Other elements of the book are references to mudras one hardly hears of, such as Animal Hasta, Water Animal Hasta and Planet Hasta. "I have added all this in my book," Kapote said. Kapote got into dance at a time when Maharashtra society disapproved of boys dancing. But, Kapote had watched the legendary dancer Gopi Krishna perform Kathak at Bal Gandharva Rang Mandir in Pune and was drawn to the art form. "If he had been performing Bharatanatyam, I would have been a Bharatanatyam dancer today," said Kapote. "Bahut struggle se dance seekha hai," he said of a journey that was marked by setbacks and breakthroughs. "Today, there are many boys who dance. Many of my male dancer students are very successful," he said.

95 gangs with over 5,000 cases in Delhi: Centre to SC, bats for special courts to try gangsters

GNS News Agency, April 25

Battling for setting up special courts to try members of gangs, the Centre Thursday informed the Supreme Court that a total of 95 organised criminal gangs have been identified in Delhi. And over 5,000 cases have been lodged against around 1,100 of their members in the past 10 years, it added. Additional Solicitor General (ASG) S D Sanjay told the bench that a proposal is being moved, which is under active consideration of higher authorities concerned, to set up these special courts, and sought three weeks' time. It is learnt that following the SC hearing, the ASG is expected to talk to the Home Secretary and the Delhi Police Commissioner for "some progressive steps".

The submission comes after the SC had suggested setting up special courts to try such criminals. In its March 19 order, the apex court had recorded, "... in the larger interest of society, it is imperative upon authorities to evolve a mechanism to provide a speedy and time-bound trial. One of the effective recourses could be to establish special courts to conclude trials on a day-to-day basis. A clear mandate can be fixed for such courts that, regardless of the attempts, if any, made by the defence counsel to prolong the trial, the court will proceed with it and conclude the same within the prescribed timeline." In its status report on April 24, the Centre told the top court that based on data collated and analysed on criminal gangs operating in Delhi in the last 10 years — from DCPs, Special Cell and Crime Branch — "a total of 95 organised criminal gangs have been identified, comprising an aggregate of 1,109 members, all of whom are presently undergoing trial proceedings". "... the cumulative number of criminal involvements attributed to these gangs amounts to 5,212 cases, which include serious offences such as murder, extortion, robbery, abduction, and offences under special laws including the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act (NDPS), the Arms Act, Maharashtra Control of Organised Crime Act (MCOCA) and the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA)," the report notes. Among the identified gangs, the major ones have members ranging from 50 to 150 and have an average involvement per member of around 6 to 7 cases, the status report notes.

Last November, the SC had expressed concern that hardened criminals commit crimes while out on bail — often granted on the ground of delay in trial. The SC's observation had come while dealing with a bail plea by gangster Mahesh Khatri alias Bholi. While refusing him bail, it had noted that the oldest case against him, dating back to 2013, continues to be pending to date. At the time, a bench of Justices Surya Kant and N K Singh had recorded, "It goes without saying that endless protracted trials do violate the in-



carcerated person's right to a speedy trial, even if he is found not entitled to the relief of bail. Unnecessary delays in criminal trials, such as the unexplained delay of 12 years in the aforementioned FIR of 2013, strike at the very heart of the constitutional values... The prosecution, thus, must show cause as to what has prevented it from concluding the trial in at least 15 matters... pending against the petitioner (Khatri)..."

Why are trials delayed?

The Centre submitted that there are multiple factors responsible for prolonged trial proceedings. "The primary one [is] that designated courts handle other routine matters such as IPC/BNS offences, EOW (economic offences wing) matters, ED cases, etc., making the courts burdened with multiple sensitive matters." The report notes, "... due to multiplicity of offences, jurisdictions, and legal classifications, different criminal cases involving members of the same gang are being tried before different courts, including regular sessions courts, Special NDPS courts, and special MCOCA courts." Another reason for the delay, according to the Centre, is that most of these cases are being tried under the Code of Criminal Procedure (CrPC) and not the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita, 2023, (BNSS), which replaced it. The latter has provisions for time-bound procedures such as time taken by magistrates to take cognisance of chargesheet (within 14 days); framing of charges (within 60 days); committal of cases; supply of documents to accused (within 14 days of their production); proceeding with trial against absconders; electronic trials; and trials of interconnected offences in a single court. "... majority of cases registered against these gang members are under the Indian Penal Code and are being tried as per the provisions of Criminal Procedure Code... the (BNSS) provisions are not being utilised for conducting expeditious trial in these cases as the offences have been committed before July 2024 and FIRs were registered before the cut-off date for implementation of BNSS..." the report notes.

Cricket star-turned-TMC MP Yusuf Pathan visits Murshidabad, asks people not to pay heed to fake news

GNS News Agency, April 25

Following the violence in Murshidabad, Pathan held small meetings with residents, party workers and party leaders, and another meeting with Imams, Muezzins and priests, in Berhampore. On Thursday, Pathan held small meetings with residents, party workers and party leaders, and another meeting with Imams, Muezzins and priests, in Berhampore. Cricket star-turned-TMC MP Yusuf Pathan visited Murshidabad and asked people not to pay heed to fake news or rumours. He condemned the riots that took place in some parts of the district, but stated that one "should not tarnish the image" of the district of the state. Yusuf Pathan is the MP from the Berhampore Lok Sabha seat. Days after Murshidabad in West Bengal was rocked by communal violence, Pathan landed in a spot as the Opposition, several residents, and even a section of the TMC section have increasingly targeted him, flagging his absence in the district.

On Thursday, Pathan held small meetings with residents, party workers and party leaders, and another meeting with Imams, Muezzins and priests, in Berhampore. "I assure you that I keep track of what is happening in Berhampore minute by minute. Even if I call administrative officials late at night, they answer my call. I promise you that this will not happen... I am there with you always," said Pathan, during the meeting with Imams, Muezzins and priests. "Riots took place in two blocks of Murshidabad and

some parts of Malda. We strongly condemn it. It should not have happened. The wrongs that happened are condemned by all. However, there is a lot of fake news and rumors which are being spread. This aims to tarnish the image of the district as well as Bengal. I appeal to you not to pay heed to fake news. We must maintain communal harmony," said Pathan. On Friday, Pathan went for a morning walk in a local field in Berhampore and interacted with residents.

Berhampore is one of the three Lok Sabha constituencies in Murshidabad district, with the other two seats, Jangipur and Murshidabad, also held by the TMC.

On April 12, a day after protests against the Waqf Amendment Act turned violent in various areas in Murshidabad including Samsarganj, Dhulian and Suti — which fall under the Jangipur parliamentary constituency — Pathan posted pictures of him sipping tea on Instagram with the caption: "Easy afternoons, good chai and calm surroundings. Just soaking in the moment". This sparked an uproar, with the 42-year-old politician coming under attack from the principal Opposition BJP and other quarters, who questioned his post when the district was convulsed by violence which claimed three lives. The police have arrested over 270 people in this connection so far. According to several residents, Pathan was last seen in Berhampore before Eid which was celebrated on March 31. During the month of Ramzan, he was said to have participated in some Iftar parties organised by the TMC in Murshidabad.

Delhi man beaten up for not allowing neighbour's dog to poop in front of house



GNS News Agency, April 25

A 54-year-old man in Delhi suffered injuries after he was allegedly thrashed by a young man on Thursday afternoon for allegedly refusing to let his dog defecate in front of his door, the police said. The victim identified as Rajesh Aggarwal, 54, a liver cirrhosis patient was admitted to the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS), Trauma Center, said the police at the Amar Colony station. Meanwhile, the accused identified as Vishesh Duggal who lives oppo-

site to the victim's residence has filed a complaint alleging that Aggarwal misbehaved with his aunt and chased him with a brick. "Duggal was roaming around the corridor to make his dog poop at my brother's door. When he confronted him, he started abusing him," Manoj Aggarwal, the victim's brother, said. Manoj said that when his brother held his phone to record the incident, Duggal snatched it and ran away. "Rajesh then chased Duggal till a park near his building, where the latter abused him and started beating him, injuring his face and then pushed him to the ground. He threw his phone in the park and then ran away," Manoj said. The police said that video footage of the incident showed Duggal snatching Aggarwal's phone in front of his house.

Aggarwal is currently unemployed and lives with his son, wife and parents, said an officer. "We admitted him to the trauma center. However, we could even give him pain killers as due to liver cirrhosis, his doctor has restricted administering drugs without his approval. He is now back home," Manoj said. The police have filed a First Information Report (FIR) on Friday under sections 115, 126 and 351 of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS).

Formulate SOP to combat gangster threats, HC directs Punjab, Haryana

GNS News Agency, April 25

In a landmark ruling, the Punjab and Haryana High Court has directed the states of Haryana and Punjab to develop a standard operating procedure (SOP) to tackle the rising threat of gangster activities and extortion rackets. The directive, issued by Justice Harpreet Singh Brar on Thursday, came in response to a petition filed by Raj Veer, a man allegedly living in fear due to relentless threats from Rohit Godara, a notorious gangster linked to the Lawrence Bishnoi gang.

Veer approached the court under Article 226 of the Constitution, seeking protection for himself and his family. According to his plea, he and his nephew have been receiving threatening calls and letters from Godara since April 1, 2024. The gangster allegedly initially demanded Rs 2 crore, later escalating it to Rs 5 crore, and threatened to kill Veer's children if the money was not paid. Despite submitting multiple representations to the authorities—documented as Annexures P-4 to P-6—no FIR has been registered, leaving Veer and his family vulnerable for over a year, he said. Justice Brar underscored the state's fundamental responsibility to protect its citizens. Quoting legal scholar Wolfgang Friedmann from his book Law in a Changing Society, the court noted, "State of criminal law continues to be—as it should be—a decisive reflection of social consciousness of society." The judgment emphasised that safety and security are prerequisites for progress, stating, "It is only when security and subsistence are not under threat, can a people truly make progress and build a life for themselves."

The court painted a grim picture of Veer's ordeal: "It is hard to imagine the petitioner getting a good night's sleep in the last year, owing to the immense psychological burden he has been put under." It expressed alarm over the broader impact of gangster culture, observing, "Gangster culture, particularly in the form of extortion rackets, has emerged as a significant threat to the social order in today's time, fostering an environment of fear and lawlessness." The judgment highlighted how such activities—marked by violence, extortion, and the recruitment of vulnerable youth—erode



public trust and create a parallel economy that fuels corruption. "Extortion forces individuals and businesses to pay for 'protection' or face dire consequences," the court remarked, calling for "a firm hand with stringent law enforcement and legal measures" to dismantle these criminal networks. To address this growing menace, the court directed Haryana and Punjab to formulate a comprehensive SOP, offering specific recommendations: • Anti-gang units: Establish dedicated teams with proper training and technology to target gang activities.

• Surveillance: Monitor known gangsters using digital tools and track their finances with help from banks. • Intelligence sharing: Set up mechanisms for Punjab, Haryana, and central agencies to exchange information, as "these gangs operate across borders." • Anonymous reporting: Create a service to encourage citizens to report incidents without fear. • Witness protection: Implement a programme to safeguard those who provide information. • Fast-track courts: Ensure swift justice by setting up special courts to handle such cases promptly. The court sought suggestions from the states' advocate generals and the additional solicitor general, to be submitted via affidavits from the ADGPs (Intelligence) of Punjab and Haryana before the next hearing on May 14. To assist in the case, Justice Brar appointed advocate Preetinder Singh Ahluwalia as amicus curiae, tasking him with providing expert input.

Neelam Gorhe lauds Mahayuti top brass' work ethics, but quips; 'Do they sleep?'

GNS News Agency, April 25

Neelam Gorhe, Deputy Chairperson of Maharashtra Legislative Council, on Friday lauded the Mahayuti government's commitment and work ethics, while humorously enquiring if the top brass got adequate sleep. On Friday, Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar was in Pune and started his day early by performing the bhoomi poojan of the proposed 10-storey family welfare bureau and training centre at 8 am.

"Ajit Pawar starting his day early is a good habit, but if we have to attend an early morning event then our day begins at 5 or 6 am. Meanwhile, Deputy CM Eknath Shinde works till 1 am. So where's the time to rest?" she asked tongue in cheek, while also noting that Chief Minister Devendra Fadnis was alert the entire day. Gorhe reminded the ministers to mind their health amid their busy schedules. "Do they get adequate sleep?" Gorhe wondered and advised his car driver—better to go slowly and safely. "So, in jest, I want to remind everyone—our health is important too," Gorhe quipped. Pawar admitted that indeed that they were working 24/7. "My day begins at 4 am and after the morning exercise, I begin work and end my day at



10 or 11 pm. Yes, the administration works tirelessly and Dy CM Eknath Shinde continues to work from 2 am to 4 am," he said in a light-hearted response. Pawar said that the officers are encouraged to work with enthusiasm as part of the Mahayuti government. He also recalled a meeting with PM Modi who had advised them to take one hour in the day for physical activity and ensure health check-ups every six months. "Mental health should not be neglected either," he added.

'Interest-free loans': Mumbai police arrest 3 from Delhi call centre for duping senior citizens

GNS News Agency, April 25

The Mumbai police Friday arrested three persons from a Delhi-based call centre on charges of duping senior citizens by offering "interest-free loans". The Mumbai cyber police busted the gang while probing the case of a 71-year-old man who lost Rs 1.14 crore to these fraudsters in 2023-24. The police found that the same cybercriminals were involved in at least 132 such cases across the country. An officer said that while probing the First Information Report (FIR) they had registered in March last year, technical surveillance led them to a Delhi-based call centre called Maximiser Marketing (OPC) Private Limited. A cyber police team, thereafter, conducted a raid and arrested three persons for making fraudulent calls. The three accused were identified as Shehzad Khan, 30, Anuj Rawat, 30, and Mohammad Amir, 34. The police also seized 104 mobile phones and a laptop during the raid. An officer said the accused would call up senior citizens and claim to be calling from Bajaj Finance in New Delhi. They would then claim that they had a special scheme for senior citizens who would



be offered interest-free loans.

The accused would use forged documents bearing stamps of Bajaj Finance and Yes Bank and send them to senior citizens online in order to gain their trust. The accused would then ask senior citizens to deposit money into their account under various excuses and go incommunicado. An officer said the accused were being brought to Mumbai and would be produced before a court later in the day.

When traffic cops in Mumbai have life cover of Rs 1 crore, why do traffic wardens get nothing? Man's death while on duty raises key questions



GNS News Agency, April 25

A traffic warden, Rafiq Wazeer Shaikh, 38, died in Mumbai Saturday after he fell into the sea while chasing a tempo driver who allegedly violated traffic rules on the city's Coastal Road. The recent incident has once again highlighted the issue of how traffic wardens face similar risks to those encountered by traffic police. Yet, they lack adequate health and life protection coverage, even in cases of on-duty fatalities. Here is a detailed breakdown of the challenges faced by traffic wardens, their roles, and the dangers they are exposed to.

Who are traffic wardens?

Traffic wardens are privately hired contractual workers who assist traffic police in managing vehicular traffic on roads. Additional traffic wardens are deployed during major bandobast in the city, especially during Ganeshotsav and other major festivals. Various government bodies, such as the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) and the Mumbai Metropolitan Region Development Authority (MMRDA), also provide wardens to the traffic police through contractors to manage traffic in areas around key infrastructure projects. They are usually assigned to help reduce the workload of the traffic police.

Do they also receive traffic police training?

Traffic wardens, after induction, receive basic training on managing vehicular traffic and adhering to rules and regulations from the traffic police department. In Mumbai, traffic wardens get training at the traffic police headquarters in Worli.

What are their working hours, and how much do they get paid?

Traffic wardens work in 8-hour shifts and receive a monthly salary of around Rs 10,000 to Rs 12,000 from the contractor or the firm that hired them. Many wardens complain that they do not receive their salaries on a regular basis.

"When it comes to work, traffic wardens are given all the work the traffic police do, but when it comes to giving

facilities to them, wardens are treated like watchmen. Wardens are essentially security guards working on the roads in hazardous conditions. It is better to do a security guard's job with fewer risks than doing a warden's job," said Manoj Darji, who worked as a traffic warden for nine years before quitting the job during Covid. He currently works as a supervisor with a security firm.

In what adverse conditions do traffic wardens work?

"Traffic police get helmets, masks, caps, water, etc., and other facilities, but we get nothing. Due to constant exposure to pollution and dust, traffic wardens become more prone to breathing-related issues, including chest infections and tuberculosis (TB). I have been diagnosed with TB and have to undergo treatment for the same," said Darji.

Traffic wardens work similarly to traffic police, but do they receive the same level of respect?

Wardens are often taken casually by motorists. "Forget respect, people do not even listen to us, as we have no government uniform or identity card. In road rage cases, we are abused and sometimes assaulted during brawls with errant motorists. If the traffic policemen we work under are good people, then they help us get the errant motorists to pay the compensation or get booked by the police. But most of the time, the traffic police are not bothered. We are completely at their mercy," said Darji.

Do wardens get life cover?

A Mumbai traffic police officer said any policeman in Maharashtra, including the traffic police personnel, gets an accidental death cover of Rs 1 crore from the bank, which has all the policemen's salary accounts. This life cover is in addition to the various insurance covers a policeman receives from the state government. But traffic wardens do not get any life cover even if they die while on duty. There is no provision in the police department or other government bodies for providing compensation to wardens if they die while at work. Darji said, "If the private firm wardens work for a reputed one, then they provide a provident fund facility and health cover to the warden and his family, but not many firms do this. If we meet with any accident, we take care of our medical expenses on our own."

Does the Mumbai traffic police have a policy in place for safeguarding wardens' basic rights?

RTI activist Chetan Kothhari, who also volunteers as a traffic warden, said the Mumbai traffic police have no policy in place to safeguard the basic rights of traffic wardens. Kothhari said several requests had been made to the Mumbai police to issue identification cards to traffic wardens, but they had been in vain. "Wardens have no insurance cover or health plan. Mumbai traffic police should have a policy for wardens, as they work in the same conditions as traffic police do," Kothari said.

Bengaluru road rage: DRDO officer injured, says defence sticker on car triggered attack by man

GNS News Agency, April 25

A disturbing case of alleged road rage involving a Wing Commander with the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) has surfaced in Bengaluru. Wing Commander Aditya Bose posted a video on Instagram detailing a violent attack that left him bleeding and his wife, Squadron Leader Madhumita, verbally abused. According to the officer, the incident took place on April 18, 2025, while the couple was driving from the DRDO Colony at CV Raman Nagar to the Kempegowda International Airport. As seen in the now-

viral footage, Bose, his face and neck bloodied, recounted how a biker abruptly stopped their car and began hurling verbal abuse in Kannada — a confrontation that quickly turned physical. DRDO sticker triggers attack

Bose explained that the biker's aggression escalated upon noticing the DRDO identification sticker on their vehicle. The unknown assailant allegedly made derogatory remarks aimed at both the officer and his wife. When Bose stepped out of the car to address the confrontation, the situation spiraled out of control. "The moment I got out of my car, the biker hit me with a key

on my forehead, and there was blood," Bose says in the video, visibly shaken and injured. He went on to allege that more bystanders joined the biker, and one even picked up a stone to strike him on the head. After the assault, Squadron Leader Madhumita reportedly drove Bose to the nearest police station to lodge a complaint. "Despite serving the nation, this is how we are treated," Bose lamented. He added, "God help us. God give me the power not to retaliate. Tomorrow, if law and order don't help us, I will retaliate," he warned in the video, which has since drawn strong reactions on social media. The Bengaluru city



police reportedly confirmed that they have taken cognizance of the viral video and were in the process of verifying the claims.

'Mother, sister have depression, fought frequently with father: son of murdered ex-Karnataka Police chief Om Prakash in FIR



GNS News Agency, April 25

Karnataka ex-DGPOm Prakash, 68, was found dead with multiple stab injuries at his house in HSR Layout in Southeast Bengaluru, and his wife Pallavi Prakash, 65, was detained in connection with the case. (Express Photo) The wife and daughter of the former Karnataka Police chief Om Prakash, who was found murdered at his home in Bengaluru Sunday, are suffering from depression and frequently fought with the officer, his son has said in his police complaint.

Om Prakash, 68, was found dead with multiple stab injuries at his house in HSR Layout in Southeast Bengaluru, and his wife Pallavi Prakash, 65, was detained in connection with the case. Kartik Prakash, 40, stated in his police complaint Sunday that his father had moved out of his house because of the frequent fights and threats from his mother, and also expressed suspicion that his mother and sister may have murdered his father. The First Information Report (FIR) was based on his complaint. Kartik, who received the news of his father's death while he was at the Karnataka

Golf Association, said his mother had been threatening to kill his father for the last week. He said Om Prakash moved to his sister's house in Bengaluru as a result of the threats. "Then my younger sister Kriti went to Sarita Kumar's [Om Prakash's sister] house two days ago and took our father, Mr Om Prakash, back home," he said in the complaint, adding his mother and sister were "suffering from depression and used to fight with our father every day." Vikash Kumar Vikash, Additional Commissioner of Police (West), said Sunday they were informed about the incident at around 4.30 pm, and that a sharp weapon was found near the former DGP's body. Vikash also said there were three people in the house when the incident happened.

Before the murder, the senior police officer's wife sent a series of messages on a social media forum for officers' families expressing a threat to her life and her daughter's life from Prakash, and staff at their home. "Me and my daughter have been under severe domestic violence at the hands of my husband Omprakash, ex DGP Karnataka. His weapons are not traditional ones. They are extremely sophisticated," she said in one of the messages. "My son has got a revolver and rifles that should be seized or taken away immediately. All these events are for the sake of property, Greed and jealousy. My husband is supporting my son and daughter-in-law," said another message. A 1981-cadre Indian Police Service (IPS) officer, Prakash started his career as the additional superintendent of police in Karnataka's Ballari district. He served in various districts as superintendent of police, was with the Lokayukta police, and DGP of the Criminal Investigation Department before assuming charge as director general and inspector general of police (DG&IGP) in 2015. He retired in 2017.

Six new beetle species discovered in northeast India

GNS News Agency, April 25

As many as six new species of Sericinae beetle have been discovered by a team of researchers from the Zoological Survey of India (ZSI) and the Museum A Koenig in Germany, underscoring the exceptional biodiversity of northeast India and Western Ghats. The newly identified beetle species are Maladera champhaiensis, Neoserica churachandpurenensis, Maladera barasingha, Maladera lumaensis, Serica subansiriensis, and Maladera onam.

The research team, comprising Dr Devanshu Gupta, Dr Debika Bhunia, and Dr Kailash Chandra from the ZSI, and Dr Dirk Ahrens from the Museum A Koenig, meticulously examined beetle specimens housed in the Coleoptera Section of the ZSI, Kolkata and the Museum in Germany. Their comprehensive analysis not only revealed these six previously unknown species belonging to the genera Maladera, Neoserica, and Serica but also documented new regional records for 28 other species, significantly providing insights into the area's rich insect fauna. Dr Dhriti Banerjee, Director of the Zoological Survey of India, Kolkata, said, "This research highlights the critical role of international cooperation in advancing scientific knowledge and conservation outcomes and the need for ongoing exploration and documentation of insect biodiversity, particularly in under-sampled regions."

"It underscores the importance of taxonomic studies and international collaborations in biodiversity conservation. By accurately identifying and documenting species, scientists provide essential data for conservation planning and management. We call for increased sampling efforts, particularly in northeast India, to further enhance our understanding of regional biodiversity and to inform strategies for its protection," said Dr Banerjee. Dr Devanshu Gupta, Scientist-D and Officer-in-Charge of the Coleoptera Section at the ZSI, Kolkata, mentioned that understanding the ecology and distribution of these beetle species yields tangible benefits. Identifying potential pest species early enables the development of environment-friendly pest management strategies, thus reducing reliance on harmful chemicals that can impact both human health and the environment.



"Moreover, preserving the biodiversity of these regions supports ecotourism initiatives, creating economic opportunities for local communities and fostering environmental stewardship. Recognizing that some Sericinae are known crop pests while others contribute to soil health, closing these knowledge gaps is crucial for developing sustainable agricultural practices, mitigating potential pest outbreaks that threaten farmers' livelihoods, and ensuring the long-term health of our natural environment for present and future generations," said Dr Gupta.

Cool roofs, water ATMs, and heat wave wards: Delhi Govt rolls out Heat Action Plan 2025

GNS News Agency, April 25

In response to rising temperatures and early heatwave warnings, the Delhi Government Monday launched the Heat Action Plan (HAP) 2025, outlining comprehensive measures to safeguard public health. Delhi has already registered its first heatwave this summer — from April 7 to 9 — as temperatures crossed 40 degree Celsius. With the India Meteorological Department (IMD) forecasting a higher-than-usual number of heatwave days this year, the Heat Action Plans prepared at the state, district, and city levels are aimed at mitigating the adverse impacts of extreme weather.

In the national capital, last year's city-specific HAP was prepared by the Delhi Disaster Management Authority (DDMA). Building on last year's groundwork, the Delhi Government has expanded the scope of its heat preparedness efforts this summer. Delhi HAP 2025 includes a range of measures — from installing water ATMs and cool roof technology to setting up heatwave wards in hospitals and shading public walkways — to ensure better preparedness.

The plan was launched by Delhi Chief Minister Rekha Gupta along with Cabinet Minister Parvash Verma, National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) chief Rajendra Singh, and Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) leader Pankaj Singh at the Secretariat. Speaking at the launch, Gupta said, "If Delhi is experiencing the most heat in India, then preparations should also be the most extensive here. We've had a detailed discussion about this in our cabinet. We'll install 3,000 water coolers, and cooling shelters should be available on roads. Footpaths should have shading structures. Green roofs are also a great solution. We'll issue heat alerts in collaboration with the weather department. Large hospitals will have heat wave wards with trained staff." Gupta alleged that the previous Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) government did not recruit Disaster Mitras (trained volunteers).



"The Prime Minister had prepared a large army of 'Disaster Mitras'. The previous government didn't recruit 1,800 Disaster Mitras, but we need them to deal with disasters. We've received them from the Centre. Every life is precious to the country and state." NDMA chief Rajendra Singh assured that HAPs will kick in in all districts next year. Singh added that 23 states have prepared the plan, and the work is underway in 250 districts.

1. Cool Roof Technology will be implemented at major sites, including the Vivekananda terminal, Kashmere Gate ISBT, and Delhi Secretariat.
2. Installation of 3,000 water coolers and water ATMs along PWD roads.
3. Dedicated heatwave wards to be set up in large hospitals, equipped with trained medical staff to treat heat-related illnesses.
4. Cooling shelters and shaded structures will be developed along footpaths for pedestrian relief. Booklets for schools detailing safety guidelines and preparedness strategies for students and staff during extreme heat

Panvel court sentences ex-police inspector Abhay Kurundkar to life in jail

GNS News Agency, April 25

A local court in Panvel in Maharashtra's Raigad district Monday awarded life imprisonment to former police inspector Abhay Kurundkar for the murder of assistant inspector Ashwini Bidre-Gore in 2016. On April 5, the court found Kurundkar guilty of murdering her, and two of his associates for helping him destroy the evidence.

Additional Sessions Judge K G Paldewar found Kurundkar guilty on charges including murder, destruction of evidence, forgery, and false entries in a police registrar to create an alibi. He was acquitted of charges of criminal conspiracy. Judge Paldewar said the Supreme Court has set parameters for granting the death penalty only in the rarest of rare cases. Judge Paldewar said that while the manner in which the evidence was destroyed in the case, by the body being chopped, showed brutality, it did not fall in the rarest of rare cases. Judge Paldewar also said he was considering the age of the accused, and the chance of reformation. "I have considered the accused's age and the

defence's submissions that his reformation is possible. He is a family man, he lost his wife during the COVID-19 pandemic, and his children are in touch with him. This shows that he may have a chance at reformation," said Judge Paldewar while pronouncing the judgment.

Two of his co-accused driver Kundan Bhandari and his friend Mahesh Falnkar were found guilty of destruction of evidence. The court sentenced them to seven years in jail, which they have already spent in jail as undertrials, and were ordered to be released. On April 11, 2016, Bidre-Gore, who was posted in Navi Mumbai, went missing. She was estranged from her husband, Raju Gore, and was in a relationship with Kurundkar, who was also married and posted in Thane. Her brother lodged a missing case at the Kalamboli Police Station in Panvel. However, the police allegedly did not take any action until December 7, 2017, when they arrested Kurundkar. The police then claimed Kurundkar killed her at his Bhayander residence on April 11, 2016.

China warns countries against striking trade deals with US at its expense



Nations Security Council meeting to accuse Washington of bullying and "casting a shadow over the global efforts for peace and development" by weaponizing tariffs.

Earlier this month, U.S. Trade Representative Jamieson Greer said nearly 50 countries have approached him to discuss the steep additional tariffs imposed by Trump. Several bilateral talks on tariffs have taken place since, with Japan considering raising soybean and rice imports as part of its talks with the U.S. while Indonesia is planning to increase U.S. food and commodities imports and reduce orders from other nations. CAUGHT IN CROSSFIRE Trump's tariff policies have rattled financial markets as investors fear a severe disruption in world trade could tip the global economy into recession. On Monday, Chinese stocks inched higher, showing little reaction to the commerce ministry comments, though investors have generally remained cautious on Chinese assets due to the rising growth risks. The Trump administration also has been trying to curb Beijing's progress in developing advanced semiconductor chips which it says could be used for military purposes, and last week imposed port fees on China-built vessels to limit China's dominance in shipbuilding. AI chip giant Nvidia said last week it would take \$5.5 billion in charges due to the administration's curbs on AI chip exports. China's President Xi Jinping visited three Southeast Asian countries last week in a move to bolster regional ties, calling on trade partners to oppose unilateral bullying. Beijing has said it is "tearing down walls" and expanding its circle of trading partners amid the trade row. The stakes are high for Southeast Asian nations caught in the crossfire of the Sino-U.S. tariff war, particularly given the regional ASEAN bloc's huge two-way trade with both China and the United States. Economic ministers from Thailand and Indonesia are currently in the United States, with Malaysia set to join later this week, all seeking trade negotiations. Six countries in Southeast Asia were hit with tariffs ranging from 32% to 49%, threatening trade-reliant economies that have benefited from investment from levies imposed on Beijing by Trump in his first term. ASEAN is China's largest trading partner, with total trade value reaching \$234 billion in the first quarter of 2025, China's customs agency said last week. Trade between ASEAN and the U.S. totalled around \$476.8 billion in 2024, according to U.S. figures, making Washington the regional bloc's fourth-largest trading partner. "There are no winners in trade wars and tariff wars," Xi said in an article published in Vietnamese media, without mentioning the United States. Reporting by Liz Lee and Laurie Chen in Beijing, Orathai Sriring in Bangkok and Stanley Widianto in Jakarta; Editing by Tom Hogue and Shri Navaratnam. Laurie Chen is a China Correspondent at Reuters' Beijing bureau, covering politics and general news. Before joining Reuters, she reported on China for six years at Agence France-Presse and the South China Morning Post in Hong Kong. She speaks fluent Mandarin.

BEIJING, GNS News Agency, April 25, China on Monday accused Washington of abusing tariffs and warned countries against striking a broader economic deal with the United States at its expense, ratcheting up its rhetoric in a spiralling trade war between the world's two biggest economies. Beijing will firmly oppose any party striking a deal at China's expense and "will take countermeasures in a resolute and reciprocal manner," its Commerce Ministry said. The Reuters Tariff Watch newsletter is your daily guide to the latest global trade and tariff news. Sign up here. The ministry was responding to a Bloomberg report, citing sources familiar with the matter, that the Trump administration is preparing to pressure nations seeking tariff reductions or exemptions from the U.S. to curb trade with China, including imposing monetary sanctions. President Donald Trump paused the sweeping tariffs he announced on dozens of countries on April 2 except those on China, singling out the world's second largest economy for the biggest levies.

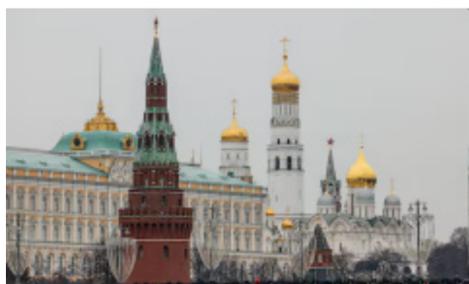
In a series of moves, Washington has raised tariffs on Chinese imports to 145%, prompting Beijing to slap retaliatory duties of 125% on U.S. goods, effectively erecting trade embargoes against each other. Last week, China signalled that its own across-the-board rates would not rise further. "The United States has abused tariffs on all trading partners under the banner of so-called 'equivalence', while also forcing all parties to start so-called 'reciprocal tariffs' negotiations with them," the ministry spokesperson said. China is determined and capable of safeguarding its own rights and interests, and is willing to strengthen solidarity with all parties, the ministry said. "The fact is, nobody wants to pick a side," said Bo Zhengyuan, partner at China-based policy consultancy Plenum. "If countries have high reliance on China in terms of investment, industrial infrastructure, technology know-how and consumption, I don't think they'll be buying into U.S. demands. Many Southeast Asian countries belong to this category." Pursuing a hardline stance, Beijing will this week convene an informal United

Kremlin says U.S. position ruling out NATO membership for Ukraine gives satisfaction

MOSCOW, GNS News Agency, April 25, - The Kremlin said on Monday that the position of U.S. President Donald Trump's administration on ruling out NATO membership for Ukraine gave Moscow satisfaction, but declined to comment on Trump's hopes for deal this week. U.S. envoy General Keith Kellogg said on Sunday that NATO membership was "off the table" for Ukraine. Trump has repeatedly said previous U.S. support for Ukraine's bid to join NATO was a cause of the war. The Reuters Tariff Watch newsletter is your daily guide to the latest global trade and tariff news. Sign up here.

"We have heard from Washington at various levels that Ukraine's membership in NATO is excluded," Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov told reporters. "Of course, this is something that causes our satisfaction and coincides with our position." Peskov said that Ukrainian membership of the U.S.-led alliance would "pose a threat to the national interests of the Russian Federation. And, in fact, this is one of the root causes of this conflict." Putin has repeatedly said that Russia would be willing to end the war if Ukraine officially dropped its NATO ambitions and withdraw its troops from the entirety of the territory of four Ukrainian regions claimed and mostly controlled by Russia.

Reuters reported in November that Putin was ready to negotiate a deal with Trump, but would refuse to make major territorial concessions and would insist Kyiv abandon ambitions to join NATO. Trump said on Sunday he



hopes Russia and Ukraine will make a deal this week to end the conflict in Ukraine. Asked about those remarks, Peskov said: "I don't want to make any comments right now, especially about the time frame." "President Putin and the Russian side remain open to seeking a peaceful settlement. We are continuing to work with the American side and, of course, we hope that this work will yield results," Peskov said. He refused to comment directly on a Bloomberg report that the United States is prepared to recognise Russian control of Crimea as part of a broader peace agreement. "Work on finding a peaceful settlement cannot take place, and should not take place, in public," Peskov said. "It should take place in an absolutely discrete mode."

Some migrants in Canada lose work status while applications languish

TORONTO, GNS News Agency, April 25, Migrants living in Canada are facing longer waits to renew paperwork that would allow them to keep working legally, as growing backlogs and changing rules stymie efforts to maintain legal status, according to interviews and data obtained by Reuters. Losing status means people who have paid taxes cannot work or access medical care and other services in a country that has long prided itself for its universal health care. The Reuters Tariff Watch newsletter is your daily guide to the latest global trade and tariff news. Sign up here. Canada is trying to reduce the number of migrants in the country as they have been blamed for straining services - a sharp change after years of growth - and is relying on people to leave voluntarily to meet its targets. Canada's immigration department said people can work while their application is processed but did not respond by the deadline to a question about people who lose status because of long waits. According to the immigration department's website, people can keep working as long as they get a labour market impact assessment needed to maintain their status within 60 days of applying to renew their work permit.

Reuters spoke with four families who lost work permits because they have been waiting for much longer than that. It is not known how many people are in this position. The labour market impact assessment processing time for temporary workers hoping to become permanent residents in Canada has been increasing since at least fall 2022, and almost tripled from 58 business days in September 2023 to 165 business days in March 2025, according to data from Canada's employment department obtained by Reuters.

The department said the lengthier waits are due in part to an influx of applications but would not provide the number of applications pending by month. Lawyers and experts say changing rules, as well as more applicants, may be contributing to the growing backlog. The number of people applying for work permits within the country has grown com-

pared to last year - as has the share of those applications that Canada is refusing, data from Canada's immigration department shows. An email seen by Reuters from Service Canada, which processes these applications, said that as of April 1, 2025, the department was still processing labour market impact assessment applications submitted a year earlier. "We are seeing a backlog now of more than a year. ... It's the first time we are seeing such a delay," said immigration consultant Kanwar Sierah. People are losing their immigration status, Sierah said, and some are working under the table for exploitative employers or falling victim to "unscrupulous actors" who give them bad advice, for example by urging them to apply for asylum when they may not have a strong case. Reuters spoke with migrants who have returned to their country of origin and to people living legally in Canada with no ability to support themselves.

Living undocumented in Canada has been rare in part because it is so difficult to access services without status. Estimates have put Canada's undocumented population in the hundreds of thousands in a country of some 40 million. Canada's Liberal government pledged to give undocumented people status but then backtracked and said it would provide it on a small scale for people working in certain sectors. Prime Minister Mark Carney, who leads polls ahead of an April 28 election, promises to cap immigration for now. Devi Acharya was too scared to go to a hospital when she started to miscarry in early March - she could not afford another medical bill. "If I got medical attention on time, maybe we could have saved the baby." Acharya does not have health coverage for the same reason she cannot work: Her work permit expired while she waited for a labour market impact assessment, so if she seeks medical care, she could be handed a hefty bill. Canada's temporary foreign worker program requires most employers wanting to hire non-citizens in Canada temporarily to file for a labour market impact assessment that says the position cannot be filled by a local resident.

Who might succeed Pope Francis? Some possible candidates



GNS News Agency, April 25

Predict who the next Pope will be at your peril. An old Italian saying warns against putting faith, or money, in any presumed front-runner ahead of the conclave, the closed-door gathering of cardinals that picks the pontiff. It cautions: "He who enters a conclave as a Pope, leaves it as a cardinal". But here are some cardinals who are being talked about as "papabili" to succeed Pope Francis, whose death at the age of 88 was announced by the Vatican on Monday. They are listed in alphabetical order. According to the French press, he is known in some domestic Catholic circles as John XXIV, in a nod to his resemblance to Pope John XXIII, the round-faced reforming Pope of the early 1960s. Aveline is known for his folksy, easy-going nature, his readiness to crack jokes, and his ideological proximity to Francis, especially on immigration and relations with the Muslim world. He is also a serious intellectual, with a doctorate in theology and a degree in philosophy.

He was born in Algeria to a family of Spanish immigrants who moved to France after Algerian independence, and has lived most of his life in Marseille, a port that has been a crossroads of cultures and religions for centuries. Under Francis, Aveline has made great career strides, becoming bishop in 2013, archbishop in 2019 and a cardinal three years later. His standing was boosted in September 2023 when he organised an international Church conference on Mediterranean issues at which Pope Francis was the star guest. If he got the top job, Aveline would become the first French Pope since the 14th century, a turbulent period in which the papacy moved to Avignon. He would also be the youngest Pope since John Paul II. He understands but does not speak Italian - potentially a major drawback for a job that also carries the title Bishop of Rome and requires a lot of familiarity with Roman power games and intrigues.

If Erdo is elected, he would inevitably be seen as a compromise candidate -- someone from the conservative camp who has nonetheless built bridges with Francis' progressive world. Erdo was already considered a papal contender in the last conclave in 2013 thanks to his extensive Church contacts in Europe and Africa as well as the fact that he was seen as a pioneer of the New Evangelisation drive to rekindle the Catholic faith in secularized advanced nations -- a top priority for many cardinals. He ranks as a conservative in theology and in speeches throughout Europe he stresses the Christian roots of the continent. However, he is also seen to be pragmatic and never clashed openly with Francis, unlike other tradition-minded clerics. That said, he raised eyebrows in the Vatican during the 2015 migrant crisis when he went against Pope Francis' call for churches to take in refugees, saying this would amount to human trafficking -- seemingly aligning himself with Hungary's nationalist Prime Minister Viktor Orban.

An expert in Church law, Erdo has been on a fast track

Trump officials had a second Signal chat where details of Yemen strike were shared

GNS News Agency, April 25

U.S. Defence Secretary Pete Hegseth created another Signal messaging chat that included his wife and brother where he shared similar details of a March military airstrike against Yemen's Houthi militants that were sent in another chain with top Trump administration leaders, The New York Times reported. A person familiar with the contents and those who received the messages, who spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss sensitive matters, confirmed the second chat to The Associated Press.

The second chat on Signal -- which is a commercially available app not authorised to be used to communicate sensitive or classified national defense information -- included 13 people, the person said. They also confirmed the chat was dubbed "Defense Team Huddle." The New York Times reported that the group included Mr. Hegseth's wife, Jennifer, who is a former Fox News producer, and his brother Phil Hegseth, who was hired at the Pentagon as a Department of Homeland Security liaison and senior adviser. Both have traveled with the defence secretary and attended high-level meetings. The revelation of the additional chat group brought fresh criticism against Mr. Hegseth and President Donald Trump's wider administration after it has failed to take action so far against the top national security officials who discussed plans for the military strike in Signal. "The details keep coming out. We keep learning how Pete Hegseth put lives at risk. But Trump is still too weak to fire him," Senate Democratic Leader Chuck Schumer posted on X. "Pete Hegseth must be fired." The first chat, set up by national security adviser Mike Waltz, included a number of Cabinet members and came to light because Jeffrey Goldberg, editor-in-chief of The Atlantic, was added to the group.

The contents of that chat, which The Atlantic published, shows that Mr. Hegseth listed weapons systems and a timeline for the attack on Iran-backed Houthis in Yemen last month. The White House, the National Security Council and a Pentagon spokesperson did not immediately respond to messages seeking comment about the additional chat group. Mr. Hegseth has previously contended that no classified information or war plans were shared in the chat with the journalist. The Times reported Sunday that the second chat had the same warplane launch times as the first chat. Multiple former and current officials have said sharing those operational details before a strike would have certainly been classified and their release could have put pilots in danger. Mr. Hegseth's use of Signal and the sharing of such plans are under investigation by the Defence Department's acting inspector general. It came at the request of the leadership of the Senate Armed Services Committee -- Republican Chairman Roger Wicker of Mississippi and ranking Democratic member Jack Reed of Rhode Island. Resignations The new revelations come amid further turmoil at the Pentagon. Four officials in Hegseth's inner circle departed last week as the Pentagon conducts a widespread investigation for

his entire career, becoming a bishop in his 40s and a cardinal in 2003 when he was just 51, making him the youngest member of the College of Cardinals until 2010. He has excellent Italian, and also speaks German, French, Spanish and Russian -- which could help him thaw relations between the Catholic and Russian Orthodox Churches after the deep chill of the war in Ukraine. Erdo is not a charismatic speaker, but while this was once undoubtedly viewed as a serious drawback, it could potentially be seen as an advantage this time around if cardinals want a calm papacy following the fireworks of Francis' rule. Cardinal Mario Grech, secretary general of the Synod of Bishops, Maltese, aged 68.

Grech comes from Gozo, a tiny island that is part of Malta, the smallest country in the European Union. But from small beginnings he has gone on to big things, appointed by Pope Francis to be secretary general of the Synod of Bishops -- a heavyweight position within the Vatican. Initially viewed as a conservative, Grech has become a torchbearer of Francis' reforms within the Church for years, moving sharply with the times.

In 2008, several gay Maltese citizens declared they were leaving the Church in protest at what they saw as the anti-LGBT stance of the then pontiff -- Pope Benedict. Grech offered them little sympathy at the time, but speaking in the Vatican in 2014, he called for the Church to be more accepting of its LGBT members and creative in finding new ways to address contemporary family situations.

The following day, Pope Francis tapped him on the shoulder at breakfast and complimented him for the speech, marking him out for future promotion. In 2018, Grech spoke about how he relished the challenges faced by the Church. "We are going through a period of change. And to me, this is a very positive thing," he told the Malta Today newspaper. He warned that it would not remain relevant to modern society if it did not move beyond nostalgia for the past. His views have won him some high-profile enemies, and conservative Cardinal Gerhard Muller memorably turned on him in 2022, belittling his academic profile and accusing him of going against Catholic doctrine.

Grech's allies insist he has friends in both the conservative and moderate camps and that, because of his high-profile role, he is known by many cardinals, a clear advantage in a conclave where so many cardinals are relative unknowns to each other. Coming from a tiny country, his election as Pope wouldn't create any diplomatic or geopolitical headaches.

He has stressed that he always seeks consensus over confrontation. But he has sometimes courted controversy. In 2016 he led a pilgrimage to pray for rain after meeting farmers worried about drought. A local newspaper said it was "a throwback to prehistoric attempts at inducing rain" but a few days after the event, it did indeed start to rain. Cardinal Juan Jose Omella, archbishop of Barcelona, Spanish, aged 79. Omella is a man after Pope Francis' own heart. Unassuming and good-natured, he lives a humble life despite his lofty title, dedicating his Church career to pastoral care, promoting social justice and embodying a compassionate and inclusive vision of Catholicism.

"We must not see reality only through the eyes of those who have the most, but also through the eyes of the poor," he told the Crux news site in April 2022, in words reflecting Francis' world vision. He was born in 1946 in the village of Cretas in northeastern Spain. After being ordained in 1970 he served as a priest in a number of Spanish parishes and also spent a year as a missionary in Zaire, now called Democratic Republic of Congo. Underscoring his dedication to social causes, from 1999 to 2015 he worked closely with Spain's Manos Unidas charity, which tackles famine, disease and poverty in the developing world.



information leaks. Dan Caldwell, a Hegseth aide; Colin Carroll, chief of staff to Deputy Defence Secretary Stephen Feinberg; and Darin Selnick, Mr. Hegseth's deputy chief of staff, were escorted out of the Pentagon. While the three initially had been placed on leave pending the investigation, a joint statement shared by Mr. Caldwell on X on Saturday said the three "still have not been told what exactly we were investigated for, if there is still an active investigation, or if there was even a real investigation of 'leaks' to begin with." Mr. Caldwell was the staff member designated as Mr. Hegseth's point person in the Signal chat with Trump Cabinet members. Former Pentagon spokesman John Ulyot also announced he was resigning last week, unrelated to the leaks. The Pentagon said, however, that Ulyot was asked to resign.

Bangladesh seeks Interpol Red Notice against ousted PM Sheikh Hasina

Dhaka: Bangladesh has requested Interpol to issue a red notice against former Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and 11 others in connection with a case alleging conspiracy to overthrow the Muhammad Yunus-led interim government, according to local media reports.

According to reports, the request was submitted by the Bangladesh Police Headquarters amid an ongoing investigation into charges of inciting civil war and plotting to unseat the transitional administration. Leading Bangladeshi daily, The Dhaka Tribune, quoted Assistant Inspector General (Media) Enamul Haque Sagor as confirming the development. "These applications are filed in connection with allegations that emerge during investigations or through ongoing case proceedings," he stated. The red notice, once issued, would enable law enforcement agencies globally to locate and provisionally detain the accused individuals pending extradition or other legal actions. "Interpol plays a key role in identifying the locations of fugitives residing abroad.

Struggling with sleep? Here's why strength training can help



muscle fibres sustain tiny tears when you lift weights. These signal the brain to trigger deeper sleep, which is essential for muscle repair and recovery.

Why strength training is good for old-age sleeplessness

Older adults may have trouble sleeping due to chronic pain from ailments like arthritis or muscle weakening. Strength training can lessen pain and discomfort by increasing muscle mass and enhancing joint stability. Additionally, improving mobility via muscle and bone strength may lessen the restlessness that usually interferes with sleep. Strength exercises calm the brain. Strength exercise improves mental health by lowering anxiety, boosting confidence and creating a sense of success. This can eventually lead to a more tranquil mind, which will make it simpler to unwind before bed. Other than strength training, massages also help because they are a passive exercise. People who do pranayama, yoga and functional training are certainly bound to get a good amount of quality sleep. Try recreational sports in the evening like badminton, volleyball, tennis or football, as both guarantee a good night's sleep.

Which routines work best?

Lifting weights, working out using resistance bands, squats, push-ups and sit-ups work best. The key to effective strength training is repetition. You should perform sets of resistance exercises that include up to 12 repetitions apiece. Begin with one set of each activity per workout and gradually increase to multiple sets once they are comfortable. Squats are a great full-body exercise as they target the legs and core. Push-ups strengthen the chest, shoulders, and triceps. Rows target the back and biceps while an overhead press strengthens the shoulders and upper back. Research suggests that exercises could be an alternative or complementary approach to existing therapies for sleep problems, particularly given that exercise is inexpensive, accessible, and generally safe.

Sleep has a direct relationship with your activity quotient. It comes automatically because the body does want to get into passivity after hyperactivity. Everybody has different ideas about how much sleep is sufficient. However, the average adult requires 7 to 9 hours each night. Many adults experience brief episodes of sleeplessness at some point. Days or weeks may pass during this time. Stress or a traumatic experience is typically the cause of short-term sleeplessness. But other people have long-term insomnia, also termed chronic insomnia. This continues for at least three months. The primary issue can be insomnia, or it might be connected to other illnesses or medications. Studies have now shown that strength training is better for sleep than simple aerobic exercise. Strength training or resistance exercises boost muscular repair, raising hormone levels that support deeper sleep and lowering stress and anxiety.

What happens when you do regular strength training?

It balances stress hormones like cortisol and melatonin, which controls sleep patterns. It can increase levels of hormones like testosterone and growth hormone, which have been linked to deeper and more restful sleep. Your

Stress raises stroke risk in younger women: Neurologist tells you how to unwind

Stress is riskier for women than men as it triggers brain strokes in them, according to a recent study published in the journal *Neurology*. Researchers found a link between chronic stress and stroke risk in younger women (ages 18-49) but not in men. They also found that moderate stress levels were associated with a 78 per cent higher risk in women. While the team at Helsinki University Hospital, Finland, found an association between stress and strokes, they didn't list it as a direct cause. However, even this association is important as stress can contribute to high blood pressure and inflammation, both of which are high-risk triggers for strokes. The researchers recruited 426 people between 18 and 49, all of whom had an ischemic stroke and about half of whom were women. The team had another group of 426 people who had never had a stroke. Surveys revealed that those who had strokes experienced significantly higher levels of stress. According to Dr PN Renjen, senior consultant, neurology, Indraprastha Apollo Hospitals, Delhi, "Women are more sensitive to stress hormones. Besides, they have more stressors as they multitask between work and home, still carrying the heft of care-giving."

How is stress a big risk factor for stroke?

Chronic stress can elevate blood pressure, heart rate, and levels of sugar and fat in the blood, creating conditions for forming blood clots, which block blood vessels in the brain, leading to a stroke. Additionally, stress may lead to unhealthy lifestyle choices such as smoking, alcohol consumption, and poor diet, further increasing susceptibility to stroke.

Why do women tend to suffer more from stress than men?

Biologically, women are more sensitive to stress hormones like the corticotropin-releasing factor (CRF), with their neurons binding more tightly to these hormones and showing lesser adaptive responses than men. Socially, women face added pressures from caregiving responsibilities, workplace inequities, and societal expectations. These cause depression, anxiety disorders and emotional exhaus-



tion. Research highlights that younger women report higher stress levels due to limited coping strategies at earlier life stages.

What should women do to lower their stress levels?

Women can manage stress effectively by adopting healthy coping mechanisms such as exercise, mindfulness practices like yoga or meditation, and seeking emotional support from friends or professionals. Engage in hobbies or self-care activities. It is also important for women to recognize the signs of chronic stress early and address underlying causes such as workload or relationship issues through structured problem-solving or counselling.

What should your immediate response be to a stressful situation?

For immediate stress management, techniques like counting to ten before reacting, practising positive self-talk, or stepping away from the situation can help you regain composure. Just do deep breathing exercises to activate your body's relaxation response, reducing heart rate and tension. Mindfulness meditation is another effective technique, encouraging focus on the present moment and breaking the cycle of anxious thoughts. Physical activity, such as a brisk walk or yoga, can release endorphins, improving mood and reducing stress hormones.

In Karnataka, efforts on to combat the challenge of a hidden disability in newborns: hearing impairment

As late identification of hearing problems among the newborns can result in permanent hearing loss, early screening is being done on a priority in Karnataka, with the Mysuru-based All India Institute of Speech and Hearing (AIISH), a premier institute in the field of speech and hearing, under the Union Ministry of Health and Family, successfully running a Newborn Screening (NBS) programme.

Under the NBS, newborns are screened for communication disorders before they are discharged from the hospital they are born in. To do this, AIISH has collaborated with several hospitals to conduct screening programmes to detect hearing impairment and other developmental disabilities that can affect speech and language development. The screening has been helping in early intervention for those identified with the disorders, as any delay in the identification poses a risk, and affects successful management of children with hearing loss, according to AIISH. AIISH has been running campaigns for early interventions and has joined hands with various hospitals in Mysuru and elsewhere in the State, besides select locations in other parts of the country. "Children born with hearing loss will not develop speech since they don't hear it and therefore early interventions are a must," said experts at AIISH here. AIISH Mysuru has been stressing on early identification and intervention on hearing issues among infants within three months of the child's birth.

According to AIISH, the first three years of life is the most crucial period for acquiring speech and language skills. Babies acquire speech and language from the time they are born, and one of the ways they learn is through hearing. If they have any problem with hearing and/or other disorders they may have delayed speech and language development, it explains. As part of NBS, over 60,000 infants are screened every year using state-of-art technology within seven days of their birth at the identified hospitals. The newborns who did not pass the screening test were evaluated in detail within two months of their birth to confirm the presence of hearing loss. Earlier data said about 3 in 1,000 newborns are known to have permanent hearing loss. But recent data from NBS says it is 5 in 1,000 newborns and for about two of these infants, the hearing loss is permanent. These infants typically won't have any overt signs due to

which the hearing loss goes undetected unless a hearing screening test is conducted. It is important to know that hearing loss can be accurately identified right at birth through audiological tests, the institute said in a note during the expansion of NBS. "Over 95% of hearing loss cases stem from damage to the inner ear, which is often not visible to the naked eye. It is called a hidden disability," explain AIISH's audiologists Indira C.P. and Sandeep M., from the Department of Prevention of Communication Disorders.

The only reliable methods for detecting hearing loss in newborns are objective tests like otoacoustic emissions (OAE) and auditory brainstem responses (ABR). Without these tests, hearing loss may go undetected, preventing children from developing speech. It is scientifically well-established that early intervention is crucial, they explain. Many hospitals in Mysuru are collaborating with the AIISH for newborn screening. The 1-3-6 rule recommends that all newborns undergo hearing loss screening at one month of age. At-risk infants should have a diagnostic assessment at three months, and intervention should start at six months. "Following these timelines will help children with hearing loss develop speech and communication skills on par with their hearing peers," the audiologists advice, highlighting the significance of early identification of hearing loss in infants. However, AIISH, says that the age of identification in India is late -- beyond 3 years. It is said based on the reports that less than 1% of newborns in India are screened for hearing loss. By the time parents notice signs of hearing difficulties such as a lack of response to sounds, it is often too late. This leads to significant developmental challenges for the child and puts an immense burden of hearing disability on the family and society, according to experts at AIISH. The All India Institute of Speech and Hearing in Mysuru. File photograph. Consequently, AIISH has joined hands with the Department of Health and Family Welfare, Government of Karnataka, to educate medical teams working under Rashtriya Bal Swasthya Karyakram (RBSK) and District Early Intervention Centre (DEIC) on early screening of communication disorders in children. AIISH collaborates with District Early Intervention Center (DEIC), Mysuru, with the purpose of carrying out newborn screening in the taluk hospitals on a quarterly basis.

A many splendored nut: studying the health benefits of eating almonds regularly



Move over tea, olive oil, turmeric, and milk: there's a tiny seed that might have just out-distanced all these foods in terms of most research being conducted on it. In the last couple of decades, the humble almond, it turns out, is right on top of a list of foods that are attracting a great deal of research and funding, as more benefits are being dragged out of its kernel, after splitting apart the hull and shell. Reportedly, over 200 peer-reviewed publications that link almonds to various health benefits have been out, these past 20 years. Among the benefits this nearly frenetic research has laid bare are protection for heart health, an edge in weight management, salutary effects on blood sugar, cholesterol, and gut health, and assisting with post-exercise recovery, not to mention, even skin care, and keeping wrinkles at bay.

The energy, and ostensibly, funding behind this activity comes from the Almond Board of California (ABC), established in 1950, and tasked with promoting almond consumption in both the domestic and international markets, but also with ensuring sustainable growing techniques, and of course, promoting research on the health benefits hidden in the nut. The Board actively works with nutritionists and dietitians across the world to work in an effort to integrate almonds, in some form, into the diet. About 4% of the Board's funds are budgeted for research and innovation, which includes nutritional research. To get a sense of the finances at play, the ABC successfully secured US \$ 7 million in funding from the United States Department of Agriculture, besides US \$ 3.41 million for market access and US \$ 2,21,000 in foreign market development and US \$ 250,000 in emerging markets funding in 2024. Key among the international locations that the ABC targets is India, a country, they acknowledge, that makes things easy for them, with the almond already embedded in local cultures, and food practices. It is also the second-biggest international market for almonds, after the United States itself. In 2023-24, Indian shipments from California amounted to 400 million pounds, a four-time increase since a decade ago.

What's in the nut?

Here are some basic facts about the almond, just to lay the ground for the powerhouse claims that researchers have made about the nut: one ounce or 28 grams of almonds, comprising roughly 23 nuts apparently pack in 6 grams of protein, 4 grams of fibre, 9 grams of monounsaturated fats, and a smattering of Vitamin E, calcium, potassium, phosphorous, riboflavin (Vitamin B), magnesium and iron. It is of course well known that proteins are building blocks, and help build and preserve and maintain bones, muscle, skin, nails, and confer satiety, while monounsaturated fats help lower harmful cholesterol, and increase protective HDL cholesterol. The multiple benefits that vitamins and minerals confer are also well documented. As Elena Hemler, the nutrition programme lead with ABC, says, "Almonds are incredibly nutrient dense." She adds that emerging areas of research include sleep benefits, healthy ageing, and impacts on cancer. "Post COVID-19," Clarice Turner, president and CEO, ABC, says, "there has been a great deal of interest in studying what we put on our plates, and healthy stuff in our bodies." This has also spurred interest in scientifically establishing the perceived beneficial effects of almonds for humans, as a healthy snack.

Almonds are also very versatile today, coming in as many as 14 forms, including oils, kernels, slivers, flour, milk, butter, coming with the shell, skin, blanched, or roasted and

in multiple favours, with research on into charming, and tasty food pairings with almonds. Harbinder Maan, associate director, trade, marketing and stewardship, ABC, who spearheads the flavour side of the business says: "Today, almonds come in more forms than any other tree nut." The almond industry might have also benefited, in recent times, from seemingly increasing gluten allergies among people in different parts of the world, as it provides flour and milk that are gluten free, and vegan options, explains Emily Fleischmann, vice president, global market development, ABC. As far as allergies go, while nut allergies might be increasing, studies show that less than 1% of the population have a tree nut (as is the almond) allergy, and less than 0.5% have almond allergies, thus not of significance to hamper use of the nut itself, Ms. Hemler explains.

Two recent Indian studies, the results of which were published in 2023, showed a strong correlation between good blood sugar control and eating a fixed quantity of almonds. One study led by Anoop Misra, Professor and Chairman, Fortis-C-DOC Centre of Excellence for Diabetes, Metabolic Diseases, and Endocrinology (New Delhi) and Seema Gulati, head, Nutrition Research Group, National Diabetes, Obesity, and Cholesterol Foundation showed that study participants who ate 20g of almonds 30 minutes before a meal showed significant improvements in glycemic control compared to those not eating almonds before meals over three months. The study recommended that almonds can be part of a nutritious dietary solution offering good potential for the reversal of prediabetes to normal glucose regulation in some Asian Indians and therefore potentially prevent or delay the development of diabetes in people with prediabetes. The other study by Viswanathan Mohan, president and chief of diabetes research at Madras Diabetes Research Foundation in Chennai, India, with collaborators R. M. Anjana, of the MDRF; Richard Mattes, from Purdue University; Jordi Salas from the Universitat Rovira i Virgili; and Walter Willett, MD, Harvard University, showed good control of blood glucose levels. The results of the study indicated that eating almonds daily for 12 weeks reduced insulin resistance and improved pancreatic function besides the positive impact on blood glucose levels. In the control study, the treatment group also achieved significant reductions in body weight, body mass index, and waist circumference during the study period, and lowered total cholesterol levels.

In 2024, a paper by Mark Kern, professor of exercise and nutritional sciences at San Diego State University, showed that snacking on two ounces (57g) of almonds for eight weeks modestly reduced pain ratings, helped maintain muscle strength, and reduced muscle damage after exercise. Another study, this time by Oliver C. Witard, Senior Lecturer in Exercise Metabolism and Nutrition at Kings College London, suggested that snacking on almonds for eight weeks reduced perceived feelings of muscle soreness during recovery from muscle-damaging exercise, resulting in better maintenance of muscle functional capacity. Almonds' impact on weight loss has also been evaluated by Alison Coates, Professor of Human Nutrition and Director of the Alliance for Research in Exercise, Nutrition, and Activity at the University of South Australia. She argued in a couple of papers that they may also support weight loss as part of a reduced-calorie diet among adults with overweight or obesity.

Currently research is focussed only on benefits from oral consumption of almonds, explains Ms. Fleischmann, and not really into deriving compounds from almonds that can enter pharmacology, and be used as therapeutics. "We don't want almonds to be looked upon as medicine," she says, while Ms. Hemler reasons that the angle is that the whole, raw almond as a package can today be a wonder food. However, she makes it very clear that nutritionally dense as it is, it is not a silver bullet. Relying only on a handful of almonds to grant health benefits would be foolhardy. Following a proper diet and exercise regimen, and supplementing those aspects with regular consumption of almonds in the recommended dose would be the way to go.

With drug Empagliflozin going off patent, doctors look forward to price reduction, benefitting diabetic, heart and kidney patients

Earlier this week, German manufacturer Boehringer Ingelheim's patent to manufacture Empagliflozin, a medication to treat type 2 diabetes mellitus, expired in India. Empagliflozin is sold under the brand name Jardiance. "Empagliflozin belongs to the SGLT-2i group of drugs. (Sodium glucose transporter inhibitor) drugs. These drugs have shown multiple benefits, including weight loss, control of diabetes, prevention of heart failures, heart attacks and kidney damage, said V. Mohan, chairman, Dr. Mohan's Diabetes Specialities Centre, Chennai. "Now that the drug is going off patent, it will be prescribed more," he said. Until the year 2000, Indian diabetologists prescribed only three classes of drugs -- metformin, sulfonylureas and insulin. But these medications can cause hypoglycaemia. During this time, research to improve the control of diabetes was ongoing, and gliptins and gliiflozins were the answers. These two new classes of drugs not only controlled blood sugar without causing hypoglycaemia, but also protected the heart and kidneys. Gliptins were introduced in 2006 but were expensive. A few years ago the manufacture of these drugs became universal.

With the end of patent, the price of 25mg tablet of empagliflozin which until till now cost ₹70 per tablet, could cost ₹15 to 20. A 10mg tablet will cost ₹10 to ₹15, surmised diabetologist A. Panneeselvam. "As a clinician, if 100 patients needed it, I would prescribe it for only 10 patients, because of the cost factor. Now we will recommend it for all patients who will benefit," he said. The expected fall in price however, does not translate into a panacea for the ailment, he cautioned. People must adhere to diet and exercise advice, he pointed out.

What is the drug Empagliflozin?

Empagliflozin, marketed as Jardiance, is a drug for type 2 diabetes mellitus, manufactured by Boehringer Ingelheim, a pharmaceutical company headquartered in Germany. It is used as an adjunct to diet and exercise, to improve glycemic control and reduce the risk of cardiovascular death in patients with established cardiovascular disease, as per its website. The patent for the drug expired on March 11, and reports indicate multiple generics are expected to hit the market, at lower prices. The India diabetes care drugs market was estimated to be worth USD 1.7 billion in 2024 and is expected to reach USD 2.01 billion by 2029. Rajaram Anantharaman, consultant cardiologist with



Kauvery Hospital said research on the drug had revealed its protective effects for the heart. Studies showed that the drug helped people at risk for heart disease even if they did not have diabetes. "In the past 20 years we had no new major heart medication. These SGLT 2 inhibitors prevent glucose absorption in the kidney. The fluid collection in the lung is therefore reduced, and hospital admission with heart failure comes down. Overall deaths also drop," he explained.

Cardiologists use four different medications for heart failure. They are beta blockers, ARNI inhibitors, mineralocorticoid receptor antagonists and SGLT2 inhibitors. The other three drugs are already available in generic form, Dr. Rajaram said. "We call them the four pillars of heart failure (treatment). With empagliflozin becoming cheaper, the medications will reduce symptoms, deaths and hospitalisations. "We do have a lot of heart failure patients in India. This drug will help in terms of symptoms and improving quality of life," he added. Rajan Ravichandran, senior consultant nephrologist with MIOT, said: "For some unknown reason the drug also protects the kidney. The drug's mechanism reduces protein leak into urine. When sugar is removed along with water, the heart function will improve. Once the tissue oedema goes away the organ functions better. That applies to kidneys also," he explained. The drug was found useful in kidney disease as it helped in weight loss and prevented water retention. "Experience has shown that the drug can be used in kidney patients with or without heart failure or diabetes," Dr. Rajan said, recalling that he had used the drug soon after it was introduced a decade ago. "When I used the drug when it first came out, on a patient, the achievement was remarkable."

How China is fighting U.S. tariffs



In the three months since U.S. President Donald Trump launched his "America First" trade policy, weaponising trade to extract concessions from his partner countries, there are indications that it could bring the global economy to its knees. "Reciprocal tariffs" were proposed as a key component for eliminating what Mr. Trump perceived as "unfair trade practices" of partner countries. But on April 9, the day this instrument was to take effect, President Trump did a turnaround and the implementation of "reciprocal tariffs" was postponed by 90 days for all 57 target countries, except China. The objective of the U.S. administration is to compel its trade partners to negotiate bilateral agreements within the stipulated period, through which they offer concessions to American stakeholders. The Trump administration's expectation is that trade partners would then be forced to reduce their trade deficits vis-à-vis the U.S., an overarching trade policy objective of the new President. China had declared right from the beginning, even as the U.S. President was laying down the contours of this aggressive trade policy, that it would challenge the decision to impose "reciprocal tariffs". And as anticipated, China announced its decision to impose retaliatory tariffs equivalent to the 34% "reciprocal tariff" that it faced, in response to which Mr. Trump imposed an additional tariff of 50%, raising the overall tariff burden to 104%. China then escalated the trade war by imposing 125% tariffs on all its imports from the U.S., which led to the White House increasing tariffs again to 145%.

However, in the midst of this escalation, Washington tacitly admitted to the potential impact these tariffs would bring by exempting a number of critical electronic goods, including computers, laptops, smartphones, and semiconductor devices, from such tariffs, reflecting the overwhelming dependence of the U.S. on import of these products. There is still confusion about the same in the Trump administration, which was evident when Commerce Secretary, Howard Lutnick, informed that tariffs on electronics products would be included within semiconductor tariffs in a "month or two", only to be contradicted by the President, who declared that these tariffs would be imposed sooner. The "America First" trade policy is causing much chaos, with its adverse implications impossible to gauge at this juncture. Two sets of issues arise as Donald Trump's trade war continues to hold the global economy to ransom. First, can the 90-day pause in the implementation of "reciprocal tariffs" provide the Trump team opportunities to stitch together at least a few agreements that would allow the "dealmaker" President to wax eloquent about his accomplishments? Secondly, what explains Xi Jinping's extraordinary defiance against Donald Trump's all-out attempt to corner Beijing? And more importantly, does Mr. Xi have a strong trump card with which he can effectively counter Donald Trump and his "America First" trade policy? Though Donald Trump's decision to pause the implementation of "reciprocal tariffs" to push his trade partners to conclude bilateral deals made immediate headlines, the move was part of a strategy that the President's advisers had worked out well before he took office. Stephen Marin, chair of the U.S. council of economic advisers, had argued in a paper published immediately after Donald Trump's election as President that "tariffs create negotiating leverage for incentivising better terms from the rest of the world on both trade and security terms. America would encourage other

nations to move to lower tariff tiers, improving burden sharing". Peter Navarro, senior counselor for trade and manufacturing, explained that the 90-day pause was "part of a calculated negotiating tactic", and "a demonstration of Trump's signature dealmaking style".

These explanations would no doubt be immensely satisfying for the President, but the question is whether trade deals can actually be re-negotiated with at least a few targeted countries. This seems improbable for at least two reasons. Under the Trump administration, the U.S.' negotiating approach has undergone a major change, as the de jure trade negotiator, the U.S. Trade Representative (USTR) is no longer in charge of negotiations. Peter Navarro revealed that Trump, "the boss, is going to be chief negotiator. Nothing is done without him looking very carefully at it." When the head of the government of the world's largest economy decides to micro-manage trade deals, it is possibly safe to conclude that negotiations would be a non-starter. A second problem for the U.S. is that it has a gargantuan negotiating agenda, a peek into which was provided in a recent USTR report — the National Trade Estimate Report on Foreign Trade Barriers. This report highlights "significant foreign barriers to U.S. exports, U.S. foreign direct investment and U.S. electronic commerce" in India and 56 other countries. It identifies "unfair trade practices [undermining] U.S. exporters' competitiveness and, in some cases, [preventing] U.S./ goods from entering the foreign market entirely". It can, therefore, be argued that unless these "unfair trade practices" identified by the USTR are removed, the U.S. President's aspiration of "Making America Great Again" cannot be realised. If Trump has to secure this grand bargain, India, for instance, would have to open its agricultural markets for U.S. agri-business, lower its agricultural subsidies, discontinue its public distribution system, and amend its Patents Act risking the future of India's generic pharmaceutical companies providing affordable medicines. India would also have to discontinue policies that the U.S. has repeatedly red-flagged, including data localisation, and regulations on genetically modified crops and dairy products. Would India and other targeted countries allow Donald Trump to coerce them into amending their laws and policies to "clinch" a trade deal? The most unexpected development following the launch of Trump's trade war has been China's retaliation. In his first term as President, Mr. Trump had forced China to ink an enforceable Economic and Trade Agreement in 2020, acceding to several of his demands. But over the past five years, the nature of the U.S.-China trade relationship has changed drastically, which could explain the push back from the world's second largest economy. In 2018, the U.S. was China's largest export market with a 19.2% share. But over the past six years, China reduced this figure to below 15% and in the first quarter of 2025, only 13.5% of China's exports reached the U.S. At the same time, China has diversified its export markets, with ASEAN emerging as the most significant destination. Several major economies, including India, Vietnam, and the Russian Federation, have seen an appreciable increase of the Chinese footprint in their economies. This is a remarkable instance of hedging against risk, from the actions of an aggressive trade partner, which has enabled China so far to counter one of the worst trade-related escalations in modern history. By diversifying its exports as a part of its defensive strategy, China is in a position to leverage its two significant strengths to force the hands of its aggressor. The first is China's control over the rare earth market, accounting for 92% of global output. China has already shown its hand by imposing export restrictions on seven types of rare earth minerals in the past few days. A second advantage for China is its position as the second largest holder of U.S. Treasury bonds, but in recent years, it has been gradually selling its holdings. Since 2018, China has reduced its holdings from \$1.2 trillion (22% of the total) to \$761 billion (less than 9%) in January 2025 (see Charts). Though it seems unlikely at this juncture that China would take the risk of dumping its holding to challenge the U.S., any further escalation of the trade war can alter the situation. Given this grave risk of economic disruption, major economies must coordinate their efforts to ensure that the U.S. President abandons unilateralism, and reposes his faith in multilateralism as the way forward.

What are the key issues in the challenge to the new Waqf law

The Supreme Court on Thursday deferred its interim decision on the pleas challenging the Waqf Act, 2025 to May 5. This came after the Centre sought time to file an affidavit defending the law, but assured the court it will not, till the next hearing, appoint non-Muslims to Waqf boards or change the character or status of any Waqf. One April 16, a three-judge Bench led by Chief Justice of India Sanjiv Khanna, and comprising Justices P V Sanjay Kumar and K V Viswanathan, gave an early hearing to a batch of nearly 65 petitions challenging the validity of the contentious new law. The petitioners include All India Majlis-e-Ittehadul Muslimeen MP Asaduddin Owaisi, TMC MP Mahua Moitra, RJD MP Manoj Kumar Jha, Samajwadi Party MP Zia Ur Rehman, Congress MPs Imran Masood and Mohammad Jawed, former MP Udit Raj, principal of Darul Uloom Deoband Maulana Mahmood Asad Madani, the YSR Congress Party, and the Communist Party of India. In the hearing that lasted for two hours, the Bench questioned the Centre, while also telling the petitioners that "there are some good aspects to the law". Senior Advocate Kapil Sibal, who led the arguments for the petitioners, essentially framed the law as violative of Article 26 of the Constitution, with the Parliament having interfered on "the essential and integral parts of the faith." Article 26, a fundamental right under Part 3 of the Constitution, guarantees the freedom to manage the religious affairs of the citizens, and is subject to only three restrictions — public order, morality, and health. Doing away with concept of "Waqf by use": "Waqf by use" simply means that land used for Muslim religious or charitable purposes for a long time can be deemed to be a Waqf even if it is not registered as such. The 2025 law does away with the concept of Waqf by use (which it refers to as "Waqf-by-user") for future dedications, and restricts it only to properties that are already registered as Waqf. It further states that where there is a dispute, or if a property is allegedly government-owned, that land in question will not be treated as Waqf-by-use. The government's argument is that land is often encroached upon in the name of Waqf, making it necessary to do away with the legal mechanism for this to happen. However, the move raises questions over the status of several Waqf-by-use properties, which have long contained mosques or graveyards but not been registered as Waqfs.

The petitioners argued that by its nature, Waqf-by-use lands are difficult to register. CJI Khanna seemed to echo this sentiment, asking the Centre how can someone register a land that has been used as Waqf for, say, 300 years. "As far as Waqf-by-user is concerned, it will be very difficult to register. So, there is ambiguity there. You may have a point that [it's] being misused... but at the same time, there is genuine Waqf-by-user also," CJI Khanna



said. The petitioners also stated that Waqf by use as a concept has long been recognised by courts, something that was acknowledged in the apex court's landmark 2019 Ayodhya judgement. Powers of district collector: The SC also mentioned it is considering staying another provision involving powers of the district collector, which could have a bearing on Waqf-by-use lands. Under the 2025 law, if the district collector identifies land, currently in use as a Waqf, as government land, then it ceases to be Waqf land till a court decides the dispute. This power, which flows from a crucial proviso to Section 3(c) of the Act, could alter the status of Waqf land even before a court has decided its status. Although this provision has not been stayed yet, Thursday's order notes the Centre's statement that "the character or status" of any Waqf will not be changed. Inclusion of non-Muslims in Waqf boards: The petitioners argued that the 2025 law, which allows non-Muslims to be part of Waqf boards and the Waqf council, is violative of Articles 26(b), 26(c), and 26(d) of the Constitution which guarantee a community's right to "manage its own affairs in matters of religion", "own and acquire movable and immovable property", and "administer such property in accordance with law", respectively. While the Centre argued that allowing non-Muslims will not affect the veto rights of the community when it comes to dealing with Waqfs, the petitioners said that "even one [non-Muslim] is too many." The Bench questioned the Centre on the issue, asking Solicitor General Tushar Mehta to name one instance in which Parliament allowed members of another faith into boards managing the religious affairs of a community. "Are you saying that from now on you will allow Muslims to be part of the Hindu endowment boards? Say it openly," the CJI asked. This is one of the provisions that the SC said it was likely to stay. Thursday's order recorded a statement by Mehta that if the "Government of any State or the National Capital Territory of Delhi makes any such appointment(s), the same may be declared void." Applicability of Limitations Act: Sibal also challenged a provision in the 2025 law that allows the applicability of the Limitation Act with respect to Waqf properties. The Limitation Act essentially bars parties from making a legal claim, say, against encroachment.

The dark forest: Into the mysterious world of the Myristica swamps



Priya Ranganathan's first encounter with a Myristica swamp was back in 2019 when she was working as a research assistant at the Bengaluru-based Ashoka Trust for Research in Ecology and the Environment (ATREE) on a hydro-ecology project. As part of a field trip with other researchers, she was exploring the Aghanashini, one of the rivers that flows through Sirsi taluk in Uttara Kannada district. "We trekked quite a distance into one of these swamps," she says, recalling that since it was during the monsoons, there was a heavy mist all over the landscape. "I remember thinking that it was so incredibly cool: a Malabar pit viper was lying there, roots everywhere, frogs were croaking, the mist was so low... it looked like a lost world," says Priya, who has since closely studied this unique ecosystem and has just come out with a book titled *The Dark Forest: An Illustrated Guide to the Biodiversity of the Myristica Swamps*. Her interest, piqued during this first encounter, deepened as she began studying these swamps as part of a project she was working on with ATREE researchers Dr G. Ravikanth and Dr N.A. Aravind. The time she spent reviewing literature on these swamps, talking to people who had worked in these places, and writing a manuscript based on this work, "made me interested in scientifically assessing swamps as a system," says Priya, who eventually started her PhD on the subject, which she is currently pursuing at ATREE with Dr Ravikanth and Dr Jagdish Krishnaswamy, Dean, School of Environment and Sustainability (SES), Indian Institute for Human Settlements (IIHS). "That is how the journey took off, and I have not looked back since then." Myristica swamps are unique, freshwater swamp ecosystems found in certain parts of the Western Ghats, "one of the least studied and most endangered wetland ecosystems in the country," writes Priya in *The Dark Forest*, going on to describe them as "relic ecosystems, remnants of an ancient landscape that once stretched across the river valleys of the Western Ghats."

These swamps, which mostly occur along the "upper reaches of river systems within wet evergreen forest watersheds" and rely on "monsoon rainfall and seasonal flooding to sustain their unique hydrological cycle," are named after the dominant trees in this landscape, which belong to the Myristica or nutmeg family, one of the oldest flowering plant groups in the world. "The exact dating of these landscapes hasn't been done yet, but fossils resembling the Myristica seeds and leaves have been found dating back to the Early Cretaceous period," she says, referring to a period around 145 to 100.5 million years ago, when the earth's landmass was still only two continents, Gondwana and Laurasia, with dinosaurs roaming across them. While there are five species of Myristica trees found in the Western Ghats today, not all of them are adapted to be in swamp conditions, she says. "Some are found in upland forests, but there are two species, *Gymnacranthera canarica* and *Myristica fatua*, which have evolved to have knee and stilt roots. This allows them to breathe in waterlogged conditions," she says, adding that these trees also have lenticels or small pores on the surface of their roots to further help with respiration. In addition to these trees, the Myristica swamps, which are found scattered across Karnataka, Kerala, Goa and Maharashtra, are home to many other forms of plant life, with around 90 species of herbaceous plants, 46 species of shrubs, 27 species of climbers and lianas and 80 species of trees, states *The Dark Forest*. It also supports a wide variety of animals, many of which are endemic to the Western Ghats, such as the lion-tailed macaque, Malabar giant squirrel, the rare Myristica Bamboo tail damselfly only found in these swamps, the critically endangered Kottigehar dancing frog and the Malabar grey hornbill. Also, "apart from being

hotspots of unique biodiversity in the Western Ghats, Myristica swamps also provide various ecosystem services to local communities living near them," explains Priya. Some swamps are sacred groves where people have worshipped for generations, helping preserve these spaces. Not only do the swamps replenish the groundwater table and retain surface water and help regulate air temperature even during the summer months, but also, "much like other wetlands, they prevent downstream flooding by slowing the flow of water and allowing it to infiltrate into their soils," she says. Some swamps also have immense cultural significance, serving as sacred sites for local communities who guard and look after them because of this. "Deities such as Chowdamma (the water goddess) and Hulidevaru (the tiger god) are worshipped in the form of stone statues placed within the dark swamp forests in Uttara Kannada district, Karnataka," says Priya. Threats and challenges: Despite the uniqueness and importance of these Myristica swamps, not enough attention has been paid to them, unlike coastal wetlands like mangroves, whose role in coastal protection, biodiversity support and ecosystem services is much better known. "The reason we talk so much about mangroves is that they are easily accessible," she says.

Besides being poorly understood, or perhaps because they are so poorly understood, Myristica swamps are under threat due to the ongoing climate crisis, which leads to rising temperatures and changing rainfall patterns, as well as human activities, she says. "In Uttara Kannada, the biggest threat is areca nut plantations and paddy fields, both water-intensive crops." Since these Myristica swamps offer a sustained water source, even during the dry months, people sometimes encroach and plant crops in and around them, destroying the ecosystem. "Another issue is of people extracting water from the swamp," she says. "That changes the growth of the seeds and seedlings. Older trees may survive without much water, but the young, growing seedlings are badly affected." While the Karnataka Forest Department has been actively working on restoring and raising awareness about swamps, they continue to be managed as forests, a classification that, in Priya's opinion, needs to be changed for better conservation strategies. "A swamp is a wetland and not just a forest. Water is what rules in a swamp; it is not just about trees being present," she says. "I feel that, in order to successfully conserve swamps and market them as unique systems to people, you need to market them as wetlands, not forests. Priya says that the kernel of the idea for *The Dark Forest* first cropped up around 2022, when she received her first fieldwork grant. "As part of fieldwork, we have a lot of outreach components in these grants, and I had to come up with outreach material and do some workshops in local schools in the landscape," she says. Since she is not a native speaker of Kannada, she started relying a lot on visual cues, "something creative that would bond them to the system without having to rely on my poor diction and vocabulary," says Priya. To do that more effectively, she reached out to her cousin, Meera Phadnis, "a talented artist," to help create a series of illustrations that could be made into posters. "Whenever we went to these schools, this would be tacked up, and the kids would come and admire it. I was really happy to see how much they loved them." This got her thinking about the illustrated story books she read as a child, she says, recalling "the old world charm, the bright colours and the authenticity" of those books. And since she was writing many articles about the Myristica swamps at that time anyway, she thought she could come up with a little book as an outreach component. *The Dark Forest*, interspersed with Meera's charming illustrations of these mist-swathed ancient wetlands and the plants and animals that live in them, offers both a broad overview of these ecosystems and functions as a field guide. Around 100 copies of the book, which came out in March this year and has been supported by a CSR donation to ATREE by Rubrik India Private Limited, have already been printed. "Since we did it under a grant, we wanted to get out the first hundred copies to people, and the response has been really good," says Priya, who is now actively looking for a publisher to get more copies out to the general public and spread the word. "I want people who've never seen a swamp to feel a connection to this mysterious, remote ecosystem in the forest, which they

It's too early for the Kerala government to feel vindicated

The relationship between the CPI(M)-led Left Democratic Front (LDF) government in Kerala and the Governor has been more or less a tranquil affair during the past decades with two rare exceptions. In the late 1980s, there was a face-off between the CPI(M) and the Governor during the two-year-long tenure of Ram Dulari Sinha, who was a former Union and State Minister from Bihar. The then ruling front locked horns with the Governor over the nomination of a few members to the Senates of the Kerala and Calicut universities of her choice, thereby ignoring the recommendations of the State government. The LDF took to the streets protesting against the Governor and even organised marches to the Raj Bhavan. Later, the LDF government also passed a resolution in the Assembly condemning her "autocratic acts". Some of the young leaders of the Students Federation of India, who were at the forefront of those protests, later graduated in politics to become State Ministers in the second LDF government led by Pinarayi Vijayan, which again hit a collision course with Kerala Governor Arif Mohammad Khan.

Though Mr. Khan began his tenure as Governor by declaring that he wanted to help the State government, the relationship turned sour in no time. Both the Governor and the government toughened their positions on a series of issues concerning the State. At one point, the Chief Minister and the Governor even refused to acknowledge each other and exchange smiles, if not pleasantries, while attending public functions. The Governor also criticised the government at press conferences and challenged activists of the Students' Federation of India, who protested against him on the streets, to confront him directly, and termed them criminals. When Mr. Khan was later appointed Governor of Bihar, the LDF government chose not to give him a ceremonial send-off. Rajendra Vishwanath Arlekar, a former Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) worker, was appointed the next Governor. He began his tenure on a cordial note with the government, even as litigation against the former Governor remained pending with the Supreme Court. Mr. Arlekar surprised everyone who was expecting the conflict between the Governor and government to continue by joining Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan and Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman for a breakfast meeting at Kerala House in New Delhi recently. However, a recent landmark judgment of the Supreme Court has come at the most inopportune



time for both the Governor and the State government. Declaring Tamil Nadu Governor R.N. Ravi's prolonged refusal to give his assent to 10 Bills as illegal and erroneous in law, the Court fixed a time frame for the Governors and the President to act on the Bills passed by the State Legislatures. Kerala was one of the States that took the Governor to the Supreme Court. It had also set the legal and political circles of the State abuzz with its surprise decision to file an appeal in the Supreme Court after President Droupadi Murmu withheld assent for four Bills passed by the Kerala Legislature without disclosing any reasons.

The LDF government was quick to claim that the apex court has vindicated its stand on the issue by setting a timeline for Governors and the President to act on Bills, in the petition filed by Tamil Nadu, even though the Supreme Court is to consider its case only in May. However, it was caught by surprise when Mr. Arlekar gave an interview to the media terming the Supreme Court order as a judicial overstep. This has given rise to apprehensions that the bonhomie between the Governor and the government may not last long. However, the government has approached the situation with abundant caution and the Ministers who responded to the Governor's statement were careful not to rub him the wrong way. They also appeared to have confined themselves to the questions of law discussed in the Supreme Court order and not cross swords with the Governor. It is not yet time for the Kerala government to rejoice since a final verdict on the issues raised by it will be taken up by the Supreme Court only next month. Also, there is apprehension that the Court may refer the case to a Constitution Bench.

China warns countries against striking deals at its expense, comes as India-US trade talks gather pace



Just days before Indian trade negotiators are due to visit the United States on April 23 to advance trade deal discussions, China has cautioned countries against entering into trade agreements with the US at its expense. The warning coincides with US President JD Vance beginning his four-day visit to India on Monday. "China firmly opposes any party reaching a deal at the expense of China's interests. If this happens, China will not accept it and will resolutely take reciprocal countermeasures," the Chinese Ministry of Commerce said in a statement.

The warning comes amid a renewed escalation in the US-China trade war, with both countries seeking to forge trade deals with nations within their respective spheres of influence. While the US is negotiating agreements with India, Japan and South Korea, China is pushing ahead with deals involving Vietnam, Malaysia and Cambodia.

China's warning of retaliation against countries seen aligning with the US efforts to isolate Beijing must be viewed through the lens of global supply chain realities, said Ajay Srivastava, former trade officer and head of the think tank Global Trade Research Initiative (GTRI). Most major economies—including the US, EU, Japan, South Korea and In-

dia—remain heavily dependent on China for the supply of industrial and consumer goods, he noted.

"China is embedded at every level of the global production hierarchy: Tier 1 (finished goods), Tier 2 (intermediate goods), and Tier 3 (parts and components). While the China+1 strategy has enabled some countries to reduce dependence on Chinese finished goods, the global economy still relies heavily on China for critical inputs at the Tier 2 and Tier 3 levels. Replacing China entirely requires building manufacturing capabilities from the raw material stage upwards—an effort that no country has yet achieved at scale," Srivastava said. He added that India must chart an independent course—strengthening its domestic manufacturing base and reducing critical import dependencies through targeted investment in deep manufacturing—while remaining firmly committed to WTO-led multilateral trade norms and avoiding actions that could breach global rules. During his visit to Vietnam, Chinese President Xi Jinping said, in an official statement: "As beneficiaries of economic globalisation, both China and Vietnam should strengthen strategic resolve, jointly oppose unilateral and bullying acts, uphold the global free trade system, and maintain stable global industrial and supply chains." Xi added that both countries are committed to openness and to playing a positive role in ensuring regional industrial and supply chain resilience, as well as in promoting economic globalisation. "A single small boat may not survive a ferocious storm; only by working together can we sail steadily and far," he said. Meanwhile, India-US negotiations are progressing, with the Ministry of Commerce and Industry expanding its NAFTA division, which manages India's bilateral trade relations with the US, Canada and Mexico. India and the US are currently negotiating a bilateral trade agreement aimed at more than doubling trade—from the current \$191 billion to \$500 billion by 2030. The first phase of the deal is expected to be concluded by autumn this year.

Sitharaman says India actively engaging with US; hopes to conclude first tranche of bilateral trade pact by this fall

India is "actively engaging" with the new administration in the United States of America and hopes to conclude the first tranche of the bilateral trade agreement "positively" by fall this year, Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said during an event in the US on Sunday. Sitharaman also said that India is being recognised globally for its potential and economic strength, urging the Indian diaspora in the US to partner with India so that both countries can grow and prosper.

"The keenness with which we are engaging with the US administration, even as I talk, I think the Vice President of the United States of America is in India, he will be engaging with the Prime Minister hopefully this evening or tomorrow. In between all this, the Assistant USTR had visited India to see the progress or to engage with the negotiating team who is dealing with the tariff-related negotiation and the bilateral trade agreement that we want to sign. In fact, the progress of the agreement or the trade agreement that we are working on, at least a first tranche is something which we hope to conclude positively by the fall this year," she said during an interaction with the Indian diaspora at a community gathering held at the India Community Centre, in San Francisco, California, on Sunday evening (Monday morning IST).

While answering a question about the impact of reciprocal tariffs levied by the US on the Indian economy, Sitharaman said: "The long and short of engaging with the US is not just for this reciprocal tariff-related matter but in the interest of keeping an agreement in mind and in the interest of our largest trading partner with whom we need to have an agreement, we are working in order that by fall this year we should at least have the first phase of the agreement signed." The Union Finance Minister said India is one of the countries which is actively engaging with the US. "Equally the priority that we gave to engage with the government here is more than obviously seen with Prime Minister (Narendra Modi) himself visiting the United States in February. You have had the Commerce Minister come. I have come here because I also have the IMF and World Bank meeting but I am scheduled to meet the Treasury Secretary, my counterpart here," she said. Sitharaman is on an official visit to the US and will be visiting San Francisco and Washington D.C. from April 20-25. She will participate in the spring meetings of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank and hold bilateral meetings with her counterparts from several countries including Argentina, Bahrain, Germany, France, Luxembourg, Saudi Arabia, UK, and USA.

During the interaction, Sitharaman noted that India is among the countries that can pull the global growth engine amid the uncertainties. "When we say that India is the fastest-growing economy and when the IMF or the World Bank recognise that India because of the growth potential... India, China, many other such countries, can be the engine to pull the world trade which is in the negative or just about posi-



tive zone, they recognise the potential that exists in India." And by growing with that potential, we will probably be able to lift that trend which is seen globally because of the various uncertainties, keeping growth low, keeping trade low, but keeping inflation high in some places. And as a result in some other places, people think: is there going to be a recession? But in this environment, India is recognised for its potential, the economic strength it has," she said.

She urged the Indians living in the US to partner with India, individually or commercially, corporation to corporation. "...you benefit, the United States of America benefits, India benefits, Indian businesses benefit and together we are going to have to lift global trade and growth. I think that's a very big contribution the Indian diaspora here can do... I appeal to you to take more interest and partner with India in the areas that you choose and help our two countries to grow and prosper," she said. Sitharaman pointed out how India has worked on reducing its fiscal deficit. "It was during Covid when because of the lockdown, the deficit actually rocketed up and even immediately after that, we came up in 2021 with a clear signal as to how we want to manage our deficit. We gave ourselves year-by-year target and said by the year 2026, our fiscal deficit will come well below 4.5 per cent. And that is exactly what we have been following without fail each year... the glide path that was given is being very sincerely followed," she said. She also underlined the decline in India's debt-to-GDP ratio in recent years after it had risen during the Covid-19 pandemic. "Immediately after Covid, our debt position was such that we went over 62 per cent to the GDP. Now within four years we have brought that down to 57.4 per cent of the GDP. So within four years you see clear steps being taken to bring the debt-to-GDP number to acceptable levels and in the July budget we have very clearly said that by 2030, the debt-to-GDP will come closer to 50 per cent... whilst even well developed countries have over a 100 per cent debt (to GDP ratio) and that's how we are managing ours," she said.

Despite a dwindling share, agriculture could buttress India's growth projections amid rising global risks

Amid the uncertainties and disruptions resulting from the ongoing global tariff war, India's growth prospects seem to be at risk. Concerns have been raised over the future trajectory of capital expenditure and private sector investment for India, as the impact of a slowing global economy will make its way to domestic shores, sooner or later. But, there is a silver tint in the clouds of doubt—a good projection for the monsoon that augurs well for agriculture.

Agriculture, which accounts for around 16 per cent share in the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of the country and supports over 46 per cent of the population, has shown resilience over the last few years, especially in the post-Covid phase. The agricultural sector's annual growth has remained consistently above 4 per cent (except 2.7 per cent in 2023-24) in the last five years starting from the pandemic year 2020-21. This year, too, it is expected to gain with an above-normal rainfall forecast for the four-month long monsoon season in India. The monsoon season is likely to bring rainfall at 105 per cent of the long-period average, the India Meteorological Department said in its forecast released Tuesday. This would mark the second consecutive year of 'above normal' rainfall for India and the country would receive 100 per cent or more rainfall this season for the fifth time in the last seven years since 2019.

An above-normal monsoon is expected to spur consumption demand, especially in rural areas. Coupled with

lower inflation and softer crude oil prices, it is seen supporting growth. Estimates of agricultural production also suggest a positive outlook for food inflation, as per the latest economic review of the Ministry of Finance. As per the second advance estimates, kharif and rabi food grain output is expected to rise by 6.8 per cent and 2.8 per cent, respectively. Among cereals, kharif rice production is projected to grow by 6.6 per cent, while wheat output is expected to reach a record 1,154.3 lakh tonnes. However, headwinds from global trade disruptions continue to pose downward risks for India, as was noted by the Reserve Bank of India in its latest monetary policy review on April 9. The real GDP growth for 2025-26, as per the RBI, is projected at 6.5 per cent lower than earlier projection of 6.7 per cent, with Q1 growth seen at 6.5 per cent; Q2 at 6.7 per cent; Q3 at 6.6 per cent; and Q4 at 6.3 per cent. Most forecasts by economists have slashed India's growth projections for the ongoing financial year 2025-26 by at least 20 basis points. However, a likely pickup in rural demand with softening food inflation and crude prices have been underlined as the positive factors. "Apart from the direct impact of higher tariffs, there would be a severe indirect impact as global growth slows and capital flows to emerging economies are adversely impacted. India's domestic investors will also get wary amid the ongoing global disruptions. Hence, the gradual growth of private sector investment post-Covid could remain tepid in the coming quarters."

Will US tariffs hit the medical device industry in India? Here's decoding the ripple effect



Trump tariffs on Indian medical devices, India-US trade war 2025, impact of US tariffs on Indian exports, Trump administration tariff policy, Indian pharma exemption from tariffs, US import duties on medical devices, Indian medical device industry challenges, US FDA approval costs, Indian medical exports to US, India-US trade relations, reciprocal tariffs impact on healthcare. Medical device industry, which is still a growing sector within the country, is likely to be impacted significantly. Exclusion of pharmaceuticals from the reciprocal tariffs being imposed by the Trump administration has come as a huge relief to Indian drug manufacturers, with the US being their largest market—accounting for 31.3% of the total exports in 2024. But the medical device industry, which is still a growing sector within the country, is likely to be impacted significantly.

How will the tariffs impact the medical device industry?

First, imposing a 26% tariff on medical devices imported from India will be a sharp escalation from previous tariffs. "Historically, tariffs on medical devices from India ranged between 0 and 6%, mostly close to zero. This is also higher than tariffs charged on medical devices imported by India from the US, which have historically ranged between 0 and 7.5%, mostly closer to 7.5%," said Rajiv Nath, Forum Coordinator, Association of Indian Medical Device Industry (AIMeD).

Second, India exported medical devices less than half the value of what it imports from the US. India exported medical devices worth \$714.3 million to the US while it imported medical devices worth \$1519 million, according to data presented in the Parliament. Third, it will leave a very small margin for the Indian industry and its competitors such as China. The tariff imposed on Chinese imports is 34%, eight percentage points higher than India. "While India may

seemingly gain a marginal price advantage over China, in certain low-risk, high-volume consumables, the real impact may not be significant," said Himanshu Baid, Managing Director of Polymedicure. Fourth, the industry has concerns that competitors may route their products through a third country with lower tariffs such as the UK or UAE. Fifth, other non-tariff barriers to entry of Indian products remain in place. "India's primary obstacle remains non-tariff barriers rather than tariffs themselves. When it comes to regulatory processes, the US FDA approval costs range from \$9,280 to over \$540,000, whereas US exporters face relatively minimal costs when entering India," said Baid.

What does India export to the US?

Polyethylene bags are the most common export to the US. Along with catheters, artificial joints, surgical knives, and spectacle lenses, top exports from India to the US also include MRI machines, ECG machines, endoscopes, and X-ray tubes. "It is surprising to see some of the items like MRI machines and artificial joints on both the top imports and exports list. There are certain products for which Indian companies are globally competitive and several countries trust Indian products more than those manufactured by our neighbours. But when it comes to India, with American companies offering competitive pricing, many hospitals choose to buy the well-known products rather than relatively new ones manufactured by Indian companies," said Nath.

What does India import from the US?

These include MRI machines, CT machines, artificial joints, gas analysis apparatus used to monitor levels of gases such as oxygen and carbon dioxide in the body, mass spectrometers and orthopaedic or fracture appliances among others. The tariff imposed by India on most of the top ten products is 7.5 per cent, with a tariff of 10 per cent on the gas analysis apparatus and 0 per cent on chromatographs and mass spectrometers (high end equipment used in hospital laboratories).

Why is the pharmaceutical industry exempt from the tariffs?

Indian companies supply 47% of all generic medicines prescribed in the US. And, more than half of the prescriptions of five of the ten most common therapy areas—hypertension, mental health, medicines to control lipids, medicines for nervous system disorders, and anti-ulcer drugs—were supplied by India too. Medicines from Indian companies provided \$219 billion in savings to the US healthcare system in 2022, according to data from IQVIA.

An hour's screen use in bed increases risk of insomnia by 59%: Why new study calls for sleep hygiene reset

Scientists have found another reason to put the phone down. A survey of 45,202 young adults in Norway has discovered that screen-scrolling in bed drives up your risk of insomnia by 59 per cent and cuts your sleep time by 24 minutes. However, social media was not more disruptive than other screen activities, according to a new study published in *Frontiers of Psychiatry*. Insomnia is defined as trouble sleeping and daytime sleepiness at least three times a week over at least three months. While the study did not determine causality—for example whether screen use causes insomnia or if students with insomnia use screens more—researchers found that using a screen in bed at night makes it much more likely you will sleep less and sleep poorly. Sleep problems are widespread and according to ENT surgeon and sleep disorder expert Dr Seemab Shaikh, even studies from AIIMS have shown that sleep disorders, particularly Obstructive Sleep Apnea, affect 34 per cent of the population, meaning one in three individuals. "Whether it's a laptop, mobile, TV, or even a Kindle, these devices keep you awake and can distract you from falling asleep. The blue light emitted by these devices hits the retina and activates the cells connected to the brain's centre, disrupting sleep. This delay in falling asleep leads to a delayed wake-up time, throwing off your entire circadian rhythm. This can lead to short-term memory loss, irritability, mood swings and daytime headaches," said Dr Shaikh.

Why the type of screen doesn't matter

Scientists used the 2022 Students' Health and Wellbeing survey of 45,202 participants in full-time higher education aged between 18 and 28. They sorted responses into three categories, one where participants used social media, one where they did not mention social media and one where participants selected several activities, including social media. Researchers found increasing screen time



after bedtime by one hour in any of these categories increased the odds of insomnia symptoms by 59 per cent and lowered sleep duration by 24 minutes. "Using a screen in bed at night makes it much more likely you will sleep less and sleep poorly, but social media use is no worse than any other form of screen time," said the authors. There was no significant difference between social media and other screen activities, suggesting that screen use itself is the key factor in sleep disruption. This is likely due to time displacement where screen use delays sleep by taking up time that would otherwise be spent resting.

How to reduce screen use

Researchers suggested stopping screen use at least 30-60 minutes before sleep. "Consider disabling notifications to minimize disruptions during the night," they said. Dr Shaikh suggests maintaining a sleep diary of consistent sleep schedules, a comfortable sleep environment and avoiding caffeine and alcohol at least six hours before.

Elon Musk wants more kids through surrogacy, says report: What do you need to know about sperm donation?

Tesla CEO and US billionaire Elon Musk, 53, is looking to increase the size of his family by recruiting surrogates from across the world as a means of quickly creating a "legion" of children, according to a report in the *The Wall Street Journal*. This has led to many questions about sperm donation and freezing procedures and what it means for fertility for men over 50.

Upto what age can men donate sperm?

"Sperm donation in India is safe, well-regulated, and quite simple when done through the right channels. The law allows men between 21 and 55 years to donate sperm. Since sperm quality starts to dip with age, the aim is always to get the healthiest sperm," says Dr Muskaan Chhabra, Birla Fertility & IVF, Delhi. However, a majority of sperm banks would like donors under the age of 35. "Sperm quality tends to deteriorate after 40 in terms of quantity, motility and DNA quality. On the other hand, men can, in theory, father children at even older ages, but assisted reproduction and conception chances might go down with advancing age," says Dr Mannan Gupta, HOD, Obstetrics, Gynaecology & IVF Expert at Elantiss Healthcare, Delhi. Older men can have decreased sperm count, movement and shape, all of which impact fertility. "Moreover, sperm DNA fragmentation increases, which can impact embryo development and raise the risk of miscarriage," adds Dr Gupta.

What are factors to keep in mind before becoming a donor?

Sperm donors undergo a complete medical history examination to exclude any hereditary or underlying ill-

nesses. "A series of tests are carried out, which include infectious disease screenings such as HIV, Hepatitis B and C, and Syphilis, as well as genetic carrier testing to detect any concealed conditions," says Dr Chhabra. According to her, the parameters are sperm count (at least 16 million per millilitre), motility or the ability of sperms to move efficiently, (a minimum of 42 per cent), and morphology (a minimum of four per cent). Lifestyle plays a significant role as donors have to be non-smokers, not have used any drugs and be in top physical condition.

How is the donor sperm stored?

Sperm samples are frozen and quarantined for a period of 180 days and retested to ensure they're free from infections before use. With modern cryopreservation techniques, sperm can be stored for many years, even decades, without significant declines in quality. "There have been successful pregnancies using sperm frozen for 10 to 20 years and even longer in some cases. As long as the sample remains frozen without thawing, its quality remains largely unchanged," says Dr Gupta.

What about the impact on infants?

Dr Gupta says infants born to older fathers might have marginally increased chances of genetic mutations, autism spectrum disorders and schizophrenia. "The DNA present in the sperm ages along with men, and therefore, the likelihood of transferring genetic abnormalities increases. Still, most infants born to older fathers are completely normal. The overall likelihood of carrying a healthy baby is quite high," says Dr Gupta.

Suresh Raina says CSK got IPL 2025 auction wrong: 'Have never seen them struggle like this'



GNS News Agency, April 25

Raina felt that the CSK team management's auction strategy was to blame for the poor returns this year. (BCCI) Raina felt that the CSK team management's auction strategy was to blame for the poor returns this year. (BCCI)

While he was on commentary for Mumbai Indians' routine nine-wicket win over Chennai Super Kings at the Wankhede Stadium on Sunday, former India batter Suresh Raina said he had never seen his former team struggle in the manner that they are this season. Languishing in last place on the IPL table after losing six of their opening eight games, CSK look bereft of new ideas or any solid leader-

ship, with the lack of firepower in their batting order evident. The loss of skipper Rituraj Gaikwad, in whose place the 43-year-old veteran MS Dhoni has been forced to step in as captain, has only compounded the problems. Raina, who was at the Chennai-based franchise for 12 seasons between 2008 and 2021 with a break in the middle when CSK were suspended from the league in 2016 and 2017, felt that the team management's auction strategy was to blame for the poor returns this year.

Experts @ImRaina and @harbhajan_singh break down what's gone wrong for CSK from the auction table to the pitch ?? "I think, from the coach and the management, the auction has not gone well this year," Raina said on Star Sports. "There were so many youngsters, talented players in the auction, like Priyansh (Arya) who scored a 100 the other day. Even among the more senior players, you left Shreyas Iyer, Rishabh Pant, KL Rahul."

"When you see the other teams play, they are attacking so much. (In front of them,) I have never seen a CSK team struggle like this," Raina added. Former India spinner Harbhajan Singh, who has also played for CSK in the past, would add: "Among the youngsters, I have not seen anyone play for CSK who can play a game-changing innings. Those that hunt the talent pool for this team need to also be asked questions of whether they passed on the right information to the (management) based on which the selection (at the auction) took place."

'Some great charity..what have they gotten from it?': Ambati Rayudu slams RR for heavily investing in youngsters

GNS News Agency, April 25

The Rajasthan Royals have struggled top pick up form this season in the Indian Premier League (IPL 2025), having suffered six defeats out of the 8 games they played this season. Sanju Samson's men are on a four-game losing streak, narrowly letting go of games, be it a defeat in the super over to Delhi Capitals or their failure to chase down 180 vs LSG on Saturday, with 9 runs needed in the last over. Time and again, the 2008 IPL winners have shown trust in young talent, as evident in their munificent investment in players like Yashasvi Jaiswal, Dhruv Jurel, captain Sanju Samson and Riyan Parag to name a few. Even 14-year-old debutant Vaibhav Suryavanshi, who took to the crease for RR against LSG was secured for 1.1 crore.

Amidst RR's struggles to conjure up anything significant in terms of wins this season, former Indian International and commentator Ambati Rayudu slammed the RR management and its decisions. He called out the side for their lack of preparation in the way they approached the IPL season and stressed that the side's priorities should be to compete and win. Speaking on ESPNcricinfo's Timeout, Rayudu said, "... They've invested so much in youngsters over the years. What have they gotten out of it? It's been 17 years since they've won an IPL, and they always showcase this as if it's their strength. It is some great charity that



they're doing for the game, but it is not. You're here to compete". Expressing his disapproval of the way the RR management runs the side, the six-time IPL champion added, "You're here to win the IPL, and there are ways teams have adopted to win the IPL, and you don't follow any of those. And you want people to come on board and appreciate you for the good team that you are by giving youngsters all over the world a good opportunity in the IPL". The franchise's decision to retain middle order duo Riyan Parag and Jurel for the 2025 campaign has also come under significant criticism for their inability to chase down games for the side. Eight games into the season, RR is in 8th spot and firmly rooted to the bottom half of the table.

BCCI Central Contracts 2024-25: Shreyas Iyer and Ishan Kishan included back in list, India T20I captain Suryakumar Yadav still in Grade B

GNS News Agency, April 25

The inclusion of Shreyas Iyer and Ishan Kishan Grade B and C headlined the annual player contracts issued by the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) on Monday. In early 2024, the duo's name was removed from the BCCI contract list after they didn't turn up to play Ranji Trophy matches. While Ishan hasn't played an international outing since then, Shreyas has managed to not just redeem but evolve into an integral member of the ODI set-up, playing a key role in India's Champions Trophy triumph.

Other than the inclusion of the two, there are no other major promotions and demotions. Grade A+ which is the top category and sees players take home Rs 7 crore includes Rohit Sharma, Virat Kohli, Jasprit Bumrah and Ravindra Jadeja. With Ravichandran Ashwin hanging up his boots, Rishabh Pant has climbed from Grade B to Grade A joining KL Rahul, Mohammed Shami, Mohammed Siraj, Shubman Gill and Hardik Pandya. Players in Grade A get Rs 5 crore annually. Despite being taking over as India's T20I captain, Suryakumar Yadav continues to remain in Grade B (Rs 3 crore) as he still remains a one format player. Interestingly, Kuldeep Yadav who is part of all three squads still finds himself in Grade B and so does Axar Patel. Yashasvi Jaiswal and Shreyas who have been part of just one format, complete the list.



The Grade C with a retainership of Rs 1 crore sees 19 players in the list. Ishan, despite not playing a single match in the previous international season, has managed to get back into the fold. While 16 players were part of this grade in the previous cycle, the BCCI has increased it to 19 as there have been new additions to India's fold in the recent months. Harshit Rana, Nitish Kumar Reddy, Akash Deep, Rituraj Gaikwad and Varun Chakaravathy have all been included in Grade C. Interestingly, unlike the previous season where the BCCI handed out a fast bowling contract for those who performed exceedingly well in the domestic circuit, the board hasn't come up with any list this time.

Does Real Madrid play better 'without' Kylian Mbappe?

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Kylian Mbappe was forced to sit out Real Madrid's narrow 1-0 victory over Athletic Bilbao in La Liga on Sunday. The forward missed the game due to a red card suspension for a foul on Deportivo Alaves player Antonio Blanco. Sitting in the stands for the important game against Bilbao, the Frenchman was booed by fans when shown on the big screen. The fact that the game was held at the Santiago Bernabeu speaks volumes about the Madrid crowd's current sentiment towards their star man. Mbappe missing the game also led to discussions regarding the players contribution to the team, with statistics revealing that the Los Blancos have managed to win every single game that their star man has sat out this season, in every major competition.

The Spanish giants have managed to go unbeaten in La Liga, UEFA Champions League and the Copa del Rey in games where Mbappe hasn't featured. The club has 3 wins, 2 draws and zero losses in games where their prolific

No 9 has did not make the playing XI. Madrid's attack is often lopsided and heavily through the left-hand side when Mbappe, Vinicius Jr. and Rodrygo play together. The fact that all three attackers drift to the left, leaving the right wing empty is a problem Carlo Ancelotti and his men have had to deal with throughout this campaign. Mbappe's most recent game for Real came in a rather unimpressive attempt at a 'comeback' at home against Arsenal, in which the Gunners comfortably picked up a 2-1 win, cruising the tie 5-1 on aggregate. He was later subbed off in the 75th minute for an ankle injury sustained in a crunching tackle. Recent reports however, have deemed his injury to not be serious in nature, allowing the 26-year-old to play for his side in the Copa del Rey final against archrivals Barcelona on the 27th of April.

Mbappe's red against Alaves also garnered a lot of criticism. The player's suspension only lasted one game and he will be available for the La Liga fixture against Barcelona on the 11th of May. Real are currently trailing their rivals by four points with six games left.

'Neeraj Chopra Classic will change face of Indian athletics'



GNS News Agency, April 25

Hyderabad: India's greatest athlete ever, Neeraj Chopra, feels that the Neeraj Chopra Classic, an international javelin meet to be held in Sree Kanteerava Stadium in Bengaluru on May 24, can change the face of Indian athletics itself. The event is jointly organised by Neeraj and JSW Sports in collaboration with the Athletics Federation of India and the World Athletics can change the face of Indian athletics itself.

"Till now, the Indians have been seeing the world-class athletes in action on TV. But now they have a chance to see them at the stadium. The event should be of great help to Indian athletes too and not just to the javelin sport itself," 27-year-old Neeraj said in a virtual interaction on Monday. "It has been a long-standing dream for me to organise this kind of event in India. When I used to compete abroad with all those big athletes, I thought, why not have a similar competition in India? So, finally it is happening," Neeraj, the former Olympic gold medalist and the World Champion, said. "It will be an annual feature and in future, more events will be incorporated. The World Athletics will definitely get a feel of

how popular athletics is in India and also the organisational skills of all of us, as we are all known for our hospitality," he said. "We will try to get the prestigious Diamond League to India also," he added.

"Winning medals is a different feeling. They are at home. But, by organising this event, which is India's first-ever World Athletics Category A event and qualification event for the World Championship, I feel there is a great feeling of giving back something to the Indian athletes through this event," Neeraj said. "The reason to name it as Neeraj Chopra Classic is that most of these kinds of events abroad are named after big athletes. So, that was the inspiration," the champion athlete said.

"Some of the big names Anderson Peters (Grenada) and Julius Yego (Kenya), 2016 Olympic gold medalist Thomas Roeher (Germany) and world leader Curtis Thompson (USA) will be in action and there are plans to have at least three to four Indians too in the fray," Neeraj said. On Pakistan's Paris Olympics gold medalist Arshad Nadeem's participation in the meet, Neeraj said that he was in touch with the star athlete and waiting for the final confirmation. "Initially, Panchkula in Haryana was to be the venue, but because of the issue with floodlights (with regard to lux capacity for live telecast), it has to be shifted to Bengaluru," he said. "We have a complete team at JSW taking care of every aspect in organising the event successfully and I feel that the Bengaluru evening weather would be perfect for the event and the fans will have a great time," Neeraj said. "We are keen to ensure the best experience for the fans and also to see that the ticket pricing is not too high," he said. On balancing between training and organising the event, a smiling Neeraj said that it was initially challenging to come out of the comfort zone of a participating athlete, but certainly enjoying it because the event was very close to his heart. "I sincerely appeal to all to make it a huge success," he signed off.

Can Manchester United get relegated from the Premier League this season?

GNS News Agency, April 25

Ruben Amorim and Manchester United have been breaking record after record this season, with the only catch being that these milestones are not honorifics, but rather, the opposite. With just 10 wins and 15 losses 33 games into the season, the club is going through its worst season in Premier League history. Back in January, club boss Ruben Amorim called his side as being the 'worst side' in club history. Only one thing could make his claim come to life - Premier League relegation.

With the club's recent form spiraling downward, it is to be seen whether Amorim can turn the tide in the final games and attempt for a finish in or near the 10th place mark. The Red Devils' most recent game in the English top flight ended in defeat, as a 1-0 score against Wolves meant that the club is now winless in the competition since their 3-0 win over Leicester City in March. A wasteful United attack that failed to capitalize on chances paved the way for Wolves to snatch all three points with a spectacular free-kick goal in the 77th minute. In a desperate attempt to prevent Matheus Cunha from running at Andre Onana, Christian Eriksen brought down the Brazilian. The resultant free-kick was converted in supreme fashion by Pablo Sarabia, whose kick swerved above the wall and found the top right corner. The win also meant that Wolves completed the League double over United for the first time since 1979/80.



Can Manchester United get relegated this season?

Even though United is currently in 14th position in the Premier League and have just 38 points to show for a disastrous season, it is mathematically impossible for the club to drop down to the EFL Championship. The clubs that end the season in 18th, 19th and 20th spots are automatically demoted to the 2nd tier of English football. A quick look at the League table shows that the side in 18th - Ipswich Town - with 21 points, cannot overtake United even if the Red Devils lose all their remaining games and Ipswich wins their last six fixtures. This also ensures mathematical safety for Tottenham Hotspur, who are in 16th position with 37 points.

We got the team we wanted, says Virat Kohli

GNS News Agency, April 25

HYDERABAD: "We got the team that we wanted. I think on day one everyone was panicking, but these guys [team management] were very composed. They knew exactly who they wanted," Virat Kohli of Royal Challengers Bengaluru said after his team outclassed Punjab Kings in Mullanpur on Sunday. "And if you look at guys like Tim David, Jitesh Sharma, Rajat obviously playing the way he does, [Liam] Livingstone coming in, Salty playing the way he is. Dev (Devdutt Paddikal) played this amazing role for us at No. 3," he said.

"It's coming together nicely and now with the addition of Romario [Shepherd], it gives us even more firepower at the back. You have two guys who can hit 10 sixes in 18 balls. So that was missing in all the other seasons," Kohli said in the post-match interaction. "If you look at the top order in the last few seasons, we had to do bulk of the scoring. But this time around, it feels like even if someone gets out, like in Chennai, guys can still keep carrying on with that momentum and keep counterattacking, like in Mumbai as well," he said.

"It feels very balanced. The guys are very hungry to perform for the team. You can see that intensity in the field. You can see that feistiness as well, just in the body language, just the way they throw themselves around on the field," Kohli said. "There have been occasions where I felt



like I wanted to accelerate more and more," Kohli said while crediting Padikkal for his aggression. "But I think it was understanding that if Salty (Phil Salt) doesn't get off to a start, my role then becomes to let the others around me to play the way they do," he said. "I utilised my experience, yes, to finish the game, but Dev could play like that around me, maybe Rajat [Patidar] can play like that around me. So I try to stay in there long enough for the others to know that I'm holding one end and if need be, I can accelerate," Kohli said. "I think you need to understand the conditions which we honestly haven't done back home. So, the first two games at Bengaluru we had the learnings, last game was a shortened game, so we had to go hard again," the star batter said.

MCA honours Dhoni with Wankhede legacy book

GNS News Agency, April 25

HYDERABAD: For Chennai Super Kings captain MS Dhoni it was one of those "memorable" souvenirs which would have surely taken him down memory lane! Soon after CSK lost to Mumbai Indians in the IPL match at the Wankhede Stadium on Sunday night, Mumbai Cricket Association president Anjinkya Naik presented to the legend Dhoni a coffee table book celebrating 50 glorious years of Wankhede Stadium.

"The book captures the iconic legacy of Wankhede, featuring unforgettable moments from MSD's incredible journey at this historic venue," the MCA chief said. It may not be out of place for it was here in 2011 when Dhoni hit that most "unforgettable" six to signal India's win against Sri Lanka in the World Cup final in style and trigger a wave of emotions, not just in the stands at the venue but also across the world for millions of Indians. Anjinkya said it was an honour to present the book to such a great player whose contribution to the sport was amazing.



For Chennai Super Kings captain MS Dhoni it was one of those "memorable" souvenirs which would have surely taken him down memory lane

After Shah Rukh Khan, Malaika Arora offers Dilip a big show that they'll host together; Farah Khan says 'Tu aur chadha usko'



Later, it is revealed that Dilip volunteered to work for Malaika but she says that he refused the offer because of her friendship with Farah Khan. Dilip also tried his hands at Yoga where Malaika Arora taught him a couple of asanas. While doing the yoga, Malaika told Dilip, "Ab tumhe sab jaante hai, tum jah bhi jaate ho sab kehte hai kaha hai Dilip, kaha hai Dilip? (Everybody knows you now. They keep asking 'Where is Dilip')." Listening to this, Farah Khan quickly replied, "Tu aur chadha usko Kaminey (Hype him more)." Later, Malaika Arora offered a huge show to Dilip. She said, "Dilip, mai bahaut bada show karne jaa rahi hu, tum karoge mere sath (I am going to start a huge show soon. Will you do it with me?)" Dilip shook his head in agreement, later pretending to not take it up to prove his loyalty to Farah Khan. Dilip recently shot an ad with Shah Rukh Khan, which was eventually planned with Farah Khan. In their previous vlog, Farah Khan shared with Gaurav Khanna, "I was supposed to do an ad with Shah Rukh Khan, but at the end they asked me to bring Dilip. Now, he has shot with him." Farah started her YouTube vlogs nearly a year ago. In her YouTube, she often visits various celebrities houses and cooks special meals with them. Along with food recipes, the celebs also share some fun gossip, entertaining their viewers. Previously, they have shot with actors Shehnaaz Gill, Aditi Rao Hydari, Khushi Kapoor, Karan Johar, and Gaurav Khanna among others.

Swanand Kirkire blames nepotism for Nawazuddin Siddiqui's late breakthrough: 'His acting abilities were doubted because he wasn't conventionally good-looking'

Nawazuddin Siddiqui got his breakthrough with Gangs of Wasseypur: Part 2. Nawazuddin Siddiqui got his breakthrough with Gangs of Wasseypur: Part 2. Nawazuddin Siddiqui made his debut as a lead actor in Anurag Kashyap's 2012 cult crime epic Gangs of Wasseypur - Part 2, and there was no looking back. However, he spent 13 years playing small roles in major films before his breakthrough. His batchmate from National School of Drama, actor-lyricist-singer Swanand Kirkire, reasoned why it took so long for the Hindi film industry to accept Nawazuddin in a lead role. "Neither theatre actors nor theatre actresses are conventionally good looking. There's only one Anurag Kashyap who'd make Nawazuddin the hero, otherwise who would? He gave Nawaz a big enough role that the film rested on his shoulders. People love Nawaz so much now because a few believed in him. Otherwise we've all seen the Nawaz pre-Gangs of Wasseypur. People have doubted him and asked, 'How will he act?' There's been so much cruelty against him," said Swanand. In the interview with The Lallantop, Swanand Kirkire said all issues like these boil down to the root cause of nepotism. "Ye cinema ke log, ye cinema ke bachche, aur ye non-cinema ke bachche (there are people of cinema, children of cinema, and children of non-cinema)," pointed out Swanand, adding that nepotism is pervasive. "Even in Indian classical music, the guru has always discriminated between his disciple and his children. The same discrimination exists even in advocacy with lawyers," said Swanand.

Nawazuddin Siddiqui began his acting career with a small part in John Matthew Mathan's 1999 cop drama Sarfarosh alongside Amir Khan. He followed it up with brief appearances in Ram Gopal Varma's 1999 crime drama Shool, Rajkumar Hirani's 2003 blockbuster gangster comedy Munna Bhai MBBS, Anurag Kashyap's 2007 crime drama Black Friday, Kabir Khan's 2009 thriller New York, Anurag's 2009 romantic film Dev. D, Anusha Rizvi's 2010 satire Peepli Live, Sujoy Ghosh's 2011 thriller Kahaani, and Tigmanshu Dhulia's 2012 sports drama Paan Singh Tomar.

After his breakthrough with Gangs of Wasseypur: Part 2, Nawazuddin has led films like Ketan Mehta's Manjhi - The Mountain Man (2015), Anurag's Raman Raghav 2.0



(2016), Sohail Khan's Freaky Ali (2016), Shlok Sharma's Haraamkhori (2017), Babumoshai Bandoobaz (2017), Nandita Das' Manto (2018), Thackeray (2019), Ritesh Batra's Photograph (2019), Tannishtha Chatterjee's Roam Rome Mein (2019), Motichoor Chaknachoor (2019), Ghoomketu (2020), Honey Trehan's Raat Akeli Hai (2020), Sudhir Mishra's Serious Men (2020), No Land's Man (2021), Sudhir Mishra's Afwaah (2023), Jogira Sara Ra Ra (2023), Tiku Weds Sheru (2023), Haddi (2023), Rautu Ka Raaz (2024), and Adbhut (2024). He's also headlined two seasons of Anurag Kashyap and Vikramaditya Motwane's Netflix India Original show Sacred Games. Nawazuddin will be next seen in the lead role in the film Costao, which will drop on ZEE5 on May 1.

In the interview, Swanand also admitted that there are more male actors from NSD who've grabbed lead roles than their female counterparts. Case in point: Naseeruddin Shah, Om Puri, Pankaj Kapur, and Irrfan Khan. "In my time, 16-18-year old girls were made actors. An NSD graduate has to study for three years, do theatre, and then consider moving to Mumbai. By that time, they miss the criteria that the industry has set," said Swanand. He cited Rasika Dugal, Anjali Patil, and Monika Pawar as great products of NSD in the film industry.

Swanand Kirkire says he was 'enraged' after a girl said 'Bobby Deol is so hot' after watching Animal: 'Sandeep Reddy Vanga dismissed other forms of masculinity'



Ranbir Kapoor played an 'alpha male' in Sandeep Reddy Vanga's Animal. Ranbir Kapoor played an 'alpha male' in Sandeep Reddy Vanga's Animal. Swanand Kirkire was one of the first celebrities to voice his disappointment with Sandeep Reddy Vanga's 2023 blockbuster family crime drama Animal. The actor-singer-lyricist called out the regressive politics of the film on X, much to Sandeep's chagrin, whose team then issued an aggressive response on the platform.

Now, Swanand has clarified that like his senior Javed Akhtar, his issue with the film was its acceptance by the audience, not so much the film itself. "If you read my tweet closely, it humbly says the only problem I had with Animal was that someone is saying something with so much audacity, and our public, especially girls, are embracing it dearly," said Swanand. In the interview with The Lallantop, Swanand pointed out how Animal shows that we've regressed from classics like Mehboob Khan's Aurat (1940)

and Guru Dutt's Sahib Bibi Aur Ghulam (1963) to recent seminal films like Vikas Bahl's Queen (2014) and Shoojit Sircar's Piku (2015). "These films made men from Indore, like me, gradually realise what equality means. Hindi cinema was teaching you how to see women in a new light in different ways. Even with how independent the women of Anurag Kashyap's Dev.D (2009) were! Then there comes a guy who makes a film like Animal, and we accept it. My problem is with the acceptance, not with the film being made," said Swanand.

He recalled the day he watched Animal, he met a girl who said that she's watched the film twice because "Bobby Deol is so hot." That enraged Swanand as Animal was a film in which Vanga dismissed other forms of masculinity from its inception to uphold the most toxic version of masculinity. As a poet and lyricist himself, Swanand also found it contentious that through his protagonist, Ranbir Kapoor's character Rannvijay Singh, he also dismissed poets. In a much talked about scene, Rannvijay argues that males were historically only alpha. The insecure males, who couldn't be alpha, became poets, thus giving rise to a new form of masculinity.

"I don't have an issue with that. But he says that those can't become alpha males, becomes poets instead. But he's playing Arjan Vailly in the background for his alpha male. That's a poem, right? So you do need a poem to make him an alpha male. You may have dismissed poetry in a dialogue, but you can't dismiss songs. He (Vanga) will get upset with me again after this, but that's okay," added Swanand. Inspired by Punjabi folklore, Arjan Vailly was originally composed by legendary Punjabi singer Kuldeep Manak in the 1950s. It's been reshaped by Bhupinder Babbal and Manan Bhardwaj in Animal. It plays in the pre-interval action sequence in which Ranbir's character is slashing dozens of masked men.

Jyotika, Suriya go on a spiritual sojourn ahead of film commitments: 'Thank you for love and blessings'

Every few days, actors and real-life couple Jyotika and Suriya provide just enough content to be filed under '#CoupleGoals'. In fact, in recent times, there have been many instances where both of them have stood by each other during trying times, and proving that, come what may, they would have each other's backs. Ahead of the release of Suriya's film Retro and the shooting of Jyotika's upcoming project, the couple went on a spiritual trip in Maharashtra.

Sharing images of their trip to the Shakti peethas of Kolhapur Mahalakshmi and Kamakhya, Jyotika wrote, "Blessed to have visited the sacred Shakti peethas of Kolhapur Mahalakshmi and Kamakhya during the auspicious new year! Starting my next film... I thank you for your love and blessings always." In the post, we can see the temples being featured prominently with the two actors doing certain rituals and taking a selfie after visiting the shrines. While there were a lot of heartfelt wishes for both the actors, there were also negative comments directed at Jyotika. A few years back, at an event, her words about channeling funds to better healthcare options of the State instead of using it for maintenance of temples didn't go down well with sections of the audience. And recently, actor Simran's comments at an event about the cynicism of a



co-star was said to be an attack on Jyotika, and people started taking sides. On the acting front, Jyotika, who was last seen in the Netflix series Dabba Cartel, is said to be part of Amazon Prime Video's upcoming courtroom drama, which will be helmed by Ashwiny Iyer Tiwari, and also star Sonakshi Sinha. On the other hand, Suriya is gearing up for the release of Karthik Subbaraj's Retro on May 1.

'Hazel Keech was throwing popcorn, Yuvraj Singh was catching them with his mouth': Yuvraj Singh's mother recalls meeting 'angrezi bahu' for the first time



Former cricketer Yuvraj Singh and actor Hazel Keech have been married for nine years and are also parents to two adorable kids. The two have a successful marriage despite coming from two different backgrounds. While Yuvraj grew up in Punjab, Hazel was born and brought up in England. In a recent interaction, Yuvraj's mother, Shabnam Singh, recalled how the cricketer introduced his 'angrezi' girlfriend Hazel Keech to her. Shabnam remembered that she was never invited to her son's birthday parties, which used to be organised in Mumbai. But one year, the cricketer decided to invite her on the happy occasion and used it as an excuse to introduce her to the woman who would later become his wife. She told Curly Tales, "My ticket was booked for Mumbai. I had to attend a function but Yuvraj threatened the organisers that I should get on that plane."

Explaining the moment she first saw Hazel, she said, "I entered and there was this girl sitting and throwing popcorn at Yuvraj, who was catching them with his mouth. She was trying to make him catch popcorn." Yuvraj quickly intervened and said, "You didn't have to tell this story here." Ignoring him, Shabnam continued, "He had liked her and he wanted me to meet her. So I saw this cute little girl. So, that was the first time I met Hazel." During the interaction,

Yuvraj also opened up about his strained relationship with his father and former cricketer, Yograj Singh. He said, "With my father, the relationship was more of a coach and less of a dad." Yuvraj added that he doesn't have the same approach towards his kids. "I don't want to be a coach to my kids, I want to be a dad first. If they pick up cricket then I can be their coach but I feel I want to be a dad and have fun while being that. Things I couldn't do with my dad, I do with them," he said.

Parineeti responds to 'jiju' moment featuring hubby Raghav Chadha

Mumbai: Actress Parineeti Chopra delighted fans with her sweet reaction after husband Raghav Chadha was greeted with loud chants of 'jiju' during a recent IPL match. The couple, who tied the knot in 2023, continue to be fan favorites, and the endearing nickname shouted by the crowd at the recent IPL match sparked a wave of amusement online. On April 20, Raghav was spotted at the IPL match between Royal Challengers Bengaluru and Punjab Kings, held in Mullanpur, Chandigarh.

Among the many videos and photos circulating online, one clip in particular stood out—capturing the AAP leader watching the game from the stands and enjoying the high-energy atmosphere. Notably, Raghav acknowledged the enthusiastic crowd with a warm gesture, folding his hands and waving as fans eagerly recorded him on their phones. Their fondness for the couple was evident as they affectionately called out "jiju" (brother-in-law) upon seeing him.

Parineeti Chopra reshared the viral video on her Instagram stories and wrote, "You guys are the sweetest," followed by multiple laughter emojis. Parineeti and Raghav were in a relationship for a while before tying the knot in a grand destination wedding in September 2023.

Jacqueline Fernandez visits Siddhivinayak Temple with 'dear friend' Maye Musk, Elon Musk's mom: A 'beautiful experience'



neur Elon Musk, is in India for the launch of the Hindi edition of her book, A Woman Makes a Plan, and looks like she took some time off for this experience.

Jacqueline was seen dressed in a golden suit while Maye wore a printed yellow ensemble. Jacqueline was also seen covering her head in the temple. Photos of the two praying offering prayers at the temple are going viral on social media.

Jacqueline Fernandez and Maye Musk from the Siddhivinayak Temple visit Jacqueline Fernandez and Maye Musk from the Siddhivinayak Temple visit Jacqueline Fernandez and Maye Musk from the Siddhivinayak Temple visit Jacqueline Fernandez and Maye Musk from the Siddhivinayak Temple visit. Jacqueline shared with HT, "It was such a beautiful experience to seek blessings at the temple with my dear friend Maye, who's in India for her book launch. Maye's book is a symbol of the resilience of a woman. It has taught me so much, especially that age is just a number and it shouldn't define your dreams and goals."

Jacqueline and Maye were also accompanied by actor Anusha Dandekar. She later had an Easter lunch with the actor. Sharing photos on her Instagram, Anusha wrote, "When you have such a blessed & beautiful day...? Siddhivinayak Temple to Easter Lunch ... ???#siddhivinayak @joshihouse." Maye Musk celebrated her 77th birthday in India recently. She celebrated her special day with a private party which had a selected gathering of around 40-50 guests. Sharing a photo of her birthday look she wrote, "Thank you Elon for sending birthday flowers to me in Mumbai? Jacqueline was going through a rough time after her mother's death which happened away earlier this month. This was one of Jacqueline's rare outings since then.

Jacqueline Fernandez Siddhivinayak Temple visit, Maye Musk in the viral photos, Jacqueline Fernandez and Maye Musk were seen dressed in traditional outfits as visited the Siddhivinayak temple. Actor Jacqueline Fernandez visited Mumbai's famous Siddhivinayak temple on Sunday with billionaire Elon Musk's mother, Maye Musk. Jacqueline's Easter was well spent as she paid a memorable visit to this Mumbai's iconic temple. Maye Musk, who is a writer, nutritionist, and also the mother of tech entrepreneur