

Hyderabad police issue notices to four Pakistan nationals to leave country

Hyderabad: The Hyderabad police issued notices to four Pakistan nationals asking them to leave the country by Sunday.The union Government had asked all Pakistan nationals staying in the country to leave India following the Pahalgalam massacre incident. There are around 213 Pakistan nationals staying in the city and a majority of them are staying on long term visas granted by the government.The police identified four Pakistan nationals who were on a short term visa and handed over the notices to them. The police have not disclosed the whereabouts of the Pakistan nationals for security reasons.

BRS gears up for historic silver jubilee public meeting at Elkathurthy



GNS News Agency, April 26Hyderabad: The non-descript village of Elkathurthy near Warangal, is fully geared up to host the historic public meeting of the Bharat Rashtra Samithi (BRS), marking the latter's 25 years of formation on Sunday. With meticulous planning and grand scale arrangements, the silver jubilee meeting is being touted as a landmark event in the party's history and also a crucial moment in Telangana's current politics.The party chief K Chandrashekhara Rao, who has largely remained away from public appearances, will be addressing his first public meeting since stepping down from the office of the Chief Minsiter and taking reins as the Opposition leader. His address is expected to be pivotal, both to rejuvenate the cadre and to lay down the party's roadmap for the future.Warangal is draped in pink, and party leaders have likened the meeting to a modern-day political Jataara. Party cadres have been mobilising for days, marching with bullock carts and padayatras from districts like Siddipet, Khammam, Suryapet, and Karimnagar. All the roads leading to Elkathurthy, are already awash in pink, with giant cutouts, welcome arches, and flags.Arrangements for the silver jubilee celebrations have been made on an unprecedented scale. Nearly 1,250 acres have been readied, including over 1,000 acres earmarked for parking across five designated zones.The BRS leadership left no stone unturned to ensure that the public faces no inconvenience, considering the massive participation expected. Around 3,000 buses through TSRTC and another 20,000 private vehicles have been arranged to ferry lakhs of supporters.With 10 lakh people anticipated, massive arrangements have been made including around 2,000 volunteers for crowd and traffic management, 200 mobile patrol vehicles, 25 towing vehicles, 250 CCTVs linked to a dedicated Command and Control Centre, and 250 power generators. Massive LCD screens and lights have been arranged in both the meeting venue, parking and routes leading to the main stage.Despite the mammoth arrangements, the real spotlight remains on Chandrashekhara Rao's speech which is expected to offer organisational direction, and a fresh political pitch. Politically, the meeting holds immense significance, reminding Chandrashekhara Rao's pivotal role in reinvigorating the Telangana statehood movement and an administrator who implemented landmark welfare schemes.The public meeting is also intended to instill fresh energy among the cadre, many of whom have been demoralised post-defeat. The year-long celebrations planned by the party aim at sustaining momentum, particularly among the youth, by highlighting KCR's leadership and the party's vision for the future.After facing a severe electoral setback, the BRS is attempting to reposition itself as a people's movement rather than just a political outfit.

Renowned historian, former ICHR Chairman MGS Narayanan passes away at 93

GNS News Agency, April 26 Kozhikode: MGS Narayanan, the former Chairman of the Indian Council of Historical Research (ICHR) passed away here on Saturday.He was suffering from age-related issues and was ailing for a while. He was 93-years-old and his last rites will be held later in the day here. He was the head of the department of Calicut University from 1976 to 1990 and headed the ICHR from 2001-03. He was born in Ponnani near here on August 20, 1932.After his early education in and around Kozhikode, Thrissur he did his Masters in History from Madras Christian College and secured his PhD from University in Kerala in 1973.His PhD thesis empirically reconstructed the history of Kerala between 800 and 1124 CE. His thesis had been highly rated by many historians as one of the ablest and most thorough Indian thesis. He was the general secretary of Indian History Congress during 1982-1985.

PM Modi distribute over 51,000 appointment letters at 15th Rozgar Mela today

GNS News Agency, April 26

New Delhi: Prime Minister Narendra Modi will distribute more than 51,000 appointment letters to newly recruited youth in various government departments and organisations through video conferencing on Saturday as part of the 15th edition of the Rozgar Mela.According to a statement issued by the Prime Minister's Office (PMO), the Rozgar Mela will be held at 47 locations across the country and is in line with the Centre's commitment to placing the highest priority on employment generation.

This nationwide initiative aims to provide meaningful opportunities for youth empowerment and to enable them to contribute effectively to the country's progress.The fresh recruits, selected from different parts



of India, will join central government ministries and departments, including the Department of Revenue, Ministry of Personnel and Public Grievances and Pensions, Ministry of Home Affairs, Department of Posts, Department of Higher Education, Ministry of Railways, and the Ministry of Labour and Employment, among others.Since the launch of the Rozgar Mela in October 2022, the

Mela, which began on October 22, 2022, with the distribution of 75,000 appointment letters in its first edition, marks a crucial step in the government's efforts to create robust employment avenues for the youth. The recruitment drive for 10 lakh personnel was launched to facilitate employment generation and bridge the gap between job seekers and various government sectors.The initiative is seen as a vital move to not only reduce unemployment but also empower young individuals to actively participate in India's growth story.At the previous edition, PM Modi had also noted that India had entered into migration and employment agreements with 21 countries in recent years. These include nations such as Japan, Australia, France, Germany, Israel, Mauritius, the United Kingdom, and Italy, along with several Gulf countries.

India, Pakistan will 'get it figured out,' says Trump on border tensions

GNS News Agency, April 26

Washington: US President Donald Trump refused to be drawn into India-Pakistan border tensions in the aftermath of the Pahalgalam terrorist attack, stating that the two countries will "get it figured out one way or the other."Trump had offered to mediate between India and Pakistan in his first term; however, on Friday, he refused to repeat that offer when asked by a reporter during a news gaggle on his way to Rome to attend Pope Francis' funeral, if he was concerned and if he was going to speak to the leaders of the two countries.

There have been "tensions on that border for 1500 years," he said, rhetorically exaggerating the history of the border dispute. "But they'll get it figured out one way or the other. I'm sure that I know both leaders."India has historically chafed at outside mediation in any border dispute, neither with Pakistan nor with China. However, Pakistan has. It's now clear if it has sought intervention this time, but Trump's first-term offer came in response to a very public request from then-Prime Minister Imran Khan during an Oval Office press interaction between the two leaders.New Delhi had politely but firmly declined Trump's offer then.In his second term, Trump offered to mediate the border dispute between India and China during Prime Minister Narendra Modi's February visit to the White House. The Indian delegation turned it down once again.Although the American



President showed no desire to offer a mediation role this time, he and his officials have been quick to condemn the Pahalgalam terror attack and offer India support in fighting terrorism. Trump called Prime Minister Modi just a few hours after the attack to extend his condolences and support, with the White House addressing the attack in a suo motto statement shortly before.Tulsi Gabbard, the director of US national intelligence, on Friday extended her condolences and support for India's efforts to "hunt down" the perpetrators of the attacks."We are with you and support you as you hunt down those responsible for this heinous attack," she posted on X.

Harish Rao appeals to party rank and file to beat back attempts to block roads leading to Warangal



GNS News Agency, April 26

Warangal: Stating that the BRS silver jubilee celebration in Warangal would be a historic moment for Telangana state, BRS leader and former minister T Harish Rao said on Saturday that the turnout of crowds could be more than the expected. He wanted the party rank and file to be vigilant and beat back attempts to block the roads.Addressing media persons at the venue of the Sunday's massive public meeting, he said the rally was expected to draw massive crowds and reaffirm the party's dedication to Telangana's transformation. He emphasised that the event was meant for demonstrating the commitment of the party to the state's progress and to showcase its transformation achieved during it regime.

He said that the event was not just a milestone but a testament to the BRS's enduring impact on the region. Large numbers of people and activists were arriving. They all were bound for Warangal by bullock carts, vehicles, bicycles, and on foot. They were eager to see BRS chief K Chandrashekhara Rao and listen to him addressing the rally. The BRS silver jubilee would be a festival day for the people of Telangana.Telangana, once a hub of droughts and suicides in the undivided state, was transformed into a prosperous land by K Chandrashekhara Rao triggering a reverse migration. Whether in power or opposition, the party rank

Fire breaks out at Kuntlur in Hayatnagar

A significant fire has broken out in Kuntlur, located in the Hayatnagar of Ranga Reddy district with flames reportedly raging near Ravi Narayana Reddy Colony. The blaze has devastated the dwellings of impoverished residents, with more than 30 huts already reduced to ash.

The situation escalated when gas cylinders exploded in some of the huts, further intensifying the inferno. Firefighters responding to the scene are working tirelessly to bring the fire under control, while local residents look on in panic at the scale of the flames.

The cause of the fire remains unknown at this time, and officials are investigating the incident. Further updates will follow as the situation develops.

Women, farmers, youth are main partners in Telangana govt: CM Revanth



Hyderabad, April 26 Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy has stated that the Telangana government accorded top priority to education, healthcare and employment opportunities and women, farmers and youth are the main partners in the government.Addressing the Plenary Session at the Bharat Summit 2025 at HICC here on Saturday, the Chief Minister stated that the State government's policy is to generate more revenues and distribute the wealth to the poor.The government is transparent and proactive in introducing reforms. Gig, App workers welfare policy will be introduced soon," he said.

The Chief Minister said the State government introduced the biggest welfare schemes in the history of India and waived off Rs 20,617 crore farm loans of 25.50 lakh farmers on August 15, 2024, stating that Telangana farmers were freed from the mounting debt burden on Independence day. "Telangana is blessed with wonderful women entrepreneurs. Some women formed self-help groups with 67 lakh members. Our goal is to promote one crore women as Millionaires. Women groups are establishing solar power plants, owned electric RTC buses and petrol pumps in the state," Revanth Reddy said. He further stated that the State power distribution companies entered agreements with Women groups to purchase 1,000 MW of solar power.

"Women are running 600 buses and competing with corporate transport agencies. Telangana women entrepreneurs are competing with big corporate companies like Adani and Ambani in running solar plants and EV buses," the Chief Minister said. Revanth Reddy said the State government has envisaged plans to free Hyderabad from pollution by reviving the Musi river and studied the development of rivers and riverbanks in many cities, including the Hudson River in New York, Thames River in London, and Sumida in Tokyo. "The Musi river will become a major tourist spot and the Musi rejuvenation project will also provide employment to thousands of people in the days to come," he said. The Chief Minister said the Telangana delegation attended the investment conferences held in Davos, America, South Korea, Japan, and Singapore and received more than Rs. 2.5 lakh crores of investments to provide jobs to the youth in the private sector. "The People's government has started a lot of welfare and development programmes and there is still a lot to be done. Inviting all the delegates to join our mission to bring a change in the lives of people. I further appeal to all the delegates to share their experiences, knowledge and skills with the State government and become the "Telangana Rising" brand ambassadors, showing the greatness of Telangana to the world," Revanth Reddy added.

Uttam warns of global threat to liberal democracy

Hyderabad, April 26 Minister for Irrigation and Civil Supplies N Uttam Kumar Reddy warned on Saturday that liberal values were facing an unprecedented assault across the world.Delivering the vote of thanks at the closing session of Bharat Summit 2025 at HICC, he said that freedoms of thought, speech, arts, academia, assembly, and protest were under relentless attack by extreme right-wing and authoritarian regimes globally. Uttam Kumar Reddy said it was a matter of pride that the Bharat Summit was being hosted in Hyderabad, Telangana, under a Congress-led government that is firmly committed to upholding liberal, democratic values. He described the gathering as one of the world's largest of progressives, liberals, democrats, activists, thinkers, doers, change-makers, and innovators in the humanities, assembled at a time when the defence of fundamental freedoms had become a global imperative.Reflecting on the breadth of discussions held over two days, Uttam Kumar Reddy said the Summit's sessions addressed critical themes such as global justice, environmental concerns, the spread of misinformation through technology, and the persistent challenges of gender and age discrimination.He noted that some of the world's most distinguished thought leaders, political figures, activists, and policymakers had enriched the deliberations with their insights on the way forward The Minister said the Bharat Summit 2025 had raised a clear and urgent voice on behalf of the liberal democratic world, offering not just intellectual arguments but emotional strength to face contemporary challenges.Acknowledging the gloom that often permeates discussions on current global affairs, Uttam Kumar Reddy said that many people feel disheartened and even hopeless when confronted with rising intolerance and authoritarianism. However, he said, the Bharat Summit had rekindled hope by uniting not just minds but also hearts. He stressed that the Summit was not merely a conference, but had brought together a family connected by a larger vision for humanity - one based on dignity, freedom and justice. Uttam Kumar Reddy also invited delegates to consider Hyderabad as a global investment destination, pointing out that the city offered some of the best opportunities across various sectors.

Naidu to launch Matsyakara Bharosa in SKLM dist today

GNS News Agency, April 26Vijayawada: Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu will launch Matsyakara Bharosa scheme at Budagatlalalem village of Etcherla constituency in Srikakulam district on Saturday. He will also interact with fishermen and distribute Rs 20,000 to each of them as part of the scheme that was approved in the recent cabinet meeting.

Indian Chronicle

English Daily

YouTube turns 20

An unremarkable grainy video — just 19 seconds long — showing a young man standing in front of an elephant enclosure at a zoo in San Diego was uploaded on April 23, 2005. No one would have imagined that this banal footage would trigger a video revolution globally and completely transform the way we consume content online. Twenty years later, YouTube, with over 20 billion videos and more than a billion monthly active users, is an integral part of our lives. From those modest beginnings, the site opened the gates for users worldwide to post funny, viral videos that could take the internet by storm, racking up millions of views and earning some millions of dollars. A whole generation of digital natives has grown up with the video-sharing website. YouTube is now a cornerstone of the media ecosystem. It is the go-to platform for every conceivable activity, ranging from cat videos, music videos, gadget reviews and food blogging. It is as much an endearing platform for rising stars as it is for conspiracy theorists. It has disrupted the traditional television medium in ways that were unimaginable two decades ago. YouTube has spawned a world of video creators who make content catering to every imaginable niche interest. For every YouTube video you have watched, there are hundreds of millions you will never get to see in your lifetime. Popular music artists such as Justin Beiber rose to fame on YouTube and social media stars including 'Mr Beast' turned their large followings into powerful entertainment companies.

The joy of early YouTube was that it offered a window into the lives of others; their triumphs and trials, their homages and reviews. Google-owned YouTube's revenue last year was estimated to be \$54.2 billion, which would make it the second-largest media company behind Walt Disney. The founders of YouTube envisioned it as a dating site.

YADAVA COMMUNITY LEADERS FELICITATE NEWLY APPOINTED MANTHANI TAHSILDAR.



P.S.ASHOKAN“INDIAN CHRONICLE“MANTHANI APRIL,27““Manthani, Saturday: Marking a gesture of respect and community goodwill, Yadava community leaders met with the newly transferred Manthani Tahsildar, Mr. Girivenu Kumaraswamy, who recently assumed office.““During their visit, the delegation extended a warm welcome and honored the Tahsildar with a ceremonial shawl. They conveyed their heartfelt congratulations and expressed confidence in his leadership and commitment to the development of the region.““The delegation included prominent Yadava leaders such as Peravena Lingayya Yadav, Doragorla Srinivas Yadav, Bogonda Ravi Yadav, Kanavena Ramesh Yadav, Appala Kumar Yadav, Kanavena Odelu Yadav, Mogili Srinivas Yadav, along with Manthani Srinivas and Kannuri Bapu.““Their visit reflected a spirit of unity and community engagement, aimed at fostering a collaborative relationship with the local administration.

BRIDGE CRUMBLES BEFORE COMPLETION: CPI BLAMES CONTRACTOR NEGLIGENCE AND GOVERNMENT APATHY.



“P.S.ASHOKAN“INDIAN CHRONICLE“MANTHANI APRIL,27““Oded, Mutharam Mandal – CPI former district secretary Goutham Govardhan has lashed out at the state government and the contractor over the incomplete and collapsed bridge across the Maneru River near Oded village in the Manthani constituency. Speaking during an on-site inspection on Saturday, he criticized the poor construction quality and lack of oversight that led to the premature collapse of the bridge structure.““Govardhan alleged that the bridge, which was initiated under the previous government, came to a halt due to sheer negligence by the contractor. “The pillars collapsed even before the bridge could be completed, clearly indicating substandard work,” he stated. “This is a result of the contractor’s failure to maintain construction standards and the utter indifference of government officials who failed to monitor the project.““He further stated that despite two years passing since the collapse, the state government has not taken any corrective action. As a result, people from nearby villages and distant areas continue to face daily hardships, especially during the rainy season, as they are forced to travel via a temporary and unsafe mud road adjacent to the collapsed site.““The bridge was supposed to reduce the travel distance by nearly 30 kilometers between Peddapalli and Bhupalpally districts. Instead, it has become a symbol of government negligence,” Govardhan said.“

FORMER MANTHANI MLA PUTTAMADHUKAR CRITICIZES CONGRESS GOVERNMENT FOR IGNORING SOCIETY IN THE NAME OF GOVERNANCE.



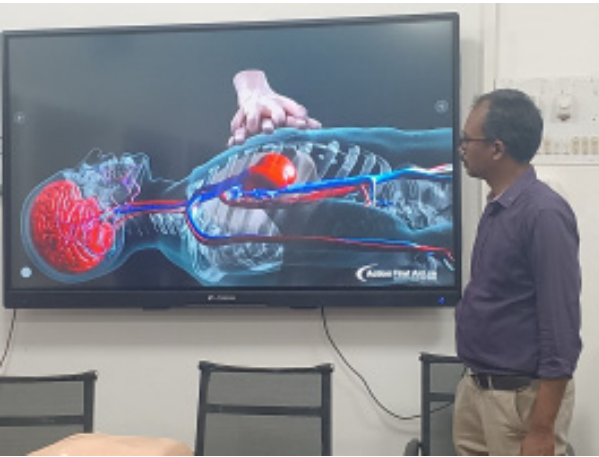
P . S . A S H O K A N “ I N D I A N C H R O N I C L E “ M A N T H A N I , A P R I L 27 “ “Former Manthani MLA Puttamadhukar has criticized the Congress government, stating that it has been misleading people in the name of governance while ignoring society’s needs. On Saturday, he visited the protest camp of contract assistant professors at JNTU College in Centenary Colony, Ramagiri Mandal, who have been protesting for their rights for the past week. During his visit, he expressed solidarity with the professors and listened to their concerns.““He stated that the government has a responsibility to fulfill the just demands of assistant professors who have been working at the JNTU College for several years. These educators have pursued higher education and secured their positions through proper examinations and qualifications—they did not arrive here without merit, he said. With over 1,100 such assistant professors working across various colleges, he stressed that they should not be harassed under the pretext of regulations.““He further highlighted that there are over 3,000 vacant posts across different institutions, which should be regularized according to the rules. He reminded the government that people, including these professors, trusted the



Congress party’s manifesto during the elections and gave it a chance to govern. However, not even a single promise from the manifesto has been implemented so far, he said.““He urged the government to at least think about the future of these well-educated individuals, as students are currently left without classes due to the ongoing protest. The government should act promptly in the interest of both students and faculty.“

“He also called upon the Manthani MLA, who is a highly educated individual and close to the Chief Minister, to respond to the issues faced by the assistant professors. As the chairman of the party’s manifesto committee, the MLA was trusted by the people. But instead of fulfilling the aspirations outlined in the manifesto, it is now at risk of being seen as a tool of deception.““Puttamadhukar warned that if the government continues to ignore the people’s trust, the manifesto will gain a reputation for betrayal. He urged the administration and leadership to take proactive steps to prevent that from happening. He assured that the BRS party stands firmly behind the protesting assistant professors and will support them until their demands are met.

CPR training workshop at Sri Padmavati Mahila University concluded



April 26, Indian Chronicle, Rayalaseema coordinator““The College of Nursing, Sri Padmavati Mahila University, Tirupati, jointly organized a workshop on “CPR Training” for nursing students and community health nursing officers on April 25 and 26, 2025, in collaboration with the Model Rural Health Research Unit (MRHRU), Chandragiri - Andhra Pradesh. The workshop was organized with the aim of teaching CPR to the people of the rural areas where they work, preparing them appropriately to save their lives in times of emergency and to provide effective training to the final year B.Sc. Nursing students for their future careers.““Principal of the College of Nursing Dr. B. Ganga Bhavani; Dr. Sunitha, Head of the Department of Community Medicine, Sri Venkateswara Medical



College; Dr. J.J. Babu Geddam, Scientist ‘G’ (Director Grade Scientist), Head of the Department of Clinical Epidemiology Division, ICMR-National Institute of Nutrition, Hyderabad, acted as the members of the organizing committee of this workshop. ““M.R.HRU. Scientist Dr. U.V. Prasad; Professor of Cardiology, SWIMS, Dr. V. Vanajakshamma, Assistant Professor of Emergency Medicine, Dr. Rohit Gupta, Assistant Professors of Physiotherapy College, Dr. M. Suresh Kumar and Dr. Kavitha acted as resource persons in this workshop.““The participants of this workshop were provided with comprehensive training on CPR through detailed teaching and practical sessions. The teaching staff and students of the Varsity Nursing College participated in this workshop.

Admissions for the academic year 2025-26 in the National Sanskrit University



“April 26, Indian Chronicle, Rayalaseema coordinator““The National Sanskrit University in Tirupati is providing you with the opportunity to learn Sanskrit along with modern subjects directly after class 10 at the . “National Sanskrit University” provides you with a great opportunity for people of all languages, religions, and all communities to study Sanskrit language simply and easily. You can take admission in Prak-Shastri (Plus 1, 2), UG, PG courses in this university for the academic year 2025-26 in a very easy way. Along with the 14 sciences in Sanskrit, you can study English, Computer, Maths, Yoga, Translation, Bharatanatyam, Sitara, Communicative English, etc., along with the subjects, NEP – 2020, through the credit system and grading system. You can study many modern subjects along with Sanskrit, and build a better future in Sanskrit. “This admission notification for the academic year 2025-26 will be available on the university website www.nsktu.ac.in from 28.04.2025. Those who want to join



this university can apply online or register immediately at the Help Desk set up in the Academic Section of our university.“For more details, contact“Website:“www.nsktu.ac.in Email: academics@nsktu.org Cell: 7382595500, 7382585500“Online application starts from 28.04.2025

UNIDENTIFIED WOMAN'S CORPSE RECOVERED IN MANTHANI MANDAL“

“P.S.ASHOKAN“INDIAN CHRONICLE“MANTHANI APRIL,27““Manthani, April 26: In a concerning development, Sub-Inspector Dega Ramesh announced on Saturday that the decomposed body of an unidentified woman was discovered on the outskirts of Mahaboobpalli village, within the Gummunur region of Manthani mandal.““Preliminary observations suggest that the deceased belonged to the Yadava community. However, her identity remains unknown at this stage. Law enforcement authorities are actively investigating the circumstances surrounding the death and are seeking assistance from the public.““The Manthani Police have appealed to anyone with relevant information regarding the woman's identity or any suspicious activity in the area to come forward and aid in the ongoing inquiry.

Sri Padmavati Ammavari Vasanthotsavam from May 11 to 13

- Koil Alwar Thirumanjanam on May 6“ - Golden chariot on May 12““April 26, Indian Chronicle, Rayalaseema coordinator““The annual Vasanthotsavam will be held grandly from May 11 to 13 at the Sri Padmavati Ammavari Temple in Tiruchanur. For this, the Ankurapran will be held on May 10 at 6 pm. Devotees can participate in the Vasanthotsavam by paying Rs. 150/- each.““As part of the festivities, the Swarna Rathotsavam will be held at 9.45 am on May 12. On the three days of the Vasanthotsavam, a Snapans Thirumanjanam will be held for the Ammavari Utsav in the garden on Friday from 2.30 pm to 4.30 pm. From 7.30



pm to 8.30 pm, Ammavaru Procession will be held three days in four mada streets. ““Koil Alwar Thirumanjanam on May 6““Koil Alwar Thirumanjanam will be held in the temple on May 6 to commemorate the annual Vasanthotsavam of Sri Padmavati Goddess. The goddess will be woken up with suprabatham and Koil Alwar Thirumanjanam will be held from 6 am to 9 am. In this, the temple premises, walls, ceiling, puja accessories and other items will be purified with water. Holy water mixed with namakopu, sri churnam, kasturi turmeric, pachaaku, solid camphor, sandalwood powder, kumkuma, kichiligadda and other spices will be sprinkled throughout the temple. Devotees will be allowed to have darshan of the goddess from 9 am. ““ Due to these celebrations, TTD has canceled the Kalyanotsavam and Sahasradeepalankara services from May 6th and May 10th to 13th.

Praneeth Foundation launches Free water kiosk.“



“April 26 Indian Chronicle Rayalaseema coordinator““Praneeth Foundation launched its third Free water kiosk center near the TTD Administrative Building in Tirupati. On the occasion of the launch of the kiosk, a program of distributing about 250 liters of free buttermilk was arranged. This Free water kiosk center was inaugurated by K Kishore Kumar, President of TTD Employees Cooperative Bank. As part of the inauguration program, free buttermilk was distributed to the people who came to the kiosk center. Speaking on the occasion, Kishore Kumar said that it is very happy that Praneeth Foundation is launching useful Free water kiosk for the people. He also asked them to start more cold storage centers with the grace of Lord Sri Venkateswara Swamy, the presiding deity of Kaliyuga. A large number of people, Praneeth Foundation staff and others participated in this program.

*Siddhaiah's death is unfortunate“Deputy CM announces compensation of Rs. 10 lakhs



Chandragiri Jana Sena in-charge Devara Manohar““April 26 Indian Chronicle Rayalaseema coordinator““Chandragiri constituency Jana Sena party in-charge Devara Manohar expressed his grief that it is unfortunate that R. Siddhaiah (72) of Dasarigudem village, Chinnagottigallu mandal, Chandragiri constituency, died in an elephant attack. He participated in Siddhaiah's funeral on Saturday and expressed deep condolences to the family members. The scene of the attack was inspected along with Jana Sena leaders at night. Speaking on the occasion, he said that Jana Sena party president and Deputy CM Pawan Kalyan has decided to give a compensation of Rs. 10 lakhs to Siddhaiah's family on behalf of the state government. He said that it is unfortunate that such incidents occur despite all measures being taken to monitor the movement of elephants and provide information to the people of nearby villages from time to time. He prayed for the peace of Siddhaiah's soul.

BRS has no moral right to criticise others: Sridhar Babu



Hyderabad, April 26 : Minister for IT and Industries Duddilla Sridhar Babu strongly criticised the Bharat Rashtira Samithi (BRS), stating that a party, which systematically violated the rights of the people over a decade-long rule, has no moral standing to criticise others. As part of the "Bharat Summit 2025", the Minister, along with Deputy Chief Minister Bhatti Vikramarka, ceremoniously inaugurated a

special photo exhibition titled 'Path of Justice' at HICC here on Saturday. On the occasion, he explained that the exhibition was curated with the aim of acquainting the younger generation with India's historical milestones and fostering awareness of its positive international relations. Sridhar Babu emphasised that the summit seeks to provide directional leadership to the global progressive movement. Intellectuals from over 100 countries, working in areas such as progressive thought, democracy, and world peace, have been made stakeholders in this initiative, he added.

The Minister further remarked that under the leadership of Mallikarjun Kharge and Rahul Gandhi, the Congress party has been steadfastly striving to uphold the spirit of the Constitution. He accused BRS leaders of maliciously attempting to tarnish the reputation of the Congress-led government under Chief Minister Revanth Reddy, using AI-generated content. Questioning the motives behind the premature release of photographs from the exhibition on social media, he urged BRS leaders to reform their ways.

Modi govt's tough stance on terrorism: Bandi Sanjay

Hyderabad, April 26: Union Minister of State for Home Affairs Bandi Sanjay Kumar stated that the Pehalgam incident represents the height of terrorist brutality. He warned that those who wield guns will eventually fall to those same guns. He affirmed that the Narendra Modi government is committed to eradicating terrorism and is preparing to take strong measures that will shake Pakistan to its core. He added that the Modi government is about to take tough decisions in this regard and called upon the entire nation to stand in support.

He was speaking at the 'Rozgar Mela' event held today at the Marri Chenna Reddy Human Resource Development Centre here. He was joined by GST Chief Commissioners Sandeep Prakash, V. Sampooran, and others. "Prime Minister Narendra Modi holds the Rozgar Mela program close to his heart. He is a leader who stood by his word of providing one million jobs. The Rozgar Mela, which began on October 22, 2022, continues to this day. So far, 14 Rozgar Melas have been conducted, resulting in the filling of 925,000 jobs", he said. Through today's 15th Rozgar Mela, more than 51,000 jobs are being filled across the country, bringing the total close to the one million mark. Filling so many jobs within a stipulated timeframe without room for corruption or error is no small feat, and that credit goes to the Modi government. When vacancies exist in government departments, the burden falls on existing employees, making it hard to provide services in remote areas. Keeping this in mind, under PM Modi's leadership, vacancies in departments are being filled promptly. No government in the past had regularly filled vacant positions like this, he added.

Today, the Rozgar Mela is being held in 47 centres across the country, with appointment letters issued to 51,000 candidates. In our State, it is being conducted in Hyderabad and Secunderabad. Around 700 candidates are receiving appointment letters from the MCHRD centre.



"Having secured a job through hard work and study, now it is your responsibility to perform your duties with commitment and earn recognition. Stay up to date with new technologies and changes in your work, and keep learning. You know that PM Modi is determined to create job opportunities, which is why we were able to fill one million positions. This is a government that delivers on its promises", Bandi Sanjay said. Moreover, initiatives like Startup India, Stand-up India, and Make in India are encouraging youth to not only get jobs but also become job creators. During the pandemic, when countries like the U.S. faced economic crises, India remained stable because of the Atmanirbhar package, a feat credited to the Modi government. "Coming to Telangana State, the previous State government failed to fill jobs regularly, with paper leaks and delays causing injustice to unemployed youth. Even the present State government is plagued by corruption and irregularities. Under PM Modi's leadership, India is striving to become a global economic leader. From the 11th position, India has moved up to 5th, and within the next three years, it aims to reach 3rd. As we approach 100 years of independence in 2047, Modi envisions India surpassing the U.S. and China to become the number one nation in the world", he added.

"Samuhik Ganesh Utsav in Bhagyanagar" and Ranga Reddy & Medchal Districts



Hyderabad, April 26 (NSS): Bhagyanagar Ganesh Utsav Samithi is celebrating Samuhika Ganesh Utsav since 1980 which has a unique identity internationally being a single organization conducting such a starting 1400 idols in the year 1980 to 140000 Ganesh Pandals / Mandap in the year 2024. The organization coordinates between all the Govt agencies and with the Mandaps for providing infrastructural

Support and all other cooperation to all Mandap organizers to have a smooth and safe "Samuhik Ganesh Utsav in Bhagyanagar" (twin cities) and surrounding Ranga Reddy and Medchal Districts.

This year also, the Bhagyanagar Ganesh Utsav Samithi is planning to organize 46th Samuhik Ganesh Nimmajjan starting with Idol installation on August 27 and culminating with huge immersion procession on September 6. Accordingly, this year also the Samithi has started the preparatory work in April itself for arrangements and smooth conduct of the Samuhik Ganesh Utsav in Bhagyanagar. In this connection, the Bhagyanagar Ganesh Utsav Samithi (BGUS) organized its assembly convenors meeting at Bhagyanagar on April 25 to chalk out the plan for grand arrangements and conduct of Utsav this year.

The meeting was presided over by G. Raghava Reddy, President. He felicitated our committee members Nayini Buchi Reddy, EC Member on his taking over charge as "National General Secretary" of Sabarimala Ayyappa Seva Samajam and B.V. Chandra Shekar, taken over charge as "Convenor-Telangana State Unit" of Sabarimala Ayyappa Seva Samajam.

Rachakonda CP inaugurates 855 CCTV cameras in Maheshwaram Zone



Hyderabad, April 26 : Today, G. Sudheer Babu, IPS, Commissioner of Police, Rachakonda, inaugurated 855 CCTV cameras in Maheshwaram Zone, in which 289 CCTV cameras have been installed across 26 Colonies/Villages covering with major road and junctions at a cost of Rs 68,00,000/- with two years of Annual Maintenance Contract (AMC) under the com-

munity initiative. The remaining 566 CCTV cameras have been installed in 138 vulnerable temples under special drive. These Community cameras will be integrated into the Command & Control Centre, where a dedicated team will monitor them around the clock. As of today, there are 2997 Community CCTV cameras and 23,582 Nenusaitam

CCTVs installed, all of which are geo-tagged within the limits of the Maheshwaram Zone. Sudheer Babu, IPS, stated the CCTV cameras are playing a pivotal role in enhancing security, crime prevention, fostering in creating a safer society by deterring criminal activities, aiding in investigations, enabling proactive surveillance, facilitating crime analysis, and promoting

community safety and its presence are a vital component of modern crime prevention strategies. Through the help of CCTV Cameras, the Rachakonda Police has been successful in detecting several sensational cases. Sudheer Babu requested the colony and village elders to come forward to install CCTV cameras and these cameras are essential for community security, which helps to deter crime, monitor suspicious activity, and assist police in investigations. CCTV presence alone can discourage unlawful behavior, creating a safer environment for all residents. Let's take responsibility and work together for a more secure neighbourhood. Sudheer Babu, IPS, appreciated and felicitated the colony elders, who came forward and supported police in installing CCTV Cameras. D. Sunitha Reddy, Dy. Commissioner of Police.

TPCC chief terms BRS MLC Kavitha as liquor queen and mega rowdy



Hyderabad, April 26 Telangana Pradesh Congress Committee (TPCC) President Mahesh Kumar Goud has strongly responded to BRS MLC Kalvakuntla Kavitha, labeling her as a "liquor queen" and a "mega rowdy."

On Saturday, MLC Kavitha tweeted on X, claiming that Congress leader Rahul Gandhi is coming to Telangana from the wrong path, arguing that the Congress government has oppressed the people during its 16-month tenure, even sending bulldozers to harm the poor under the guise of the Hy-dra and Musi rejuvenation project. In reply to her comments, the TPCC chief stated that Kavitha, who has been involved in the liquor business, lacks the authority to criticise Rahul Gandhi. He added that the BRS MLC, who refers to herself as a "mega rowdy," should feel embarrassed for opposing the Congress leader. Mahesh Kumar Goud also asked Kavitha to address the issue of land sales in Hyderabad that occurred during KCR's administration.

Daylight dacoity detected in Suncity, six held

Hyderabad, April 26 The Rajendranagar Police, in coordination with the CCS team, have successfully detected a daylight dacoity case and apprehended six accused involved in the crime. The accused identified are: A1 Jibrin Bin Jaber, driver, Mailardevpally, A2 Mohammed Aqeel, furniture worker, Karwan, A3 Mohammed Fasiuddin, carpenter, Humayunnagar, A4 Sohail Shah Khan, driver, Vattepally, A5 Mohammed Abdul Rub Javeed, driver, Saifiy Colony, A6 Mohammed Shabbir, chef, Kalapathar. The police seized two knives used in the commission of the offence, two Redmi mobile phones belonging to the complainant, one white Swift Dzire car used during the offence and Gold and silver ornaments.

Police said on April 21, 2025 at around 9:22 hrs, a dacoity was reported at P&T Colony, Suncity, Gandipet, under the limits of Rajendranagar Police Station. Complainant Mohammed Shakir Ali reported that while he and his

family were at home, four unidentified individuals knocked on the door, forcibly entered the house and threatened him and his wife at knifepoint. The accused broke open the almirah and looted gold and silver ornaments, net cash, and two mobile phones before fleeing the scene. During the investigation, it was revealed that A1, who is a relative of the complainant, had prior knowledge about the valuables in the house. He hatched a plan and conspired with the other accused. A1 arranged weapons and a getaway vehicle to execute the crime. All six accused were apprehended within four days of the offence. Dy Commissioner of Police, Rajendranagar Zone, Cyberabad appealed to the people to avoid sharing personal or financial details with casual acquaintances or extended relatives and refrain from storing large quantities of cash or valuables at home; use secure lockers and ensure all CCTV systems in and around the residence are functional and regularly monitored.

Telangana Govt modernising irrigation through emerging technologies: Uttam



Hyderabad, April 26 The Telangana government is actively modernising its irrigation ecosystem by leveraging advanced technologies such as drones, artificial intelligence (AI), Geographic Information Systems (GIS) and the Internet of Things (IoT), said Minister for Irrigation Uttam Kumar Reddy. Speaking at the Drone Expo and Conference 2025 held at Hitec Exhibition Centre on Saturday, the Minister emphasised the government's commitment to harnessing technology to achieve greater water security, improve agricultural productivity, and promote sustainable rural development.

The conference, organised in partnership with Rashtriya Raksha University and themed "Irrigation, AI, Space & Drones," brought together leading experts and innovators who extensively discussed advancements in pre-

cision agriculture, water management strategies, rural infrastructure development, AI-driven unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) applications, and the integration of drone technology with space-based remote sensing capabilities. On the occasion, Uttam Kumar Reddy outlined the ongoing initiatives by the Telangana government aimed at significantly upgrading both physical and institutional infrastructure in the irrigation sector. He highlighted the revitalisation of WALAMTARI (Water and Land Management Training and Research Institute), underscoring the government's ambition to reestablish the institute as a premier training and research centre dedicated to modern water management and irrigation practices. The Minister further elaborated on the role of drone technology in agriculture, describing it as transformative. "Drones have become indispensable for precision agriculture. They help monitor crop health, provide detailed soil analysis, manage irrigation schedules efficiently, and significantly reduce resource wastage," he explained. The Minister emphasised that drones are not merely technological tools, but critical assets enabling farmers to enhance their productivity and sustainability. However, Uttam Kumar Reddy pointed out that the successful implementation of these technologies requires more than just their availability. "Technology alone cannot bring about the desired outcomes. It requires vision, effective collaboration among stakeholders, and capacity building. Events like this Drone Expo play a pivotal role in bringing startups, academia, policymakers, and industry leaders together to collaborate, innovate, and develop impactful solutions," he added.

Encouraging the youth and innovators in attendance, Uttam Kumar Reddy stressed the importance of adopting a solution-oriented mindset.

Arrangements for Haj 2025 reviewed



Hyderabad, April 26 : Special Secretary to Government, Minorities Welfare Department, Tafseer Iqbal, IPS, Yasmeen Basha, IAS, Director, Minorities Welfare and Sajjad Ali, Executive Officer, Telangana State Haj Committee along with Department Officials have taken review Meeting on the arrangements for the Haj 2025.

As per last year, all arrangements have been made and best of the best facilities will be provided to all Hajis, who are proceeding to Haj 2025 from the Hyderabad Embarkation point and regarding the above all Department co-ordination meeting and meeting with the Airport, Customs has also been conducted further tenders were also finalised for the furnishing, catering, engaging of the VOLVO buses for transporting the Hajis to Airport, CCTV camera for surveillance. Further, a Medical Camp from Princess Esra Hospital will also be there for Health Check-up of the Hajis. Necessary arrangements have been issued to Law and Order for deploying Police Personnel and Fire Engine Vehicles and Extinguishers will also be made available from the date of starting of Haj Camp till the completion. Additionally, the X-Ray screening machine, Luggage trolleys are also been facilitated at Haj Camp and additional transformer is also installed from the TRANSCO Dept. The Special Secretary, Minorities Welfare has instructed Executive Officer, Telangana Haj Committee to make all necessary arrangements and sought out all issues.

Momentum builds for BRS Jubilee as MLC Kavitha flags off symbolic Car Rally

Hyderabad, April 26 In a spirited lead-up to the BRS Silver Jubilee Celebrations, BRS MLC Kalvakuntla Kavitha today flagged off 25 cars from her residence in Hyderabad.

Marking 25 glorious years of the Bharat Rashtira Samithi, the 25 cars — a symbol of the party's journey, were dispatched towards the grand meeting venue in Yelkaturthy, Hanamkonda. MLC Kavitha expressed her gratitude to BRS leader Ravi Yadav for his thoughtful initiative and contribution to the celebrations.

The much-anticipated Silver Jubilee meeting is set to take place tomorrow evening, where BRS supremo, former CM K. Chandrashekar Rao will address a massive gathering expected to draw lakhs of supporters, commemorating a historic milestone in the party's journey.



Kavitha’s scathing attack on Rahul Gandhi ahead of Hyderabad visit

Hyderabad, April 26 : BRS MLC Kalvakuntla Kavitha issued a sharp critique of Congress MP Rahul Gandhi ahead of his visit to Hyderabad, accusing him of ignoring human rights violations under the Congress-led Telangana government. In a tweet, she demanded him to visit Hyderabad Central University and interact with students, who were subjected to lathicharges, false cases, and arrests for protest-ing forest destruction.

Taking on her X handle, MLC Kalvakuntla Kavitha questioned Rahul Gandhi’s silence despite claiming to protect the Constitution, stating, “You roam the country with the Constitution in hand... why the silence when your CM Revanth Reddy in Telangana is violating human rights and mocking democracy?” She called out the Congress

regime’s 16-month rule as a period marked by deceitful promises and blatant lies. Citing incidents in Lagadcherla and the suppression of Banjara communities, she said the National Human Rights Commission had confirmed the brutality carried out under the Congress government. Quoting from her tweet, MLC K. Kavitha demanded answers on the Congress’s unfulfilled “Six Guarantees,” including the partial implementation of the ‘2 lakh farm loan waiver, the weakening of the Rythu Bandhu scheme, and the failure to deliver on Kalyana Lakshmi, one tola gold, ₹2,500 monthly aid for women, and scooters for 18-year-old girls. Concluding her tweet, BRS Leader MLC Kavitha said, “Telangana awaits answers. When will your six guarantees and 420 promises be fulfilled?”, she asked

Citizens step forward to protect hills from construction threat



GNS News Agency, April 26

Pune’s hills face increasing pressure from urban construction and citizens have stepped up to defend the city’s natural green cover. The Green Pune Movement (GPM), a collective of residents, environmentalists, and experts, leads the opposition against any changes to the Bio-Diversity Park (BDP) reservations that protect Pune’s hilltops and slopes. These hills—including ARAI, Taljai, Parvati, and Dighi—are essential to the city’s ecological health. They help reduce temperatures, support biodiversity, recharge groundwater, and act as natural carbon sinks. However, despite a policy in place since 2015 and a compensation mechanism introduced in 2018, progress has stalled, raising concerns among citizens and experts alike.

Former MP Vandana Chavan has questioned the government’s inaction. “Why did the government fail?” she asked. “The need to stop construction on hills and their slopes and to legally protect hills as natural heritage has been recognised for quite some time now. Yet despite this policy being in place, the government has made no significant progress.” According to the government’s policy, those already occupying the land would receive 8% transferable development rights (TDR), with an additional 2% for those who complied within a year. Still, activists claim that no real implementation has taken place. “The hills are the lungs of the city, and without them, Pune might just become the next Delhi. Right now, the city isn’t even among the top 40 most polluted cities — but if the hills are destroyed, we could easily find ourselves topping the pollution charts,” said Chavan. Concerns were further raised with the formation of a study group under retired IAS officer Ramanath Jha to review the status of construction on hill land. The group consists only of government officials, with no representation from experts, citizens, or environmentalists.

“It’s a government committee formed for government purposes concerning the land. When we asked why the committee consists only of government officials, they responded by saying they would take opinions from stakeholders,” Chavan added. Ecologist and archaeologist Shayali Dhatar questioned the lack of outside representation. “The committee formed on April 8 consists solely of government

officials. Why hasn’t anyone else been involved?” Activist Anita Gokhale Benninger emphasised the risks of altering the natural form of the hills, she said “Preserving the integrity of the landform is crucial — if we don’t, we risk facing disasters like the massive landslides seen in Kerala.” She also reminded authorities that the land had already been marked as cultural heritage. “As per the town plan, this area has long been designated as cultural heritage — it’s a settled matter. To mark off this land properly, the entire planning process would need to be revisited.” The Green Pune Movement has demanded that the government cancel the study group, fully implement the biodiversity park (BDP) reservation, and prevent any further construction on hilltops and slopes. The movement has also called for a dedicated monitoring squad, regular satellite mapping every six months as per Jain Committee recommendations, and the formation of a hill protection task force that includes citizen participation. Chavan pointed out that satellite mapping, as recommended, has only been done twice—once in 2005 and again in 2016—despite a six-month interval being suggested. “Your stand must be, and will have to be, to save the city,” she told the government. “Don’t make the citizens of Pune suffer because of your failures.”

Experts are backing the GPM’s demands. Dr Prakash Rao, from the Symbiosis Institute in Lavale, said, “Pune’s hills are not just scenic backdrops; they are critical to the city’s environmental health. They regulate temperature, support biodiversity, and help with groundwater recharge.” Dr Vaishali Thakur, from Fergusson College, highlighted their importance in maintaining ecological balance. “These hills contribute to air purification, prevent soil erosion, and provide habitats for many species. They also offer educational and recreational value to the city’s residents.”

Dr Ankur Patwardhan from Abasaheb Garware College warned of broader consequences. “Disruption of these habitats can lead to a cascade of ecological consequences. Conservation of these hills is critical for maintaining biodiversity and the services on which the city depends.” On the ground, citizens are voicing their fears. “We come here every morning for walks and to enjoy the fresh air. If construction starts, we’ll lose not just the trees but also the peace and the birdsong,” said Soniya Choudhary, 23, at ARAI Hills. Anupama Thakur, 78, who lives near Taljai Hills, said, “Taljai is more than just a hill; it’s a sanctuary for wildlife and a retreat for people. If buildings come up, where will these animals go?” In response to the government’s move, GPM launched an online and offline signature campaign. Over 25,000 people have signed, and the petition will be submitted to the Pune Municipal Corporation to formally register public opposition. More than 9,000 citizens have also signed a separate petition demanding enforcement of no-construction zones and legal protection for the hills. The message from Pune’s citizens is clear: they want action, not committees, and they are ready to fight for the future of their city’s green spaces.

the citizens. He stated that with the growing population in PCMC and Charoli, public transport in these areas must be strengthened to combat traffic problems. Lakhs of people come to Pune for jobs, education, and employment opportunities. Public transport through PMPML serves as an essential medium for such citizens. In his speech, he highlighted how the common man should be able to travel comfortably by having access to AC buses. Hence, the plan includes AC CNG buses. PMPML chairperson and managing director Deepa Mudholi Munde presented an overview of the organisation’s status during the inaugural event. “Efforts are being made to control the traffic congestion by empowering PMPML and Metro, considering the growing population of Pune and PCMC,” stated a press release.

band will be back.” “I have decided to visit Pathankot myself and plead with the BSF officers to ensure my husband’s safe return. I will personally appeal to everyone to help in this effort. I will reach out to the prime minister and the President to secure his release. I’m unsure whom to trust. We must ensure his return, and I am willing to knock on doors personally to make this happen,” added Rajani, who is scheduled to leave for Pathankot Sunday. “His friend had called. He said that the Pakistan side had kidnapped my husband while he was on duty. I spoke to him last Tuesday. For 17 years, he has been in service,” said Rajani, who, according to relatives, is pregnant with the couple’s second child. The couple has a seven-year-old child. Meanwhile, Kalyan Banerjee, Trinamool Congress’s Lok Sabha MP from Serampore, said he called up BSF Director General Daljit Singh Chaudhary on the issue. Speaking with The Indian Express, Banerjee said, “I called up the BSF DG regarding Purnam Kumar Shaw, who is detained in Pakistan. He told me that all agencies and the Centre are making every possible effort to bring the jawan back. He said Pakistan is taking time, but ultimately, the jawan will be returned. He said Purnam is presently safe and in good health in Pakistan.”

Roller skating on a roll in Pune



GNS News Agency, April 26

Once a recreational pastime, roller skating is now thriving as a competitive sport in the country, and Pune is at the centre of it. Speaking with owner of Fast & Furious Academy, Shekhar Thorat said, “Skaters from many cities in Maharashtra and even outside are coming to Pune for practice. Pune has become the hub for skaters.” “The increase in participation from Pune alone in the past five years is a lot,” said Shripad Shinde, the coach of the Indian national team and the president of Pune Skating Association. He pointed out that India is climbing fast in global rankings. “We’re already in the top three in Asia and among the top ten in the world. We’ve got skaters who’ve brought home silver and bronze from the Asian Championships and a few juniors who’ve even won medals at the world level.” “Pune is one of the very few cities in India to have not one, but three full-length, Olympic-level skating rinks,” says Ashok Gunjal, the secretary of the Skating Association of Pune. The Skating Association of Pune also hosts regular competitions. “On average, once a month, we organize a race at the local level,” he said. Recently there was a district-level championship held on April 13 to mark Ambedkar Jayanti, with another Open Skate Championship scheduled for April 29 and 30 in Viman Nagar.

“Viman Nagar skating rink, which is the main skating rink in Pune, which Gunjal built, is where all the big skating events happen,” said Vishal Desai, owner of Panther Skating. This is an international-level skating rink regarded as one of the best rinks built in India. The city’s success isn’t just in infrastructure. “There are 2-3 skaters I can immediately name, Vikram Ingle and Siddhant Kamble, both Asian medalists, with good world rankings,” Gunjal said. Both are

Pahalgam terror attack | How Islamic verse ‘Kalma’ saved Hindu professor at Assam University: ‘Feels like second life’



GNS News Agency, April 26

Pahalgam terror attack: How Islamic verse ‘Kalma’ recital helped Hindu professor at Assam University survive: ‘Feels like second life’ Bhattacharya recalled that more gunshots were heard and his son saw one of the terrorists ask something to a tourist and then shoot him. Death was just a bullet away from Debasish Bhattacharya, an Assam University professor who was on a six-day Kashmir tour with his family, on the fateful day when terrorists gunned down tourists in Pahalgam on April 22. Born to a Hindu Brahmin family, Bhattacharya, while recounting the spine-chilling story of survival, told The Indian Express that he recited Islamic verse ‘Kalma’ as he saw four terrorists gun down (Hindu) men in front of his eyes.

“Our Kashmiri tour was from April 21 to April 26, and we were to stay at Pahalgam for a day. On that day, we entered the arena called Mini Switzerland from the back side. Not many people were there on that side. We were all very relaxed. My wife was looking at some shawls while my son was walking around and I took some photos. Suddenly, I heard gunshots and asked the local photographer

students of Shinde.pune, roller skating, Inline skating now dominates over quads due to its international scope. (Express photo) Ingle, captain of the Indian skating team, said, “Our team is growing every year. Maharashtra, followed closely by Tamil Nadu, has some of the best speed skaters in the country.” Ingle and Kamble, both skaters who started their skating journey in Pune, are the top skaters in India at the moment.

“Nearly 80 percent of the skaters in team Maharashtra are from Pune,” said Kamble, who is currently in Frankfurt representing India in the European Cup. Although he recalled that the number of participants from Pune is faltering these days. “Despite these achievements, there are challenges,” he said. Everything, these kids and parents, they have to spend on their own,” he said. Events are primarily funded through entry fees, and sponsorship remains sparse. “We’re hoping for more Olympic recognition. Skateboarding was included in Tokyo 2020. Once more roller sports become part of the official Olympic roster, we’ll see funding, visibility, and maybe even mainstream sponsors come in.” On the contrary, Shinde explained, “There is support. All international-level rinks in Pune are built by PMC. Right now, we have three tracks. I don’t think any other city has this quantity of tracks built by a local corporation. We definitely have support, of course, there would be limitations due to budgeting.”

Pune is also beginning to see interest in adjacent disciplines like artistic skating, skateboarding, and inline hockey. “There are specific teams dedicated to one discipline like the one at Seva Sadan School that train regularly in artistic skating alone,” Shinde said. Participation of young girls in the sport has increased according to the Skating Association and various academies throughout Pune. “Girls are coming in good numbers, till 14–16 years, we have a good number of girls and boys,” he said. Inline skating now dominates over quads due to its international scope. “Quad skates go up to the national zone only. If a child wants to go international, they will have to have inline skates,” he said. India is one of the few countries where both are still allowed to compete. Inlines are faster, about 35% more efficient, but quads help with balance and learning the basics. “Parents have a crucial role in choosing the right coach. They must verify the coach’s background, qualifications, and experience before enrolling their children. It’s important to ensure that coaching is rooted in proper technique, sports science, and ethical practices,” said Shinde.

about it. He said shots are fired by the forest people to scare away monkeys,” said Bhattacharya, the head of the Bengali Department of Assam University. Bhattacharya recalled that more gunshots were heard and his son saw one of the terrorists ask something to a tourist and then shoot him.

“Quickly, we all ran towards a tree and lay down. Another couple with a child came there for shelter. A terrorist came there and asked the husband something that was inaudible to us. Then I saw the man shoot him dead in front of my eyes,” said the professor. Bhattacharya said that after the murder, the terrorist quietly walked up to the group and asked the professor, “Kya bol rahe ho?” (What are you saying?) “At that moment everyone was chanting ‘La ilaha illallah’. I also started chanting that verse, even though no sound was coming out of my mouth, out of fear. I do not know what the terrorist felt, but he walked away. But then again, the terrorist returned from the opposite side, took a round, and then walked away. When the terrorist was 20 metres away, we all crossed the fence and ran for our lives and wandered for two hours in the mountains, not getting any signal,” Bhattacharya recounted. Bhattacharya mentioned that with no mobile network and having no idea from where the terrorists would emerge from the mountains, they followed the horses’ footprints and reached a village. “Much to our relief, we were able to contact our local driver, and a local resident took us to safety. A family from Chhattisgarh was also with us had got separated from the group. Luckily, their child and the other members of that family were with us and we quickly descended and came back to Srinagar. It’s like a new life to me I faced death right in the face.” This was the family’s first visit to Kashmir, but Bhattacharya does not know if he will visit the Valley again. But he says his son Drobadeep Bhattacharya would visit the place in the future.

Five pellets fired from air gun at windows of house in Pune’s Kondhwa; cops detain suspect, seize weapon



GNS News Agency, April 26

Pune city police have launched a probe after at least five pellets were fired from an air gun at the windows of a house in Salunkhe Vihar area of Pune’s Kondhwa around Saturday noon. While no one from the house was injured, the incident did create panic in the area. Police have detained a 29-year-old person who is suspected to have fired the pellets and seized the air gun. Around Saturday noon, the Pune police responded to a call made to the emergency response control room about firing on the windows of the house of Manoj Shrikant Kanade (50), in a residential building in Salunkhe Vihar locality of Kondhwa. “When our team visited the house, we found there were impact marks of pellets—one on a window glass on the ground floor and four more on a window glass on the first floor. Two pellets were found in the house. Initial observations based on the impact marks suggested that pellets were fired from a building across the street. We detained a suspect identified as Bilal Zulphikar Shaikh. During questioning, Shaikh admitted to having fired pellets,” said Inspector Abdul Rauf Shaikh, Kondhwa police station.

“We have detained the suspect along with the air gun. We are questioning the suspect on why the person resorted

to firing which could have potentially led to injury to people. Primary probe suggests the person was using the air gun for recreational purposes. Prima facie there is no history of any dispute of the suspect with the residents of the house fired upon. Probe is on into the motive and how the suspect came to be in the possession of the air gun,” said an officer from Kondhwa police station.

National Commission for Women to hold Grievance Redressal Camp

Hyderabad, April 26 : The National Commission for Women (NCW) will be visiting Hyderabad on Monday (April 28) at 10.30 am to conduct a “Rastriya Mahila Aayog Apke Dwar-Mahila Jansunwai” (NCW at Your Doorstep - Women’s Public Hearing).

The Jan Sunwai will be held at Samagam Hall, 2nd Floor, Tourism Plaza, Greenlands, Begumpet. The initiative aims to provide a platform for the redressal of grievances related to women. The public hearing will be chaired by Vijaya Rahatkar, Chairperson, NCW. The program offers an invaluable opportunity for women to directly present their issues and seek resolution. Notably, walk-in complaints will also be accepted during the Jan Sunwai



BJP submits petition to revoke suspension of 18 MLAs from Karnataka Assembly



GNS News Agency, April 26

The 18 Karnataka BJP legislators were suspended for six months for climbing up to the Speaker’s chair, tearing copies of various Bills, and hurling them at him. The 18 legislators were suspended for six months for climbing up to the Speaker’s chair, tearing copies of various Bills, and hurling them at him. A delegation of BJP legislators under Leader of Opposition R Ashok petitioned Speaker U T Khader to withdraw the suspension order of 18 BJP MLAs on Monday.

The legislators were suspended on the last day of the Budget session on March 21 as the Karnataka Assembly witnessed a pandemonium over allegations of honey-trapping legislators, including ministers in the state government, apart from the row over the passage of a legislation which extended reservation benefits to Muslims in government tenders below Rs 2 crore. The Speaker is learnt to have

assured the Opposition legislators that he would take a call on revoking the order in consultation with the state government.

The 18 legislators were suspended for six months for climbing up to the Speaker’s chair, tearing copies of various Bills, and hurling them at him. The suspension was under Rule 348 of the Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business in the Karnataka Legislative Assembly. Speaking to reporters after the meeting, Ashok said that the incident should have remained inside the walls of the Assembly, and suspending the legislators for six months was not right. “We have submitted a petition saying that the intention was not to disrespect the Speaker,” he added. During the meeting, Ashok said that Khader assured him that he would discuss the suspension with the Department of Law and Parliamentary Affairs and would inform the Opposition about his decision soon. “Our intention is to ensure the smooth functioning of the Legislative Assembly,” Ashok added. On April 9, the 18 suspended MLAs had met the Speaker and urged him to withdraw his decision that would keep them out of the Assembly till September. This would mean that they will not likely be part of the Monsoon session of the legislature, unless the suspension is revoked. The 18 suspended MLAs include Doddanagowda Patil, Dr C N Ashwath Narayan, Byrathi Basavraj, B Suresh Gowda, Umanath Kotyan, C K Ramamurthy, Dheeraj Muniraju, Muniratna, S R Vishwanath, Dr Bharath Shetty, Dr Chandru Lamani, Basavaraj Mattimudu, Shailendra Beldale, Sharanu Salagar, Harish B P, Channabasappa, and Yashpal Suvarna.

Abandoned as a baby, lost vision at 10: Mala Papalkar’s journey to clearing MPSC exam is that of sheer determination

GNS News Agency, April 26

Last week, the Maharashtra Public Service Commission (MPSC) declared the final results for the Combined Group C examination, and among the many names on the list was that of Mala Papalkar from Amravati. Her selection email on April 18 proved that nothing is impossible for a visually impaired person. She appeared for the exam in 2023, the result of which was declared 22 months later. The 26-year-old will soon join the collector’s office in Nagpur as a revenue assistant after getting the appointment letter. “I am a little nervous about leaving the ashram and living on my own in Nagpur. I have stayed alone before in a hostel, but this time it feels different. I will really miss everyone, especially Shankar Baba,” Mala told The Indian Express. Taking one step at a time

Over two decades ago, Mala was found abandoned at the Jalgaon Railway Station. After being placed in a remand home, she was sent into the care of Shankar Baba Papalkar, a Padma Shri awardee and social worker from Amravati, and his ashram in Wazzar became the foundation of her dreams. After Mala was placed with Shankar Baba by the Department of Women and Child Development, her government documents were made stating that she is the daughter of the social worker. Mala was 10 when she came to the ashram, and she found that she was blind — she has only 5 per cent functional vision — and physically weak.

She studied at Swami Vivekanand Blind School and then attended Bhiwapurkar Blind School in Amravati before pursuing a Bachelor’s degree at Vidarbha Mahavidyalaya. A Good Samaritan, Prakash Tople Patil, paid for her college and the associated fees. While speaking to The Indian Express, Baba said Mala scored 60 per cent in Class 10, and she scored 65 per cent in college. “I understood that



competitive exams could pave the way for her rehabilitation,” he added. Mala attended Amol Patil’s Unique Academy, an institute which helps aspirants prepare for competitive exams, in 2019, but due to the pandemic, she was forced to study online. “Mala is sharp, but there are numerous challenges that the blind students face. I couldn’t simply ask her to read from a textbook. I had to find audiobooks for Mala, or sometimes even record the lessons myself so she could listen and learn,” said Patil. Patil, who said Mala is a keen observer, did not charge her fee, and ensured he was available to solve her doubts even on the phone. He said Mala cleared the MPSC Mains in 2024, but the final result was declared last week after the candidates went through a skill test. “Mala is attached to me so much now that she has already announced that she will take care of me in the future,” said Shankar Baba. Shankar Baba also talked about Gandhari, another blind and disabled girl whom the police found on the banks of the Chandrabhaga River in Pandharpur. Gandhari is now a music therapist at a hospital in Achalpur, Maharashtra.

SHO arrested over custodial torture in Haryana’s Palwal, cow vigilante Bittu Bajrangi says he was framed



GNS News Agency, April 26

bitty bajrangi Speaking to The Indian Express, Bajrangi said, “If our demands are not met by Sunday, 200-250 people will hold huge protests and public meetings, and block the Mathura Road highway. “The Haryana Police Saturday arrested a suspended station house officer for allegedly beating and torturing an accused in custody at the Palwal city police station. The alleged incident happened in December when an accused hailing from Rajasthan was detained in connection with a fraud case at the police station. Inspector Radhey Shyam, instead of conducting a proper inquiry, allegedly beat him, forced him to consume chilli paste, and injected it into his private parts.

An inquiry into the alleged torture concluded on April 16, and it found Radhey Shyam guilty of misconduct. The Rewari Range inspector general suspended him the same day. Another inquiry is pending against him for alleged custodial violence against two cybercriminals. Sources in the office of the Palwal superintendent of police said Radhey Shyam was to be produced in court later on Monday.

Formerly in charge of the Special Cow Protection Task Force in Nuh, Radhey Shyam has the support of right-wing organisations like Bajrang Dal and activists like Bittu Bajrangi, who have threatened protests and demanded a fresh inquiry, alleging that cow smugglers framed him. Speaking to The Indian Express, Bajrangi said, “If our

demands are not met by Sunday, 200-250 people will hold huge protests and public meetings, and block the Mathura Road highway. The suspension was carried out under political pressure from people like Aftab Ahmed (Nuh MLA), who provided incorrect information to the IG. “I did not know Shyam personally but appreciated him for his work against cow smuggling, and now people like him are being suppressed to encourage the practice”, said Bajrangi, who contested from Nuh in the recent Assembly elections as an Independent candidate. Haryana Bajrang Dal leader Abhishek Hair confirmed the organisation’s support for Radhey Shyam and participation in the planned demonstrations.

However, Aftab Ahmed refuted any claims that he applied political pressure to secure the suspension and arrest of the SHO. “That person (Radhey Shyam) is a habitual offender; he should not be in the police force. He has committed extreme brutalities, especially against Muslims. All residents of Nuh and I welcome the action against him. Anyone supporting him is favouring unlawful acts. Earlier, too, he ran away from enquiries, and he does this (torture) everywhere he goes,” Ahmed told The Indian Express.

Woman’s murder in GTB Enclave: 2 more in police net; total 3 behind bars

The woman was shot twice, and three days after the murder, the victim’s social media friend and alleged boyfriend, Rizwan, 19, was arrested by the Crime Branch. The woman was shot twice, and three days after the murder, the victim’s social media friend and alleged boyfriend, Rizwan, 19, was arrested by the Crime Branch. The Shahdara district police Monday said they have made two more arrests in connection with the murder of a 20-year-old woman in Delhi’s GTB Enclave. The woman was shot twice, and three days after the murder, the victim’s social media friend and alleged boyfriend, Rizwan, 19, was arrested by the Crime Branch. The police said Rizwan initially told them that he had murdered the woman out of jealousy after he discovered that she was talking to another man.

Indian Galapagos islands: Hyderabad scientists dive into Western Ghats’ biodiversity



GNS News Agency, April 26

Hyderabad: Remember Galapagos Islands that became famous after Charles Darwin visited them in 1835 and later came up with the theory of evolution of natural selection? Well, there are more biodiverse regions than the Galapagos Islands, right in our own backyard. Yes, the Western Ghats are arguably far more diverse and rich in animal and plant life, which is where top biological and genetic scientists from Hyderabad are involved in some cutting-edge research in unraveling and chronicling the rich local biodiversity. Senior scientist from Hyderabad-based Centre for Cellular and Molecular biology (CCMB), Dr Jahnavi Joshi and her team members, who are in the midst

Stigma around women’s washrooms has forced working women in Pune to adjust, affecting their health and dignity

GNS News Agency, April 26

For working women in Pune, finding a clean and accessible washroom feels less like a basic right and more like a treasure hunt with no reward. The struggle to find a decent restroom is an everyday battle that few talk about but most endure. While men can find alternatives, women are left with tough choices: hold it in, risk an infection, or wage a war for sanitation. Women working in informal sectors face worse conditions. Manisha Vakhani, a fruit seller at Karve Nagar Chowk, explained that nearby washrooms are cleaned only once every three to four days. “We have to complain to the Pune Municipal Corporation (PMC) ward office if they remain unclean for too long,” she said. Yet, most women in the area have resigned themselves to these poor conditions and avoid public restrooms altogether, Vakhani added.

Deepthi Patil, who runs a parlour in Gujarat Colony, shared a similar struggle. “I haven’t used the washroom here in 10 days. It’s cleaned only once every two to three months, even though we pay maintenance,” she said. Having suffered from UTIs and infections due to unsanitary washrooms in the past, she now avoids them entirely. Dr Mugdha Parasnis, Head, Tata Centre and IVF Department at KEM Hospital, Pune, said, “Almost 10-15 per cent of our patients have urinary tract infections (UTIs), many of which are caused by unhygienic practices like not washing hands after using the washroom or using unclean toilets.” In Kothrud, Bhagyashree Jadhav, a tea stall owner, said, “There are no washrooms in our lane. Both men and women suffer, but men find a way, while women have no solution.”

Snehal Kale, a vada seller in her thirties, shared a similar concern. “We have washrooms nearby, but they are mostly used by men. It makes us uncomfortable to go there, so we avoid using them,” she said. She also noted that poor maintenance makes these washrooms even less accessible for women. Dr Parasnis also highlighted that women who travel frequently or work in places with unclean toilets are at a higher risk of UTIs, especially if they lack proper hygiene or frequently hold in their urine. Hygiene tips for working women

Dr Prajakta P Sable, MBBS (Reproductive Medicine Training), advised working women to wipe toilet seats with disinfectant wipes or sprays and always wash their hands with soap after using public restrooms. Flushing with the lid closed and using toilet paper to touch door handles can reduce germ exposure. Opting for Indian-style toilets and staying hydrated also help maintain hygiene and flush out toxins. Dr Sable highlighted the health risks associated with limited access to washrooms. “Holding urine for too long can increase the risk of UTIs, weaken pelvic floor muscles, cause incontinence, and overstretch the bladder, disrupting normal function. In rare cases, it may even lead to urine

of an exhaustive biodiversity study of Western Ghats, in one of their papers, published in Proceedings of the Royal Society’ (April, 2023), said that Western Ghats (WG) mountain chain is a global biodiversity hotspot with high diversity and endemism of woody plants.

Western Ghats cover 5 per cent of the Indian land and contribute to nearly 40 per cent of India’s total biodiversity. The Ghats harbor over 8000 plants and 7000 animal species, including insects, reptiles, amphibians, fishes, birds and mammals, the researchers said. “We examined the distribution of 470 species based on distribution modeling and occurrence locations across the entire region. In accordance with the expectation, we found that the southern WG is both a museum and cradle of woody plant evolutionary diversity, as a higher proportion of both old and young evolutionary lineages are restricted to the southern WG,” the researchers in the paper said.

During their study of the spread of different organisms in Western Ghats, the Jahnavi Joshi research team traced the ancestries of centipedes, millipedes and woody plants that have been around for millions of years, through DNA analysis. In fact, about a year ago, the group showed that the centipedes (Scutigera) from Western Ghats have most possibly descended from ancient organisms that originated from the supercontinent of Gondwana. The research clearly links the Indian subcontinent and the Australian continent because both were part of the Gondwana.



backing up into the kidneys, causing damage,” she said.

The stigma around women’s washrooms has become so prevalent that many women have stopped complaining and simply adapted to poor conditions. Instead of demanding better sanitation, they have been forced to adjust, affecting their health and dignity. This issue highlighted a larger problem: while fewer women are visible in public spaces, their struggles with inadequate washroom access create additional barriers to their work and mobility. Addressing this issue is not just about sanitation — it’s about ensuring that women can work and move freely in the city without being denied access to basic needs. Vrushali Satre is more than just a fashion designer. Based in Mumbai, she is also an image consultant who has turned a deeply personal struggle into a mission to create awareness about women’s hygiene. Her product Paahee, a disposable stand-and-pee device, empowers women to relieve themselves hygienically in public toilets without squatting — a problem many silently endure, especially during travel. “I used to be out all day, and eventually, I started getting frequent UTIs because of unsanitary public washrooms,” she recalled, and added that “in 2022, things got worse for me medically. That’s when the idea of Paahee and its vending machine came to me.” The biodegradable device is currently available on Swiggy Mini, Amazon, and through vending machines — the first of which is installed at the Khalapur Food Mall on the Mumbai-Pune Expressway. Each piece costs just Rs 5 from the vending machine, making Paahee an affordable, eco-friendly solution that’s easy to access and use. “While women who understand the need for such a product are buying in bulk, some are taking 40-50 pieces at once,” said Satre. She also emphasised that awareness remains the biggest challenge. “Women often neglect their hygiene. But small steps like using a device like Paahee can save them from a lot of discomfort and medical bills in the future,” Satre added. Despite roadblocks like exorbitant vending machine rents in malls, Satre has continued her journey, not to make a profit, but to spark change. “It’s almost like charity right now, but it’s necessary. Women deserve safe, affordable hygiene solutions,” she said.

‘No one should suffer’: Bombay HC directs DGCA, airlines to ensure enough wheelchairs at airports; suggests high penalties

GNS News Agency, April 26

Expressing concern over the lack of proper facilities at airports, the Bombay High Court Monday said the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA), airport operators and airline companies should take preventive measures so that “no senior citizens, specially abled and ailing persons suffer for want of wheelchairs” at airports across India. The court said heavy penalties will be imposed on stakeholders concerned to avoid agony and trauma for such travellers and all required facilities should be provided by them to ensure that India leads the world by example.

The bench of Justices Girish S Kulkarni and Advait M Sethna was hearing two petitions, one by a woman over 50 years old with mobility issues due to acute arthritis, who raised grievances in relation to the ordeal she underwent while travelling from Colombo to Mumbai by Vistara in September 2023. The woman claimed that she and her octogenarian mother were denied pre-booked wheelchairs. The other petition filed by a 53-year-old man raised concerns over the non-availability of sufficient wheelchairs at Mumbai International Airport.

The high court, in its earlier observation on April 7, had opined that respondents should deal with the “genuine concerns” of such travellers with “utmost priority” and ensure a “smooth” journey. It had then asked DGCA to file an affidavit on the matter. On Monday, the high court perused DGCA’s affidavit and said that having a grievance redressal mechanism was not enough. “How can you have so little stock of wheelchairs? We know flights are overbooked but we cannot understand overbooking of wheelchairs... We want preventive measures and address them when he or

she is in need. A person may go to the airport hale and hearty but may suddenly fall ill and require assistance... What happens then? Sometimes flights get delayed for hours,” Justice Kulkarni remarked orally.

The judge went on to say, “Making grievance redressal system is fine. But the facilities should be available when required. There is an agony of travellers. This is not how it is followed internationally... How would you deal with senior citizens over 80 years old? There is so much trauma even if they are asked to wait even for an hour... Every day thousands of passengers are confronted with these issues.” Mentioning a recent incident wherein an octogenarian Air India passenger, who arrived in Mumbai on an Air India flight from New York, died after collapsing as he decided to walk due to the heavy demand for wheelchairs, the court said it was “unfortunate”. “We are concerned about human lives. What is required is sensitivity by airlines, airport operators. This ought not to have happened,” it said. The court suggested that DGCA impose heavy penalties for negligence and deficiency of services. “You are not merely operating flights. With all this (lack of facilities), you add to ordeals of people travelling by flight. It has to be a service recognising basic human rights... that should be the intention,” the bench added. Seeking the implementation of “highest international standards” by aviation companies, the high court said children, senior citizens, specially abled and ailing persons in other countries have “above basic rights” and are given “highest respect”. “Unfortunately, this is not happening in our country. Instead of a strict regime, airlines should be spontaneous and ready and willing on their own (to provide adequate facilities).

Cracks emerge in GOP unity amid Trump trade war



Over the past two weeks, Donald Trump’s sweeping new tariffs — announced with typical fanfare on April 2 as ‘Liberation Day’ —posed one of the starkest political tests of his second term so far: could he still defy political gravity and push through economic backlash while maintaining the unwavering support of his die-hard loyal base?

For a moment, the answer seemed to be yes.

Mr. Trump’s declaration of a 10% universal tariff on all imports, combined with a staggering 145% tariff on Chinese goods, triggered global financial turbulence, panic on Wall Street, and retaliatory tariffs from Beijing escalating a trade war. As analysts warned of a looming recession — with Goldman Sachs placing the risk at 45% — the President seemed to double down on his decision, telling Americans that short-term pain was a necessary sacrifice for long-term economic sovereignty. But by April 9, amid a dramatic sell-off in U.S. bonds and a five-point drop in Mr. Trump’s approval ratings, the President abruptly hit pause. In a partial reversal, he delayed most of the new tariffs he announced for 90 days, excluding the harsh levies on China. While the markets showed signs of stabilising slightly, the political damage had been done. Within the Republican party, responses were fractured, blending steadfast loyalty with rising alarm over inflation, supply chain disruptions, and the global perception of America’s unpredictability. Even among MAGA loyalists, the tariffs drew scrutiny. Elon Musk, the billionaire Trump donor now leading the U.S. DOGE department’s charge to shrink government spending, raised opposition and argued against the tariffs sparking a public spat with one of the President’s economic advisers, Peter Navarro, calling him a “moron” and “dumber than a sack of bricks”. A vocal supporter and hedge fund mogul, Bill Ackman, too, warned Mr. Trump of a “self-induced economic nuclear winter”, urging the President to reconsider. “Business is a confidence game. The President is losing the confidence of business leaders around the globe,” Mr. Ackman posted on X after the tariff announcement, but soon after the pause was announced, he hailed the move, calling it “textbook, Art of the Deal.” The discontent even spread to the influencer community that helped gain Mr. Trump’s popularity with a legion of young supporters during his 2024 campaign, including podcaster Barstool Sports’ David Portnoy, who claimed to have lost \$20 million after Mr. Trump introduced his latest tariffs. In his podcast, he speculated his worth had gone down by 10 to 15%, saying, “If I had to guess, I’m down in these last three days probably close to [\$20 million].” “But I’m still here. That’s the game,” he added. “Do I like it? No. Am I crying like, ‘Oh, woe is me, I wish I voted for Kamala,’ no.” Discontent on the right throughout his career, Mr. Trump has championed tariffs as a tool to revive American manufacturing, viewing tariffs and trade as a matter of fairness and patriotism. Even during his campaign last year, he called for a 10% baseline tariff on almost all imports, threatened far higher rates in other circumstances and declared “tariff” to be “the most beautiful word in the dictionary”.

But the rollout of the 2025 tariffs was messy. Within hours of the ‘Liberation Day’ announcement, global markets reacted with panic. U.S. farmers faced immediate threats from China’s retaliatory 125% tariffs on American goods. The United States exported \$143.5 billion of goods to China last year and imported \$438.9 billion from that country, according to the Office of the United States Trade Representative. For decades, American agriculture has depended on exports and imported tools and fertiliser. “More than 20% of farm income comes from exports,” the American Farm Bureau warned in a statement on April 2. “These tariffs will drive up input costs and devastate access to foreign markets.” Conservative commentator Ben Shapiro slammed the rollout as “about as bad as you can do,” in a video podcast released by him. “The idea that this is inherently good and makes the American economy strong is wrongheaded,” Shapiro told his audience. “It’s untrue.” Still, some GOP lawmakers stood by the President. Chairman of the House Agriculture Committee, Rep. Glenn Thompson, called the tariffs “an effective tool for fair trade,” pointing to how past threats had yielded concessions from countries like Colombia.

Others, however, showed signs of unease. Behind

“To me,” United States President Donald Trump has famously said, “tariff is the most beautiful word in the dictionary”. Mr Trump has shown that he means it. By imposing tariffs of varying degrees on a wide range of countries, he has initiated a trade war, the likes of which the world has not seen since the Second World War. Following turbulence in the American bond market, Mr. Trump has announced a 90-day pause on tariffs on all countries except China. Hardly anybody thinks that Mr Trump will back off from tariffs for fear of visiting serious dislocation on the U.S. economy and the world at large. Trumponomics is a mission to fundamentally remake the American economy. It deserves to be taken seriously if only because the world will need to adjust to it. First, the propositions Trumponomics rests on a few key propositions. The first is that America needs to bring back manufacturing, lost to China and other economies over the past several decades. It needs to do so for several reasons.

Globalisation and the offshoring of manufacturing in the U.S. have meant the loss of millions of jobs. Estimates of jobs losses in manufacturing vary. Stephen Miran, Chair, Council of Economic Advisers, The White House, cites a study that estimates jobs lost in manufacturing between 2000 and 2011 at two million (Stephen Miran, A User’s Guide to Restructuring the Global Trading System). Robert E. Lighthizer, who was the U.S. Trade Representative in Mr. Trump’s first term, says five million manufacturing jobs were lost in the period 2000-09. Job losses have been concentrated in particular areas. Thriving industrial centres have been reduced to ghost towns and whole communities hollowed out. There are other social costs: homelessness, rising crime, drug abuse, and broken families. America’s services sector has absorbed a portion of those who lost jobs in manufacturing. But these are low-wage jobs. For the vast majority of American adults, manufacturing remains the sole route to a high-wage job. Trumponomics argues that

closed doors, key allies pressed Mr. Trump to reconsider. Capitol Hill, too, began to show signs of fracture. Several Republican senators joined the Democrats backing the Trade Review Act, a bipartisan Bill sponsored by Democrats that could strip away the President’s power to slap tariffs without congressional consent, signalling Mr. Trump’s grip on his party may be loosening. “The Republican Party appears to be split on its reaction to the Trump administration’s tariffs. While they publicly applaud the President, privately, some are worried. With every member of the House of Representatives up for re-election next year, members in close districts are nervous that the administration’s policies will upset their constituents, opening space for the Democrats to win in those districts,” said David Richards, associate professor and chair of the International Relations and Political Science Department at the University of Lynchburg. “Already, district meetings held by some members have been confrontational as government cuts begin to affect people. The key will be whether the economy does not slip into recession or worse. However, with the administration seemingly changing its policies on a daily basis, party members are unsure how to explain things to the voters,” he added. Dip in ratings

Following the “Liberation Day” market chaos, public approval for the President dipped immediately. Mr. Trump’s approval rating fell to 43%, the lowest since his return to office, as Americans soured on his tariff moves and his administration’s handling of information about a military strike in Yemen, a Reuters/Ipsos poll found. A Quinnipiac University survey released on April 9 found Americans widely sceptical of Mr. Trump’s tariff campaign. And an Economist/YouGov survey found a five-point spike in disapproval of Mr. Trump’s job performance, to 51%, after the tariff announcement. “I know what the hell I’m doing,” Mr. Trump told a gathering of House Republicans the night before announcing the pause of the reciprocal tariffs, bragging that countries are lining up to make trade deals. The U.S. President was speaking to political donors at the National Republican Congressional Committee’s annual fundraising dinner in Washington. Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent later framed the 90-day pause as a strategic masterstroke: “This was his strategy all along,” he claimed, citing calls from over 75 countries requesting negotiations. Just hours after urging freaked-out investors and voters to “BE COOL” on Truth Social media, Mr. Trump suddenly reversed course on April 9, pausing some of his sweeping tariffs for 90 days. “Everything is going to work out well. The USA will be bigger and better than ever before!” he wrote.

Following a week of market turmoil that rippled from stocks to crucial government bonds, Mr. Trump’s announcement on the pause came abruptly but was not surprising. Critics argue that it was investors offloading U.S. debt and demanding a high premium for buying U.S. Treasuries that compelled Mr. Trump to take the call. “The bond market is tricky,” Mr. Trump admitted to presspersons after adjusting his tariff policy. “I saw last night where people were getting a little queasy... jumping a little bit,” he said. Mr. Richards, of the University of Lynchburg, also noted that the Democrats were capitalising on the “economic chaos.” “An important bellwether election will be the upcoming 2025 gubernatorial race in Virginia. Virginia is currently run by a popular Republican Governor who is not permitted to run again due to term limits. The problem is that the Democratic candidate is polling well ahead of the Republican one. The Democratic Party in Virginia is already running ads highlighting the economic chaos caused so far by the Trump administration, tying it back to the Republican Party. How well the GOP does in Virginia might preview how well they do in 2026,” he said. Mr. Trump announced his first “trade war” in 2018 during his first term as President with tariffs on China, leading China to retaliate by limiting purchases of agricultural products. This is not the first time Mr. Trump has asked his supporters for patience. American soybean farmers still haven’t recovered from losing one of their biggest markets in China during Mr. Trump’s first term, and for cattle ranchers especially, the tariffs will likely result in the loss of one of their biggest customers—they sold \$1.6 billion worth of beef to China last year. “Our farmers are GREAT, but because of their GREATNESS, they are always put on the Front Line with our adversaries, such as China, whenever there is a Trade negotiation or, in this case, a Trade War,” Mr. Trump wrote on Truth Social on Tuesday. “The same thing happened in my First Term,” he added, pointing to the \$28 billion he spent bailing out farmers from his first trade war with China. The American Farm Bureau has warned increased tariffs could threaten the economic sustainability of farmers. “Trade is critical to the success of farmers and ranchers across the country. We share the administration’s goal of levelling the playing field with our international partners, but increased tariffs threaten the economic sustainability of farmers who have lost money on most major crops for the past three years,” they said in the April 2 statement.

America also needs manufacturing for the purpose of national security. It cannot afford to have its defence sector rely heavily on imports of steel, aluminium, and semi-conductors. In a crisis, American military capabilities could be seriously compromised. As Mr. Trump puts it, “If you don’t have steel, you don’t have a country”. A second key proposition of Trumponomics is that free trade is not necessarily fair trade. Imports from China are cheaper because China provides subsidies to its firms in various forms, uses slave labour to drive down costs, invests funds in state-owned technology companies, and indulges in industrial espionage and theft of intellectual property. It makes no sense to have American companies wiped out by competitors that do not adhere to the rules of a free market economy.

The third proposition is that America’s chronic trade deficits are unaffordable as the flip side is foreigners using their trade surpluses to acquire more and more American assets. In recent years, trade deficits have been of the order of \$500 billion to \$1 trillion a year. Trade deficits are said to be self-correcting. When a country runs a trade deficit, the exchange rate of its currency is expected to depreciate. Exports will then rise and imports will fall, leading to a reduction in the trade deficit. Mr. Miran argues that the principle does not apply to the U.S. economy because the dollar happens to be the world’s reserve currency. Nations park much of their foreign exchange reserves in U.S. government securities. This results in an overvalued dollar. An overvalued dollar means more imports, less exports and hence a persistent trade deficit. As Mr. Miran puts it, America runs a trade deficit not because it imports more; it imports more because it is the provider of reserve currency to the world. Impetus for domestic manufacturing

How to restore manufacturing to the U.S. and reduce America’s trade deficit when faced with “unfair” trade and an overvalued dollar? Enter tariffs on imports. Tariffs will raise the cost of imports and cause imports to fall, thereby

Are Indian startups not scaling up on innovation?



We have to be bigger, better, bolder: Union Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal message to Indian Startups

Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal on Thursday asked the Indian startup community to shift their focus from grocery delivery and ice cream making to high tech sector like semiconductor, machine learning, robotics, and artificial intelligence. He also said there is a need for more Indian investors into the startup ecosystem. “Are we going to be happy being delivery boys and girls... Is that the destiny of India... this is not startup, this is entrepreneurship... What other side is doing -- robotics, machine learning, 3D manufacturing and next generation factories factories,” Goyal said here at the Startup Mahakumbh, comparing the nature of Indian startups with that of Chinese. The minister said the new startups should focus on preparing the nation for the future. “Do we have to make ice cream or chips?” he asked. He also underscored the evolving role of startups in driving India’s economic and technological growth. He assured that the government will handhold and support those who face challenges in their startup journey, encouraging them to persevere and try again. The minister stressed the need for increasing domestic capital investments, stating that a strong foundation of indigenous investment is crucial to reducing dependency on foreign capital and ensuring long-term economic resilience. Goyal emphasised on the need to attract more domestic investors to strengthen India’s capital base and ensure self-reliance. Video: PTI | Video Credit: Businessline

Do you agree with Piyush Goyal’s remarks?

P.K. Jayadevan: I think it has started a debate and the timing of the debate is great. We can disagree on the substance of his statement and a lot of people have taken sides. But I think those add to the discourse and that is a positive sign. Thillai Rajan: Startups thrive where the ecosystem helps them. Startups are engines of innovation, but are they innovating enough? That means, are they looking at commercialising science and technology-based innovation? If you consider innovation as a spectrum, people always consider science and technology as the highest order of innovation. I’m not saying that is right or wrong; I’m merely stating a fact. From that perspective, data shows that a healthy share of startups qualifies under the deep tech sector. So, there is adequate activity and interest among startups to venture into deep tech sectors. But the question is, are they scaling up? The capital requirements of the deep tech startups are higher in the initial phase. No revenues come in during that phase, where the level of risk is very high. So, who can provide this amount of capital? The Startup India Seed Fund scheme gives about ₹50 lakh (for activities such as market entry, commercialisation, and scaling up), but that’s not adequate; there has to be follow-up funding. Today, there is realisation that there has to be private sector capital provided after the initial government support.

How do venture capitalists define innovation for the purpose of funding?

P.K. Jayadevan: In the early days, innovation meant just being able to order stuff online. Venture capital firms made large bets on the Indian consumer story and that was the era until 2017. We saw large companies come out of it, such as Flipkart. That was the e-commerce era. Now, we are seeing smaller funds going into deep tech, which are not nearly enough, but you could argue that venture capital is betting on the future. Now, venture capitalists will look at AI, block chain-based innovation, electric mobility, etc. Thillai Rajan: By innovation, we mean the benefits it will give to users. Are users going to benefit? Are they going to get a new experience from using this product? Will the consumer pay a premium for accessing the products and services? It is to assess the impact that it can create on people. In this regard, there are two points to be made. The first is to ask whether the innovation gives any competitive advantage that can be sustained over a long period of time. For example, a patent gives a competitive advantage. If that is not available, it will not attract investors’ interest because the capital will not get returns. The second could be in terms of the market. It may be a great innovation, but unless it addresses a need in a growing market, there will not be many backers for it. So, these largely determine which innovations get

reducing the trade deficit. They will spur domestic manufacturing by protecting American manufacturers from import competition. Economists fret that tariffs run counter to the principle of economic efficiency. Tariffs, they say, will spell higher costs for American consumers, an increase in the inflation rate and an inefficient manufacturing sector. Trumponomics says these concerns are based on first-round effects. Look farther and the outcomes change. By raising the cost of imports, tariffs will result in fewer imports. A fall in imports will result in an appreciation of the dollar. If the “currency offset” to tariffs is perfect — say, a 10% tariff is offset by a 10% appreciation in the dollar — the dollar price of imports after tariffs will remain unchanged. The American consumer does not pay anything extra. Since the exporting country’s currency has weakened, it earns fewer dollars than it did earlier. Mr. Trump has been ridiculed widely for saying that the exporting nation, and not the American consumer, will pay for U.S. tariffs. Once you take into account the currency offset to tariffs, Mr. Trump’s statement makes more sense. To be sure, if the currency offset is not perfect, there will be costs to the American consumer and an increase in the inflation rate. Mr. Miran estimates a one-time impact on the inflation rate of about 0.3-0.6 percentage points, an impact that is eminently bearable. This assumes there are no retaliatory tariffs. Tariffs can lead on to other favourable second-round effects. As input costs rise, American manufacturers will look for ways to enhance efficiency and lower costs. Tariffs will compel American and foreign companies to move operations to the U.S. and this will enhance efficiency and output in the U.S. economy. There are signs that major U.S. companies are already making such a move. More importantly, tariffs are but one of four elements in Trumponomics. There are three other elements: tax cuts, deregulation and more drilling of oil. Tax cuts, made possible by tariff revenues, will compensate companies for the higher costs of imports. Deregulation will drastically reduce compliance and operational costs. More drilling of oil

commercialised and which ones do not.

What has been the result of the Startup India push? Has it borne fruit?

Thillai Rajan: The emphasis on a startup policy is possibly the most wide-reaching policy focus of independent India. The facts speak for themselves. First, there are at least 20 Ministries of the Central government which have a dedicated policy or a programme targeted at startups. Second, we can also be proud of the numbers: there are about 1,65,000-1,70,000 startups, if we go by the numbers of the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade. This indicates that startup policies have been able to encourage many people to start ventures. Third, the capital that has flown in is not only restricted to equity; we are also seeing significant amount of debt capital going into startups. Getting banks to invest in startups is really something. That shows that the startup focus is here to stay and is going to play an integral role in India’s ambition of becoming a developed country. Apart from the Centre, large States too have startup policies. P.K. Jayadevan: Yeah, absolutely. Everyone wants to start a company these days, which is a huge shift in mindset compared to earlier. But if you compare India to the U.S., you will find that the U.S. shifted manufacturing to China when it had trouble with Japan. China was where it could find cheaper labour. China saw that as an opportunity to create employment, grow its own market, and also learn from American companies. It built its own telecom networks, micro-satellites, etc. China had a very nationalistic view of technology. Because it’s a closed ecosystem, it always wanted to be more self-reliant with respect to technology. So, the ecosystem matured much faster. China’s consumption economy also grew in a big way. About \$12,000-15,000 per capita GDP is really good for a digital economy. We are still around \$3,500. We don’t have that kind of money to spend. We have cash-rich companies but they hesitate to invest, which is not the case in other ecosystems. That’s where we are lagging. The India consumption story has to move forward. For that we need some enabling criteria.

Are you speaking about some sort of an import substitution for capital?

P.K. Jayadevan: Not necessarily. If the market is promising, capital will come from anywhere in the world. But yes, there is a need for more Indian home-grown venture capital firms.

What prevents startups from going up the value chain or becoming bigger?

Thillai Rajan: There is a natural selection process that works in the economy. But the issue is whether we should give small amounts to a large number of startups or large amounts to a small number of startups. In India, by and large, the government has been trying to give small amounts to a very large number of companies. Most of the major support that the government has provided has also been used by larger companies. The quantum of support needed has to be substantially higher. The risk capital available is very low and much of it flows from external markets, primarily the U.S. Till we are able to find domestic capital, a good amount of support needs to be provided so that we can find a few winners.

Do you think governments in India have not started taking startups seriously?

Thillai Rajan: No, of course they have. Every sector has been opened up to engage with startups. But the whole process has to be made smoother. There is a lot of bureaucracy, which makes life difficult. In addition to its intentions, if the government has appropriate implementation measures, many startups will find it a lot easier to operate.

India is a very unequal country. The upper middle class in urban areas want quick deliveries, domestic helps, electricians, etc. But the first wave of tech in India saw more broad-based growth. Have startups benefited only a few?

P.K. Jayadevan: The difference with the IT services business was that it was labour-intensive and it worked out at that point in time because of outsourcing. But were we building the foundational products? No. And did we get there? We did. Thanks to venture capital, we had Freshworks, the first Indian software product company to go to the NASDAQ and list. It changed the game. Now there are many startups that were launched by those groomed in Freshworks. Once we have successful startups, founders and others will similarly spread out and build more. Thillai Rajan: The first wave of entrepreneurship was more unidimensional. Much of it was IT, software. But today, there is an emphasis on all sectors.

For every Aether, there is a Byju’s. What do startups have to do to make sure they become an Aether?

Thillai Rajan: They should continue to be innovative because this is a competitive marketplace. One cannot rest

Trumponomics deserves to be taken seriously



Globalisation and the offshoring of manufacturing in the U.S. have meant the loss of millions of jobs. Estimates of jobs losses in manufacturing vary. Stephen Miran, Chair, Council of Economic Advisers, will help lower oil prices and counter the inflationary effects of tariffs. Taken together, the four elements constitute a plausible alternative to the current economic model. Trumponomics is driven by the principle that efficiency cannot be the sole or even overriding consideration in economic policy-making, a principle that India’s policymakers had wisely embraced decades ago. Mr. Trump’s detractors believe that he has embarked on Mission Impossible. Well, Mr. Trump does not think so. He is determined to pursue his vision of MAGA (Make America Great Again) regardless of the short-term cost to the U.S. As for the rest of the world, Mr. Trump does not particularly care.

Special Judge Kaveri Baweja appointed Delhi HC’s Registrar Vigilance



When thrusters of the Soviet rocket carrier Interkosmos fired Aryabhata successfully into space from the Kapustin Yar cosmodrome in 1975, it was a historic lift-off that launched India’s satellite odyssey. Fifty years later, today the Indian Space Research Organisation (Isro) has built 131 satellites, 51 of which are presently in orbit. Named after the ancient astronomer, Aryabhata was the country’s first indigenously built satellite launched from Russian soil on April 19, 1975. Interestingly, it took just 30 minutes after the launch for the first signals to be relayed back to the Indian ground station located in Andhra Pradesh’s Sriharikota, located about 5,000 km away from the Soviet military rocket launch complex. The Rohini Sounding Rocket Experiment and subsequent experiments since 1963 from the Thumba Equatorial Rocket Launching Station in Thiruvananthapuram, established by Vikram Sarabhai, tasted success multiple times, but Isro’s plan of designing and building its own satellite launch vehicle (SLV) was still at the drawing board. This meant that India would have to join hands with spacefaring nations with existing satellite launching facilities. Collaborating with the USSR On May 10, 1972, India inked an agreement with the Academy of Sciences, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR). Back then, the USSR had setup the Interkosmos programme towards undertaking joint research with other countries. It was also agreed upon that within two to three years, an Indian-made satellite would be launched from the Soviet cosmodrome. As India had discreetly conducted the first nuclear test at Pokhran in May 1974, an upset United States imposed certain sanctions on the country, obstructing any transfer of knowledge or technology that may prove handy towards building Aryabhata. Given the world order then, Pramod Kale, former director of the Vikram Sarabhai Space Centre, even suggested that the name Indo-Soviet Satellite Programme be changed to the Indian Scientific Satellite Programme, so it would possibly draw fewer international eyeballs on the nation’s space ambitions. [caption id="attachment_9953116" align="alignnone" width="600"]Aryabhata The quasi-spherical shaped Aryabhata. (Photo: Isro)/[caption] Though Isro was established near Thiruvananthapuram considering its proximity to the equator – for conducting experiments during the formative years – the very presence of the sea nearby and the recurrent salt water splashes prevented the setting up of the quintessential instrumentation or clean room facilities for space activities in Kerala’s capital. Speaking to The Indian Express, Kale said, “That is when it was decided to shift the activities to Bangalore, which offered close proximity to institutions like the Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL), along with a conducive environment supported by the presence of industries. The Isro Satellite Systems Project was established at Peenya village, once known as Asia’s largest chain of small and medium-scale industries

producing engineering and electronics goods. Designing and building Aryabhata U R Rao, credited with developing India’s satellite technology, led a 200-member team of engineers and scientists who went on to build Aryabhata at Peenya. Designed with 26 sides and weighing 358 kg, the spacecraft’s quasi-spherical shape was unique. Aryabhata included three scientific experiments: for X-ray astronomy, for observing solar neutrons and gamma rays, and one for studying the upper atmosphere. The quasi-spherical structure caught the attention of locals in Peenya. S Radhakrishnan, 72, who worked at a factory in Peenya in the 1970s, said, “Every working day, my colleagues and I would walk past the shed ‘A’ (where Isro teams worked) to reach our industry located in shed ‘C’. On some occasions, the Isro engineers would be seen flying some objects and on others, performing some tests or experiments, but we had no clue what they were up to.” He also mentioned another memory with regard to Aryabhata: catching a glimpse of the then prime minister Indira Gandhi, who had made multiple trips to Bangalore, inspecting Aryabhata at crucial stages ahead of its launch. “Upon learning that the prime minister was visiting, I took some time off duty to catch a glimpse of Indira Gandhi,” Radhakrishnan recalled. Underneath the shed in Peenya, several first-of-its-kind infrastructural facilities – the electronics laboratories, clean room for the final assembly of the satellite, thermal laboratories, control and stabilisation laboratories, antenna testing facilities, a workshop and draughting sections – were set up. For nearly 30 months, the Isro teams worked for the development of the satellite’s prototypes and testing of the multiple models, ensuring that the highest reliability was achieved. Some of these tests included qualification in a thermo-vacuum chamber, vibration and shock tests. The satellite model was even taken up in a helicopter over Sriharikota during January 1975, kept almost stationary at various distances and altitudes from the ground station and the two-way communication link between the satellite and the ground telemetry station at Sriharikota was checked under simulated power levels of the transmitters. [caption id="attachment_9953121" align="alignnone" width="600"]Aryabhata assembly Assembly work in progress for Aryabhata in Bengaluru. (Photo: Isro)/[caption] Tests were done on a balloon at 25 km in May 1973. The instruments for the scientific experiments, too, were tested and, lastly, the communication link was tested at 400 km, noted Rao in a 1978 research paper published by the Indian Academy of Sciences. During the first quarter of 1975, the final fabrication phase of two flight models was completed along with the complete integration and testing of the actual flight model performed during the same period. Simultaneously, in Bangalore, other ground-based support and tracking like the telemetry, telecommand and the communication units were being readied. The functioning of the entire ground station was tested using a helicopter-borne satellite model and simulating the transmitter power levels for the maximum range that the satellite will have during its orbit, to ensure that the ground station can receive the telemetered data from the satellite and send commands to the satellite. A Mission Operations and Control Centre was set up at Peenya that would coordinate the commanding as well as data-gathering programme from various ground stations. Even though all the three scientific experiments onboard Aryabhata had to be called off owing to power failure, other technological experiments were performed based on the use of the onboard telecommand, putting to use the transmitter-receiver for data transmission from one station to another using the satellite as a node.

From the Amazon to Africa: Pope Francis, the ‘unflinching global champion of climate action’

GNS News Agency, April 26

Pope Francis called the human destruction of the environment a sin and connected it to the increased suffering of the poor and the marginalised, and said that caring for the planet was an act of Christian charity equal to looking after the ill and the hungry. The pontiff, who died on Monday at the age of 88, was an advocate of climate action, defended climate protesters, spoke directly to oil and fossil fuel companies about global warming, and called out rich nations for their role in global warming.

UN climate chief Simon Stiell has called Pope Francis, “a towering figure of human dignity, and an unflinching global champion of climate action as a vital means to deliver it”. “He had a deep working knowledge of complex climate issues, and his leadership brought together those most powerful forces of faith and science to deliver unimpeachable truths, highlighting the costs of the climate crisis for billions of people,” added Stiell. Pope Francis inherited the mantle of environmental consciousness from his predecessors. Pope John Paul II, who was the head of the Roman Catholic Church from 1978 until his death in 2005, a time of increasing awareness of anthropogenic climate change, called out humans for exploiting and destroying nature and being alienated from it. Pope John Paul II declared St Francis of Assisi, a 13th-century Italian friar who was a devoted animal lover, as the patron saint of ecology.

Pope Benedict, who followed Pope John Paul II, continued to highlight the relationship between human and environmental ecologies. He wrote of “eliminating the structural causes of the dysfunctions of the world economy and correcting models of growth which have proved incapable of ensuring respect for the environment”. Pope Francis’s stance could be understood right at the beginning when, elected as the 266th Pope of the Roman Catholic Church, he named himself after St Francis of Assisi. Stories abound about how St Francis preached to birds, cared for rabbits and fish and, once, mediated a truce between a wolf of Gubbio and the people it was terrorising. Pope Francis would repeatedly quote St Francis, and refer to him. As the world mourns his passing, here’s looking at the climate legacy of the late religious leader.

He made the first international trip after being elected a Pope to Brazil, where he expressed his concern about the Amazon. In 2019, he convened a special assembly, Synod of Bishops for the Amazon, which dealt with topics such as “New Paths for Cultural Conversion”, as well as, “Threats against the Amazon biome and its people”. The next year, he issued a 94-page document, Querida Amazonia, in which he said, “the equilibrium of our planet also depends on the health of the Amazon region”. In 2022, Amazon had its first cardinal in Leonardo Ulrich Steiner.

One of Pope Francis’s landmark works was Laudato Si: On Care of Our Home, a 184-page original document of papal communication to all bishops that was published in 2015, just before COP21, in which the Paris Agreement was signed. This encyclical addressed not only the followers of the Church but “every person living on this planet”. He talked of “global environmental deterioration” to “all people about our common home”. “Particular appreciation

is owed to those who tirelessly seek to resolve the tragic effects of environmental degradation on the lives of the world’s poorest. Young people demand change. They wonder how anyone can claim to be building a better future without thinking of the environmental crisis and the sufferings of the excluded,” he said.

“I urgently appeal for a new dialogue about how we are shaping the future of our planet. We need a conversation which includes everyone, since the environmental challenge we are undergoing, and its human roots, concern and affect us all. The worldwide ecological movement has already made considerable progress and led to the establishment of numerous organisations committed to raising awareness of these challenges. Regrettably, many efforts to seek concrete solutions to the environmental crisis have proved ineffective, not only because of powerful opposition but also because of a more general lack of interest. Obstructionist attitudes, even on the part of believers, can range from denial of the problem to indifference, nonchalant resignation or blind confidence in technical solutions. We require a new and universal solidarity,” he wrote.

Yet, in 2023, shortly before COP28, the Pope issued another important “Apostolic Exhortation”, titled Laudate Deum. “...my heartfelt concerns about the care of our common home. Yet, with the passage of time, I have realised that our responses have not been adequate, while the world in which we live is collapsing and may be nearing the breaking point. In addition to this possibility, it is indubitable that the impact of climate change will increasingly prejudice the lives and families of many persons. We will feel its effects in the areas of healthcare, sources of employment, access to resources, housing, forced migrations, etc,” he wrote. This was the document in which Pope Francis came down strongly against wealthy nations and individuals. “In an attempt to simplify reality, there are those who would place responsibility on the poor, since they have many children, and even attempt to resolve the problem by mutilating women in less developed countries. As usual, it would seem that everything is the fault of the poor. Yet the reality is that a low, richer percentage of the planet contaminates more than the poorest 50% of the total world population, and that per capita emissions of the richer countries are much greater than those of the poorer ones. How can we forget that Africa, home to more than half of the world’s poorest people, is responsible for a minimal portion of historic emissions?” he asked.

U.S. visas issued to Indian students decline by 30% in Trump’s first month of presidency



In February 2025, the first month of the second Donald Trump administration, the number of student visas issued to Indians by the U.S. dropped by 30% compared to the same month the previous year. This decline was notably higher than the overall 4.75% decrease in student visas granted by the U.S. to all countries combined. Moreover, the drop in student visas issued to Indians was much sharper than the decline in visas issued to Chinese, Vietnamese, and Japanese students.

This worrying statistic comes at a tumultuous time when the visas of over 1,000 international students, including Indians, across the U.S. have been terminated or revoked without much notice. According to the Associated Press, at least 1,100 students across 170 colleges across the U.S. have been affected. Many students have filed lawsuits against the terminations. Associated Press quoted the name of at least one such Indian student, Manikanta Pasula, who was about to get a Master’s degree in computer science at Rivier University in New Hampshire. Chinmay Deore, along with four other students at public universities in Michigan, have also filed a lawsuit. According to a report in The Hindu, the Indian government too has shifted its stance, from advising the students to “follow the law” to “of-

fering them support” by reaching out to the affected students. Officials of the External Affairs Ministry are now advising affected students to pursue the “legal route”.

Chart 1 shows the percentage drop in F-1 visas (student visas) issued in February 2025 compared to February 2024. It shows the data only for the top four countries that received the most number of student visas in February 2024. In February 2025, 6,804 F-1 visas were issued in total — a 4.75% drop from the 7,143 visas issued in February 2024. During the same period, the number of F-1 visas issued fell from 1,179 to 1,117 (a 5.2% drop) for Chinese students, 500 to 452 for Japanese students (a 9.6% drop), and from 326 to 302 (a 7.4%) for Vietnamese students. The number of F-1 visas issued for Indian students dropped from 590 to 411 (a 30% decline). Moreover, the waiting time for a student visa is the longest in Delhi compared to the waiting time in the capitals of the other countries listed in Chart 1. On average, Indian students (including exchange visitors) wait 58 days for a U.S. visa, whereas students in Tokyo wait only 15 days, and those in Hanoi and Beijing face an average wait time of just two days (Chart 2). While the recent overall decline in student visas, and its disproportionate impact on Indian students, may be attributed to Mr. Trump’s aggressive policies, the struggles faced by international students are not new. During the COVID-19 pandemic, there was a sharp decline in applications for international student programmes. As a result, there was a surge in applications in the post-pandemic years, which led to a significant increase in rejections. Chart 3 compares the denial rates of F-1 visas and all other visa categories from 2013 to 2024. From 2013 to 2021, the denial rates for both categories remained relatively similar, but a sharp divergence emerged in the post-pandemic years. In 2024, 41% of student visa applications were denied, compared to the 22.1% of all other types of visa applications that were denied — a gap of nearly 19 percentage points. Before the pandemic, the largest difference was just 6 points (in 2016).

‘Phule’ and censorship: How Bollywood’s elite resist caste-conscious cinema



Hindi cinema, dominated by profit-driven masala films, often glorifies social elites while sidelining Dalit-Bahujan identities and their concerns. Mainstream Bollywood, criticised for promoting patriarchal and casteist stereotypes, rarely embraces cinema as a tool to challenge social injustices. Additionally, it tends to uphold the cultural and political agendas of traditional social elites while avoiding engaging with Dalit-Bahujan narratives and their social experiences. Popular cinema hesitates to embrace cinema as a platform for artistic and creative exploration that would unearth orthodox social practices and sensitise the audience about it. In recent years, mainstream Hindi cinema has seen rare but significant attempts to challenge Bollywood’s stereotypical narratives through films like Article 15, which exposes caste atrocities through a police officer’s awakening, and Dhadak, which subtly weaves caste into a tragic romance, signal a shift toward socially aware storytelling. Other films like Shamshera and Veda, which address issues of caste oppression and present robust Dalit protagonists to fight such social ills, are crucial additions.

This emerging genre has carved out a peripheral yet vital space for films that expose societal injustices and advocate for reform, offering a vision of a more equitable society. Such efforts should be celebrated and supported, but the industry’s conventional ruling elites have largely distanced themselves from this shift. Instead, these films are often criticised as threats to the dominance of social elites, accused of disrupting social harmony by foregrounding Dalit-Bahujan symbols and narratives. The recent controversy surrounding Phule, marked by the Central Board of Film Certification (CBFC) censorship of caste-related content, exemplifies a deliberate effort to suppress stories that dare to challenge the social and political dominance of the governing elite, highlighting the ongoing resistance to transformative cinema. The arrival of Dalit-Bahujan cinema

This new site of cinema making is an innovative improvisation as it brings stories of vulnerable social groups and provides them a dignified mantle. This genre has introduced the iconic figures of Babasaheb Ambedkar and Mahatma Jyotiba Phule to the silver screen as their ideas and values too are influencing the narrative practices of Cinema and are getting much more resonance on the silver screen today. The regional cinema (especially Tamil and Marathi) has offered impressive artistic cinema (like Sairat, Jayanti, Kabali, Asuran etc.,) that not only entertains the audience with its creative narratives but also educates them about the issues of social dignity and the need to fight against oppressive Brahmanical orthodoxy. These new narratives depict Dalit-Bahujan characters not as passive victims or background figures, but as empowered protagonists with agency, dignity, and purpose. They challenge the conventional grammar of Indian cinema and open up space for a more democratised cultural discourse. In doing so, this parallel stream is not just reshaping representation but redefining what mainstream Indian cinema can aspire to be. This is a nascent but promising genre, capable of democratising the Indian film industry.

Jyotiba Phule and Babasaheb Ambedkar were the fierce critics of Hindu caste system and the exploitative domination of priestly castes over the majority oppressed groups. They imagined modern India as a liberated territory not only from the aegis of the imperialist domination but also from our own Brahmanical and patriarchal servitude. However, in the nationalist historiography and popular culture, these iconic figures were often relegated as the heroes of certain caste groups while the other leaders were elevated as the prime representatives of the national interest. The popular Hindi cinema too ignored the heroes, historic events and issues pertaining to the Dalit-Bahujan masses and mostly endorsed narratives that promote the social and political interests of the conventional social elites.

In the case of recent controversy around Phule, the CBFC has created technical hurdles for its release. The film, initially set for release on April 11, was delayed to April

25, due to objections from the Brahmin community in Maharashtra and subsequent CBFC directives to remove or alter caste-related content. The board directed the filmmakers to remove caste-specific terms like “Mahar”, “Mang”, “Peshwai”, and “Manu’s system of caste”, as well as visuals like a man with a broom tied to his waist (a historical reference to Dalit oppression). Phule appears to be advocating anti-caste politics, showcasing the Dalit-Bahujan characters as lead protagonists and offering a strong critique of Brahmanical social order. It appears that the state is ready to stop even the nascent process that could have democratised the cinema industries substantively in favour of the Dalit-Bahujan masses. Such removals by the CBFC would dilute the historical realities of Phule’s fight against caste discrimination. These edits are mostly to sanitise history to appease Brahmin groups while undermining the film’s objective to confront the caste injustice. On the other hand, cinema that propagates communal anxieties (Kerala Story), manipulates historic facts (The Kashmir Files) and target the Muslim minorities as brutal foreign aggressors (Chhaava) and anti-nationals is endorsed and promoted by the current regime at the centre. It shall be pointed out that films like Punjab 95, Tees, and Dhadak 2, which address social issues, also faced similar censorship, suggesting a pattern of suppressing narratives that challenge the Brahmanical value system.

A brief examination of Hindi cinema reveals that most characters on-screen embody the identities of social elites, with narratives predominantly reflecting their cultural interests. While Muslim and Jatt Sikh identities add some diversity, the focus remains heavily on the perspectives of the social elites. In this landscape, films like Phule and Dhadak 2, which confront caste issues, centre Dalit-Bahujan characters, and challenge the cultural dominance of Brahmanical elites, deserve recognition. Yet, institutions like the CBFC, influenced by governing elites, appear intent on suppressing such narratives, as evidenced by the censorship hurdles faced by Phule. These challenges underscore the fact that the fight for social equity and freedom of expression in Indian cinema remains unfinished.

Only browsing, not buying

A book-browser has neither the patience nor the attention-span to read a book; he simply likes the company of the book and the feel of the book resting on his palm. A book-browser has neither the patience nor the attention-span to read a book; he simply likes the company of the book and the feel of the book resting on his palm. | Photo Credit: Getty Images

Yes, I am a “book-browser”. I browse through books at the bookstore, but I never buy a single book! My wife and children have bought enough and more books from the same store for over a decade. Those purchases should surely give me some additional perks, shouldn’t they? Why can’t I be a book-browser then?

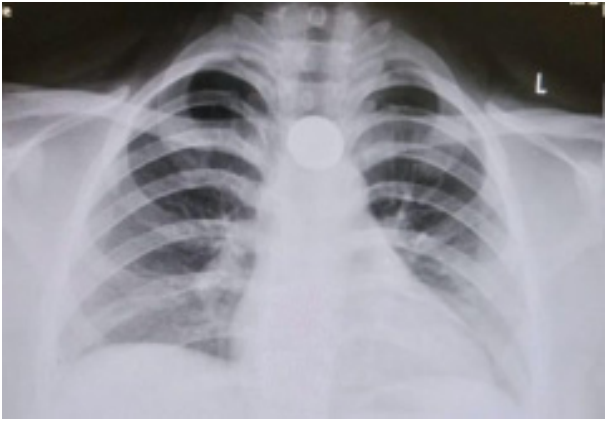
Every evening, I walk to this bookstore at the mall. The only variable in my daily, well-oiled routine is to pull out a book at random. Yes! Open a random book to a random page. That done, I will carefully browse through that one page, as though, it has a specific, pointed message meant for me, for that day. It takes me exactly 10 minutes for this entire exercise. That done, I will place the book back in the shelf and leave.

It is a routine that I have followed for months, maybe years. About two weeks ago, an attendant manning the aisles accosted me as I read my book for the day. He said, “Sir, five minutes!” I was puzzled. Never has someone delivered such a point-blank, abrupt message to a book-browser.

After all, a book-browser is well-versed with all the tricks that store owners use to evict him. An attendant will suddenly appear out of nowhere, to rearrange the books on that one shelf, against which, the book-browser is leaning. But a book-browser knows how to deal with these attempts to thwart him. He side-steps the attendant and walks away, carrying the book in his hand. Standing at a different corner of the store, he continues his browsing.

Soon, someone comes along and pops a question, “Can I help you sir? Is there a specific book that you are looking for...sir?” The book-browser is a seasoned campaigner. Experience has taught him to respond with an evasive answer, “No! Thank you! I can help myself!” and buries himself back in the book.

Coins, chemicals and more: doctors urge vigilance amid rise in accidental ingestions among kids during summer vacations



According to the World Health Organization (WHO), unintentional poisoning is a significant global public health problem. WHO estimates that unintentional poisoning accounts for a significant portion of emergency hospital visits in many countries.Dhanasekhar Kesavelu, consultant paediatrician and paediatric gastroenterologist, Apollo Children's Hospitals, Chennai, classifies ingestions into solids and liquids. Solid objects include Lego pieces, pins, coins, plastic parts, locks, and keys-- typically swallowed out of curiosity. If such items reach the stomach and are smooth, they may pass naturally. But if they get stuck in the oesophagus, the child may experience dysphagia or difficulty swallowing, sometimes clutching their chest. "Some items need urgent removal, especially button batteries, which can burn through tissue rapidly due to electric discharge. Coins stuck in the oesophagus also require removal if they cause symptoms," says Dr. Kesavelu , citing the 2023 ESPGHAN guidelines (European Society for Paediatric Gastroenterology Hepatology and Nutrition), which outline detailed protocols for ingestion emergencies.

Dr. Kesavelu points out that liquid ingestions are often more dangerous than solids, especially when they involve corrosive substances like acids, alkalis, or battery fluids. "These liquids can cause severe internal burns in the food pipe or, in some cases, even the respiratory tract if aspirated," he explains. One crucial rule, he stresses, is never to induce vomiting if a child has ingested something corrosive. "Vomiting brings the chemical back up through the oesophagus, essentially doubling the damage."Summer holidays bring with them a notable rise in paediatric emergencies, particularly accidental ingestion cases.

Swati Bhayana, consultant, paediatric hematology and oncology, Fortis Healthcare, Gurgaon, observes that such incidents increase significantly during these months. With children, especially toddlers and those under seven, spending more time at home, their natural curiosity leads them to explore their surroundings freely. "They are still learning

what's safe and unsafe," she explains, adding that the combination of boredom, heat-induced dehydration, and a lack of close supervision often results in children picking up small objects or sipping from containers without understanding the risks.Dr. Bhayana emphasises that most of these cases aren't due to any underlying illness but rather stem from situational factors. She often sees children ingest substances like mosquito repellents or toilet cleaners that have been left within easy reach. "Children don't know the difference between a bottle of water and a bottle filled with Harpic or All Out when they're stored in familiar-looking containers," she says. With both parents working and supervision often left to older grandparents, the chances of such accidents increase.Janani Sankar, medical director, paediatrician, Kanchi Kamakoti Childs Trust Hospital, Chennai, notes that among the most dangerous of accidents that befall kids in the summer vacation are accidental ingestions. Parents often store cleaning agents, kerosene, acids, and other household chemicals in reused PET or water bottles. To a child, these containers appear safe and familiar, making the mistake of drinking from them frighteningly common.Potential health risks from household substances

The effects of ingesting household substances can be devastating. Dr. Sankar explains that such ingestions can lead to inhalational damage to the lungs, central nervous system toxicity, and severe local injuries to the mouth and oesophagus. These are not minor mishaps -- they require immediate emergency care, and in some cases, intensive intervention.Dr. Sankar also highlights the risks posed by modern toys and materials. Slime, silicone gel toys, and button batteries may appear harmless but can cause serious internal damage. One child had to be treated for an intestinal obstruction after ingesting slime.Not all ingestions are dangerous. She also notes that substances like crayons, makeup products, and creams are generally non-toxic in small quantities. However, strong chemical agents like mosquito liquids, coils, and certain cleaners remain a major cause for concern.Emergency decisions and the need for public awareness

Dr. Kesavelu, adds that the size of a child's airway is incredibly small -- often no wider than a little finger. "If anything enters the respiratory tract instead of the food pipe, it becomes a life-threatening emergency," he says. A single pea or plastic piece can block the airway completely.He stresses that awareness among parents and caregivers is vital. Many don't realise the risks of leaving button batteries, sharp toys, or open cleaning products within a child's reach. "Children don't need a reason to swallow something -- they just act. Prevention is always better than cure."He reiterates the importance of timely imaging, like an X-ray, to confirm the location of the ingested item. "Whether to observe or operate depends entirely on what the child has swallowed, how long ago, and where it is now," he says.

Following the right steps early can make a critical difference.He shares a recent case to illustrate the importance of quick and coordinated medical response. "I'd like to highlight a recent case where Anita Tarigopula, an ER Consultant at Apollo Hospitals, Chennai, successfully removed a foreign body lodged in a child's esophagus. The child arrived at our ER at 11:15 PM, and within an hour, Anita, along with Karthic, our anesthetist, and our dedicated support technicians, worked swiftly and efficiently to ensure the object was safely removed.A medical team at Apollo Hospitals, Chennai, led by ER Consultant Anita Tarigopula, successfully removed a foreign body from a child's oesophagus.A medical team at Apollo Hospitals, Chennai, led by ER Consultant Anita Tarigopula, successfully removed a foreign body from a child's oesophagus. | Photo Credit: Image : Special ArrangementNeed for prevention, early intervention and dedicated guidelines

Dr. Bhayana emphasises the danger of some ingestions that doesn't always show immediate symptoms. "Children may not cough or vomit instantly after sipping something toxic. The reaction can be delayed," she says. A common but lesser-known risk is pneumonitis caused by inhaling fumes from products like All Out, even without ingestion.Dr. Sankar emphasis the need for structured engagement for children. Camps can be a good option if they're affordable. For families where both parents are working and children are under the care of elderly relatives, extra caution is necessary. Dangerous items -- including cleaning products, medications, batteries, and sharp tools -- should always be kept well out of reach.Dr. Bhayana notes that India needs a clearly documented national paediatric guidelines for treating such accidental ingestions, though paediatricians rely on international literature and personal experience. "What we have are recommendations -- broad clinical approaches based on the substance, the age of the child, and symptoms. But we need formal, structured protocols with clear dos and don'ts, especially for corrosive liquids and household chemicals," she says.

She also adds that that while guidelines and antodotes exist for treating some poisonings -- experience and multidisciplinary coordination are often what save lives in these scenarios. But more than anything, she stresses, prevention is the key. Keeping children safe begins with creating an environment where their natural curiosity doesn't lead to harm.Accidental ingestions prevention: tips for parents & caregiversStore medicines, cleaning agents, and chemicals in locked cabinets or out-of-reach shelves.Install child-proof latches in kitchen and bathroom cupboards.Never call medicine "candy." Kids may look for it thinking it's a treat.Avoid storing medicines or chemicals in food or drink containers.Keep a close eye on kids during household chores, travel, or social gatherings.Educate older siblings about not leaving small items (coins, batteries, beads) around.

POCSO case registered against four staffers of Isha Foundation, former student



GNS News Agency, April 26

An First Information Report (FIR) has been registered against four staffers of the Isha Foundation, Coimbatore, and a former student of a school run by the foundation, for offences under different sections of the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act and the Indian Penal Code.While the former student has been named the first accused, the FIR named hostel warden Nishanth Kumar, three others, namely Preethi Kumar, Prakash Somayaji, and Swami Vibhu, as the accused in the case for offences under Sections 9(l), 10, 21(2) of the POCSO Act and 342 of the IPC.The case relates to alleged sexual assault by the accused student on another student and the alleged negligence on the part of the remaining accused, between 2017 to 2019.

The FIR was registered at the All Women Police Station, Perur, in Coimbatore Rural on January 31, based on a complaint lodged by the survivor boy's mother. "Though the FIR was registered on January 31, the police gave us a copy of the document only on March 28. With the police delaying providing us the FIR copy, we submitted before a magistrate during the recording of a statement that the document was not shared by the police. The magistrate directed the police to provide us a copy, following which we got it," the complainant told The Hindu over the phone.The complainant has alleged that her son was molested and harassed at the school run by the foundation during 2017-2019, on many occasions, by the fellow student.Though the boy had complained to his 'house parents' (in home school) Nishant Kumar and Preeti kumar, the principal of the school Prakash Somayaji, and the general coordinator Swami Vibhu, he was ordered not to tell his parents about the incident, said the FIR.

As per the FIR, the boy told the school's management about the incidents of sexual assault and sent a mail to his parents in March 2019. Though the mother contacted the school immediately, there was no reply for two days. The management responded when she threatened she would go to the police if not responded, it said. The FIR stated that Prakash Somayaji insisted that the parents only talk over WhatsApp calls. When the parents wrote an email to the school explaining the incident, they were told that the boy (alleged offender) belongs to a very elite family and nothing much could be done. It said that Swami Vibhu told the parents that he would have taken action if the victim was a girl.The mother wanted a special investigation team to be formed to investigate the case.

are you physical or financial?



Physical assets have charm but are difficult to manage as we age; sometimes, the best time for transition is when there is an exceptional surge in demand for real estate as the property can be sold for a good price

Most retirees prefer rental income. But there comes a time when retirees may have to decide whether to continue earning rental income or sell the property and deposit the money in a bank. This week, we discuss the factors driving such phase transition.

Real estate is an important part of most retiree's investment portfolio. The reason is simple. You receive a steady cash flow every month that substitutes for the active income you earned during your working life. Importantly, you can annually raise the rent to help manage the increase in your monthly household expenses.

The flip side is real estate, being a physical asset, requires continual attention. The cost of repairs will surge exponentially if you do not maintain the property. Then, there is vacancy risk. What if you cannot find a suitable tenant? There comes a time in every retiree's life where they feel financial assets are easy to manage. We call this the phase transition. This is when retirees who hitherto preferred physical assets are now ready to embrace financial assets.

As a retiree, when should you embrace such a phase transition? One, when you are finding it difficult to get tenants. Two, the maintenance cost of property is increasing. Three, your property is ageing. This is a crucial factor if you own an apartment, where the undivided share of land is small; older the property, lower the rental yield and sale consideration. And four, you are unable to manage physical assets because of your health condition. Converting physical asset into financial asset is not easy. In addition to finding a suitable buyer, you must mull all the associated costs related to the sale, including taxes.

Sometimes, the best time for a phase transition is when there is surge in demand for real estate as the property can be sold for a good price. In other words, you can mull phase transition even if you do not face any of the issues stated above. Physical assets have charm because of touch-and-feel factor but are difficult to manage as we age. That said, you may not have to consider phase transition if your adult child is willing to actively manage the property. But remember, if you have more than one child: It is easy for legal heirs to divide financial than your physical asset after your lifetime.

On this Earth Day, rethink Green Capitalism

The world is moving towards an era of digital transformation, with technology at the beck and call. Thanks to the innovative solutions of tech giants across the globe, everything is seamlessly intertwined with modern electronics, from smartphones to smart homes. The reliance on smart devices has grown exponentially. Today, we always look for a technical miracle to solve nearly every problem, summed up by "OK Google" or "Hey Siri."

Consider this: The Digital 2024 Global Overview Report says, 69.4% of the world's population uses a mobile device, with over 66% of the people accessing the internet as of January 2024, a massive leap from the first-ever handset in 1983. Digitalisation has become the key to prosperity and progress. We have all witnessed the digital revolution in the last couple of years. On this Earth Day (April 22), this question is worth asking: Is it a convenient way towards a sustainable future?

What happens to our electronic devices after we discard them? The data is shocking. The Global E-waste Monitor 2024 by UNITAR says the global e-waste generation reached a staggering 62 million tonnes in 2022, an 82% increase from 2010. Yet only 22.3% of this e-waste was recycled. As per UNEP 2015 estimates, e-waste will reach 82 million tonnes by 2030, making it the fastest-growing solid waste stream, while 60-90% of global e-waste is illegally traded or dumped, valued at \$19 billion annually. E-waste is non-biodegradable, with components like lead and mercury contributing to serious health hazards.Why has the case risen to such pandemonium? The answer is not simple. It is a situational paradox. We all encounter full front-page publicity for new smartphone launches now and then. It is a part of a clever ploy widely recognised as Capitalism. At first, Capitalism was a blessing that drove innovations, profitability and expansion in the free market. However, the insatiable hunger for growth is exacerbating environmental degradation.We must carefully deliberate on our consumption choices and rectify our obsession with frequent purchases, and transform our outlook toward green choices.

The electronic sector is the cornerstone of modern Capitalism, but its foundation depends on finite resources. The craving for constant growth is causing over-extraction, mass production and waste. The relentless demand for newer and better is fuelling the trajectory of the treadmill of production. Buying the latest smartphone or laptop has become our new obsession. For instance, approximately 1.14 billion smartphones were shipped in 2023. The carbon footprint for smartphone production ranges from 31 kg to 55 kg of CO₂, according to an article in comparethemarket.

Major companies influence consumer behaviour through strategies like planned obsolescence. There was a time when we could flip open the back to replace the battery. Today's devices are engineered with proprietary screws and complicated designs, making them impossible to repair. If we try to probe and restore, the warranty is no longer valid on those devices. Product hibernation, ie, unused devices gathering dust, and limited recycling push companies to produce newer devices at breakneck speed. Furthermore, eco-friendly slogans attract more consumers at higher price points.The Digital Economy Report 2024, released by the UN Conference on Trade and Development, discloses that least developed countries (LDCs) are becoming critical destinations for e-waste from developed nations, which generate 3.25 kg per capita of e-waste annually, over 15 times higher than the LDCs at 0.21 kg per capita.Treating waste as a resource can be the solution in both the short and long run. A recent report by Recycling Industry Yearbook 2019 estimates that recycling 1 million cell phones is equivalent to the recovery of 75 pounds of gold, 772 pounds of silver, 33 pounds of palladium and 34,274 pounds of copper. This suggests an increasing and emerging trend in recycling sectors and startups, prioritising e-waste management and driving the transition towards Green Capitalism and a sustainable tomorrow.

Why did China block exports of rare earth elements?

Amid the ongoing U.S.–China trade war, Chinese authorities have reportedly imposed export controls on rare earth elements (REEs) and magnets that are needed in a range of manufacturing activities, from semiconductor fabrication units to defence equipment. This has been one of the more recent salvos in the trade war between the two countries, but the export restrictions apply to any Chinese refinery that can export refined rare earths outside the country.

What are rare earth elements?

Rare earth elements are a series of seventeen substances that are present in the earth's crust. Unlike what the name may indicate, rare earths occur plentifully in nature, but the rarity comes from the ability to isolate them chemically and make them usable in industrial applications. Heavy and light rare earths occur naturally in several countries, such as India, China, Myanmar, Japan, Australia and North Korea.China's curbs target dysprosium, gadolinium, lutetium, samarium, scandium, terbium, and yttrium, seven of the seventeen elements classified as REEs.Dysprosium's so-called magnetic susceptibility makes it ideal for use in hard disks and car motors; gadolinium is used in nuclear reactors for shielding and in some medical equipment; lutetium and compounds with it are used in PET scanners and in petroleum refineries; samarium is used in powerful magnets in personal electronics; scandium–aluminium alloys are used in fighter aircraft; terbium is used in lighting for personal electronics; and yttrium is used in cancer treatments and superconductors.

What are China's export restrictions?

While rare earths are found in multiple countries, refining them, particularly heavy REEs like the ones described above, has been an area dominated by China. A heavy rare earth facility opened in Vietnam is currently shuttered over a tax dispute. As such, practically all heavy REEs used all over the world are refined in China.From personal electronics to defence, therefore, Beijing has enormous leverage over the entire world for a range of supply chains for critical raw and intermediate materials. The export restrictions don't appear to amount to an outright ban, but could interrupt supplies to countries for a few weeks as refiners work through the process of getting permits.

What is the impact on India?

Indian supply chains may not be immediately impacted by REE export restrictions in China. While the government has taken steps to boost domestic production of semiconductors and defence equipment, the more advanced stages of manufacturing typically happen abroad in countries like China itself, and Japan. The latter country has already taken steps to insulate itself from REE supply shocks, by building a months-long stockpile.India has recognized the importance of REE production, as it is estimated to have 6% of their total deposits. Mining and refining activities tend to present great environmental strain, which have been factors in India's practically non-existent capabilities in those activities.India has light REE extraction capabilities through the state-owned Indian Rare Earths Ltd, such as monazite extraction from beach sand in Kerala (monazite is not subject to China's export restrictions).India imports a limited quantity of REEs, reflecting the state of the country's current position on global supply chains. 2,270 tonnes of REEs were imported in 2023–24, the Ministry of Mines said in a Lok Sabha response earlier in April. As such, the country's strategy depends on both boosting domestic production and imports.

What is the government's plan?

"As a policy framework for utilizing critical minerals, including rare earth metals, the National Critical Mineral Mission (NCMM) has been launched, which is India's strategic initiative to secure critical mineral supply chain by in-



creasing domestic critical minerals production and foreign supply sources," the Ministry said in Parliament.Critical minerals are a larger umbrella under which REEs fall — in a 2022 list of 30 critical minerals notified by the Union government, all 17 REEs were one item."China's restrictions on certain critical minerals, the Russia–Ukraine War, and other issues highlight the fragility of critical mineral supply and the need for diversifying sources," the Ministry of Mines said in a presentation on the NCMM in January.Under the NCMM, the government has said it will facilitate or engage in 1,200 exploration projects, award exploratory licenses to incentivise private exploration, and auction more critical mineral blocks. The mission also aims to streamline regulatory approvals for critical mineral exploration and extraction.

Indian astronaut Shubhanshu Shukla to grow crops, study water bears at ISS next month

New Delhi: Indian astronaut Shubhanshu Shukla is expected to conduct at least seven experiments, including growing crops and studying "ultimate survivors" water bears in space, during his 14-day stay at the International Space Station next month.The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO), in collaboration with NASA and the European Space Agency (ESA), will conduct seven experiments during the Axiom Mission-4 (Ax-4) scheduled for late May that will also have astronauts from the US, Hungary and Poland onboard.

In partnership with NASA and Voyager, ISRO is studying the resilience of tardigrades or water bears, tiny creatures known for their ability to survive extreme conditions.Tardigrades have been on Earth for around 600 million years and will likely withstand any major changes to the Earth's climate in the near future as well. This experiment will examine the revival, survival and reproduction of tardigrades on the International Space Station, comparing gene expression patterns between space-flown and ground control populations.Understanding the molecular mechanisms of their resilience could inform future space exploration and lead to innovative biotechnology applications on Earth, Axiom Space said.One Ax-4 experiment focuses on how astronauts interact with electronic displays in microgravity and aims to understand the physical and cognitive impacts of using computer screens in space.This research will delve into how tasks like pointing, gaze fixation and rapid eye movements are affected in microgravity and how these changes might influence stress levels. The findings could inform the design and interaction of future spacecraft computers, making them more user-friendly for astronauts.ISRO, in collaboration with NASA and Redwire, will undertake the 'Space Microalgae' project to investigate the impact of microgravity on the growth, metabolism .

Can Alzheimer’s be caused by viral infection?

Decoding research on a new risk factor



While researchers are yet to pinpoint what causes Alzheimer’s disease, over the years there has been enough evidence to suspect that certain infections might have a role to play.While researchers are yet to pinpoint what causes Alzheimer’s disease, over the years there has been enough evidence to suspect that certain infections might have a role to play. Even as researchers look for ways to cure the neurodegenerative disease Alzheimer’s — with most therapies focussing on the abnormal build-up of amyloid and tau proteins in the brain — there are growing suspicions that viral infections may be triggering the condition. And the viruses most commonly linked are from the same family — varicella zoster virus (VZV) that causes chickenpox and shingles and the herpes simplex virus 1 (HSV-1) that causes oral and genital herpes.“Research has shown that when these viruses are present in the brains of people who are the carriers of a genetic risk factor for Alzheimer’s called APOE-E4, the risk of Alzheimer’s disease increases further. Unfortunately, these viruses are very prevalent in the population — HSV-1 is found in 80% and VVX in 95% of the people,” says Dr Manjari Tripathi, HOD, neurology, All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) – New Delhi.

Why do scientists think that viral infections may cause Alzheimer’s?

While researchers are yet to pinpoint what causes Alzheimer’s disease, over the years there has been enough evidence to suspect that certain infections might have a role to play. Researchers have hypothesised that an inflammation in the brain triggers the abnormal build-up of amyloid beta and tau proteins, one of the reasons for which is infection.They have found linkages to support their theory — researchers have found genetic material of the HSV-1 in these amyloid plaques. A 2022 study found that repeated head injuries can reawaken a dormant HSV-1 infection. Concussions and brain injuries are known risk factors for Alzheimer’s disease. A shingles infection can also reactivate the HSV-1 virus — this could be the reason scientists have found that the incidence of Alzheimer’s is lower in people who have been vaccinated against it.Alzheimer’s: How viruses can be a trigger

A recently published large “natural experiment” —

based on health data of 280,000 older individuals from Wales — found that the people who had been vaccinated were 20% less likely to develop dementia. Alzheimer’s is one of the most common forms of dementia.“The exact cause of dementia is not known. However, there are several triggers that have been liked to it such as repeated head injuries, viral infections, living with conditions such as blood pressure, diabetes, sleep disorders like obstructive sleep apnoea, and insomnia,” says Dr Tripathi. Among them the viral hypothesis is very strong because it has been shown that these viral infections could “trigger the pathological hallmarks of the dementia like amyloid plaque formation.” Some scientists argue that it may not be the infection per se but the body’s response to it that could be the culprit.Researchers see abnormal protein clumps seen in the brains of patients with Alzheimer’s as a defence mechanism, to protect the brain from pathogens. Scientists in 2018 were able to demonstrate in brain cells and mice in the laboratory that a viral infection triggered the protein plaque formation as a trap for the microbes. While young people have the ability to clear out these plaques efficiently, it is not so with older persons, leading to Alzheimer’s. There is also some evidence to suggest that vaccines other than shingles — such as influenza and tuberculosis — could also lower the incidence of Alzheimer’s.

Why is the viral infection theory in focus?

If infections are the likely trigger of Alzheimer’s, then the onset may be prevented through vaccination. “While we may not have all the answers yet, it would be good to get vaccinated with all available vaccines. It is a common misconception that vaccines have to be taken only in childhood — adults should be taking the flu, pneumonia and shingles vaccines,” says Dr Tripathi.

What about research on other triggers of Alzheimer’s?

Researchers are looking at the gut-brain axis hypothesis that suggests changes in the gut microbiome make the intestine more permeable. This is the blood brain barrier that does not allow several molecules to reach the brain. Once damaged, they go through and result in brain inflammation.Another hypothesis suggests that autophagy, or the process by which cells dispose damaged parts — in this case abnormal amyloid beta protein and tau protein — gets affected. The metal-ion hypothesis suggests that increased cell damage in the brain is what leads to Alzheimer’s disease.

What are currently available therapies for Alzheimer’s?

At least three therapies for Alzheimer’s have been approved by the US Food and Drug Administration — all working on the principle of a monoclonal antibody removing the abnormally clumped proteins from the brain of patients. While these drugs cannot reverse memory loss, they can slow the progression of the disease. The phase III study for the most recently approved donanemab found that cognitive decline slows down in early Alzheimer’s patients by 35.1% at 76 weeks. These drugs, however, are known to cause small bleeds in the brain.“There are new therapies that have come out in the market but these are terribly expensive. What we need now are cheaper therapies that can prevent the disease,” says Dr Tripathi.

From cement to cables: Is UltraTech building the blueprint for India’s next infrastructure giant?

If you bought UltraTech Cement shares five years ago, you have seen a ~4x return, with hardly any drama. No flashy headlines, no overnight rallies, just steady compounding from the country’s largest cement player.In FY24 alone, UltraTech Cement, which is part of the Aditya Birla Group, added Rs 7,000 crore in profit and crossed Rs 70,000 crore in revenue. It sold more cement than ever before, aggressively expanded capacity, and maintained healthy margins despite a volatile cost environment.In early 2025, it announced a ₹1,800 crore bet on wires and cables, a segment dominated by names like Polycab and Havells. At first glance, this might seem like a strange pivot. What’s a cement major doing in a space filled with copper, conductors, and PVC insulation?

The answer lies in a deeper strategic shift. UltraTech is not just selling cement anymore as it is trying to own the entire homebuilding wallet. Cement, concrete, wall putty, and now wires. It is assembling a full-stack portfolio for India’s housing and infrastructure boom.For investors, this raises two critical questions: Can the cement engine continue to operate at full capacity? And can this new cable venture actually move the needle, or is it a costly distraction?Let’s unpack the fundamentals, the strategy, and what’s at stake in UltraTech’s next chapter.Figure 1: Share price of Ultratech Cement Ltd. Source: Screener.in Figure 1: Share price of Ultratech Cement Ltd. Source: Screener.inUltraTech’s cement business: A moat built on scale, speed, and strategy

At its core, UltraTech is a volume machine. With a capacity of over 175 million tonnes per annum (mtpa) as of FY25, and aiming for 209 mtpa by FY27, it is not just India’s largest cement producer, it is also among the top three globally, outside of China.What makes UltraTech’s cement business special is how efficiently that capacity is used and how intelligently it’s being added.

In FY24, the company added over 13 mtpa of capacity across Chhattisgarh, Tamil Nadu, West Bengal, and Rajasthan, with another 5.4 mtpa commissioned in early FY25. These additions were not arbitrary as they were specifically targeted at high-demand regions, enabling UltraTech to maintain market dominance while keeping transportation costs low.Figure 3: Ultratech’s capacity addition. Source: Quarterly Report Dec 24 Figure 3: Ultratech’s capacity addition. Source: Quarterly Report Dec 24

How does the cement business work?

Cement manufacturing is capital-intensive and regionally competitive. Cement has a low value-to-weight ratio, meaning logistics matter as much as pricing. UltraTech solves this with:A pan-India footprint: Operations spread across five regions (north, south, east, west, central), allowing it to serve demand from anywhere without depending on one geography.Integrated supply chains: Its plants are often located near limestone mines and clinker units, reducing input costs. A strong ready-mix concrete and white cement business: These adjacents not only improve margins but also create downstream stickiness with builders and contractors.In FY24, UltraTech sold over 110 million tonnes of cement, achieving operating margins of approximately 18%.

Where is the growth coming from?

India’s per capita cement consumption is still under 300 kg, compared to 500-600 kg in developed economies. That gap represents structural long-term demand, powered by:



Figure 4: Cement industry landscape. Source: Quarterly Report Dec 24 Figure 4: Cement industry landscape. Source: Quarterly Report Dec 24Urbanisation and housing: Real estate revival and government-led affordable housing schemes. Infrastructure build-out: Roads, bridges, metros, and highways that require bulk cement supply. Rural demand: Smaller towns and villages contribute nearly 35 per cent of UltraTech’s cement volumes, a market no other player serves at scale.UltraTech’s management has identified that over 65 per cent of its cement demand comes from the housing segment, with 35 per cent from rural housing alone. This gives it a direct line to India’s real economy, a trait few industrial businesses can claim.

What is the potential?

Between FY24 and FY27, analysts estimate UltraTech’s volumes will grow at a ~10–11% compound annual growth rate (CAGR), with revenue growing at 11 per cent and earnings before interest, tax, depreciation and amortisation (EBITDA) at 19–21 per cent CAGR. That means by FY27, the company could be earning over 21,000 crore in EBITDA on ₹96,000 crore in revenues, up from 12,700 crore and 73,000 crore in FY25E.And with a capital employed base of ₹1,00,000 crore by FY27, its core return metrics are expected to improve, Return on Capital Employed (ROCE) rising to 18 per cent and Return on Equity (ROE) nearing 15 per cent, both healthy levels for a capital-heavy industry.

In short, UltraTech’s cement engine is far from slowing down. It is still the most cost-efficient producer in the country, has the widest reach, and is expanding faster than its peers. The real question is whether this strength can now support and fund the company’s next step, its entry into the wires and cables market.Wiring the future: Why UltraTech is entering the cables business

When UltraTech Cement announced a ₹1,800 crore investment to enter the wires and cables segment in early 2025, the decision caught many by surprise. But it was not as abrupt as it seemed.Around 65 per cent of UltraTech’s cement volumes already come from residential housing. Coincidentally, about 85 per cent of wire demand in India is also tied to the housing segment. The overlap is hard to ignore.UltraTech is effectively trying to increase its wallet share from the same end user.If a contractor or homeowner is already buying UltraTech’s cement, why not also offer them the wires that go into the walls? This is not a brand pivot, it’s an extension of its presence in the construction chain.

A network already in placeThe infrastructure to distribute these products already exists. Through its 4,500+ UltraTech Building Solutions (UBS) outlets, the company already serves both individual home builders and institutional buyers. Many of these outlets currently stock wires from other brands like Polycab or KEI Industries.UltraTech’s move is to introduce a branded in-house offering into this ecosystem, thereby gaining control over quality, margins, and shelf space.Add to this its strong relationships with builders, masons, and electricians—the “influencer” network in the Indian construction industry—and UltraTech has a ready-made launchpad.India’s wires and cables industry is valued at approximately ₹80,000 crore and has seen a CAGR of 13-14 per cent over the past five years. The growth is structurally driven by increasing electrification, rising safety standards, and a consumer shift from unbranded to branded electrical goods.



The science behind ‘miracle babies’ born of uterine transplants



Major advances in reproductive medicine have enabled women to have successful pregnancies and deliver healthy babies by adopting either IVF (in vitro fertilisation), which began in the late 1970s or ICSI (intracytoplasmic sperm injection) in the early 1990s. No treatment is, however, available for women suffering from an absent or dysfunctional uterus, in terms of carrying a pregnancy. Approximately one in 500 women suffer from what is known as absolute uterine infertility, and the option so far, to become a mother has been to either adopt or utilise gestational surrogacy. Now however, there may be another option: uterine transplant surgery. A baby girl recently hit headlines, after becoming the first child in the U.K. to be born to a mother using a donated womb.

What is a uterine transplant?

A uterine transplant surgery can help women who do not have a uterus, to become pregnant and bear a child. A successful transplant can be a life-changing event for the woman who receives the uterus. This procedure is now being viewed as a fertility solution for women who are born without a uterus or women who have undergone a hyster-

ectomy (uterine removal) either for a benign condition or a cancer. It is, however, a temporary transplant allowing one or perhaps two pregnancies. Removal of the transplanted uterus is generally recommended after the baby is born.Women who wish to donate their uterus for transplantation to a female recipient should satisfy certain criteria. They should be between the age of 30-50 years and in good health. They should not be obese (body mass index < 30 kg/sq met) and should not suffer from diabetes. A history of a cancer and treatment for it in the donor within the last five years is a contraindication. The donor should not have HIV, Hepatitis B, C or any other sexually transmitted infection.

Uterine transplantation should and can be performed only by a trained gynaecologic transplant surgeon. She/he has to undergo extensive training and certification in the procedure. Complete healing has to be ensured after the procedure before a pregnancy can be attempted. Typically, a minimum of 6 months of recovery after transplant surgery is recommended.

What is the global scenario?

More than 100 womb transplants have been carried out worldwide, with at least 50 babies thought to have been born as a result.The first successful birth after a transplant took place in Sweden in 2014 . A boy, Vincent, was born to a 36-year-old woman. More recently in February of this year, a baby girl was born by caesarean section at Queen Charlotte’s and Chelsea Hospital in London.The first uterine transplant performed in India took place on May 18, 2017, at the Galaxy Care Hospital in Pune, Maharashtra. A 26-year-old patient had been born without a uterus, and received her mother’s womb as a transplant. India’s first uterine transplant baby, weighing 1.45 kg, was delivered through a Caesarean section the hospital, in October 2018.The overall success rate of in terms of graft survival is 74%. This translates to more than 50% of mothers who received uterine transplant giving birth to term live babies. No congenital abnormalities were reported in these babies.A successful uterine transplant can be a great boon. Miracles never cease, but when miracles are based on strong scientific evidence, they continue to inspire awe and joy.

Is nitrogen, a building block of life, a latent time-bomb?



There’s a harmless addiction that many people share: knuckle-cracking. That ‘pop’, better than the one from squeezing bubble wrap, results from the synovial fluid between your joints releasing a small bubble of nitrogen when you twist or compress your fingers or toes. It’s also a reminder of the centrality of nitrogen to life. The fifth-most abundant gas in the universe, the most pervasive on earth, there is roughly three times more nitrogen in the air than oxygen. While it only constitutes a mere 3% of our body weight, life, without it, would be impossible.NO, or nitric oxide, inside your body mediates the efficient transmission of messages among the nerves. It dilates arteries easing the flow of blood and improves immunity. Adenosine triphosphate (ATP), the fundamental currency of energy for cells, is part-constituted of nitrogen. Finally, the building blocks of DNA (deoxyribonuclease), the blueprint of life, are made up of four nitrogenous bases.

We can breathe in nitrogen but ironically cannot directly use a smidgen of it. The lungs – masters at extracting every molecule of oxygen from inhaled air to keep our cells alive – are flummoxed by nitrogen.This is one of the reasons humanity and the rest of the animal kingdom depend on plants, who by the way are also inept at extracting nitrogen from the air. Via what could be described as The First Great Outsourcing, some plants were smart enough to form an alliance with certain ancient bacteria and archaea called ‘diazotrophs’.Nearly 20,000 species of plants of the family Leguminosae – which include beans, chickpeas, lentils, soybeans, and peanuts – exist because of this symbiotic relationship between diazotrophs and them. The barter is that the former live on their nodules and break down nitrogen in the air into ammonia and ammonium, and the latter provide them a free supply of sugars. Nitrification is the process by which bacteria – that usually attach themselves to the root or live in the soil – turn the ammonia and ammonium into nitrites and nitrate.That is the form a plant finally identifies as ‘useful’ and then goes on to make proteins, chlorophyll, their own proteins, and most other stuff necessary to their lives. These make their way into other animals and us. Plants that are non-leguminous – rice, wheat, maize for instance – must depend on diazotrophs in the soil.Not all of the available nitrogen and the manufactured nitrate can be used and a large ecosystem of microbes exists to convert these nitrates back to nitrogen, called denitrification, and the cycle continues.

The other way to keep nitrogen in the ground is fertiliser. Keeping this cycle going in a sustained manner is what organic agriculture has been about for the last 11,000-odd years.Composting, manuring, crop rotation were the strategies employed to keep nitrification and denitrification going on and feeding people. Populations waxed and waned. Drought and disease kept populations in check but given that in the last millennium, human population has generally been on the rise, nitrate increasingly started to become short on supply.Animal and bird excrement, crushed animal bones were the main external sources of fertiliser, being rich sources of nitrate. Called ‘saltpetre’, this was probably the first ‘dual-use’ technology – a label that is now often applied to products and applications that have the potential for war and civilian use – as it was a vital ingredient for both explosives and farming. To hark back, the ‘pop’ in the crack of knuckles is similar to the explosiveness in gunpowder.King Charles I of medieval England ordered subjects to collect their urine for creating nitrate beds to aid small-scale saltpetre mining. The mines in Chile, that manufactured saltpetre and deposits of guano – the nitrogen-rich excrement of birds and bats – in Peru became key sources of fertiliser and gunpowder for Europe. The Guano War fought in the 1860s between Spain and its former colonies Peru and Chile revolved around control of nitrate reserves. English raiders pillaged the tombs of pharaohs – not for their

treasures – but for the nitrogen in the bones of thousands of slaves buried along with the mummified pharaohs. “More than three million human skeletons,” the novelist Benjamin Labatut writes, “along with the bones of thousands of dead horses that those soldiers had ridden in the battles of Austerlitz, Leipzig and Waterloo were sent to the port of Hull in north of England, where they were ground in the bone-mills of Yorkshire to make nitrate and fertilise fields.”

While only nitrifying bacteria have over aeons mastered the art of cleaving apart these nitrogen bonds, lightning strikes are the other way that atmospheric nitrogen can be broken down to nitric acid – another natural source of nitrogen and the reason some soils are naturally rich in nitrogen and fertile.

Like the energy in lightning, it takes an enormous amount of pressure and heat to rip apart the intimate narcissism of nitrogen atoms. Only in 1907 did the German chemist, Fritz Haber, figure out the degrees of heat and pressure needed to combine nitrogen from the air with hydrogen and synthesise ammonia. While this produced very little ammonia, it was after the know-how was transferred to the chemical company, BASF, did their engineer Carl Bosch figure out – most vitally the addition of an iron catalyst – a way to manufacture ammonia on an industrial scale. For the first time, humanity via the Haber-Bosch process was able to, as newspaper headlines of the day put it, “pull bread out of the air”. Being the early 20th century, this revolutionary way of making ammonia was almost exclusively put to making explosives. It would be a few years before the impact of the Haber-Bosch process would truly be felt in agriculture. In 1900, on the cusp of World War 1, the global population was around 1.6 billion with Malthusian concerns about agricultural productivity being unable to match birth rates, widely prevalent. It had taken the globe roughly 350 years to double its population to 1.6 billion. The next doubling took only 64 years – largely credited to the widespread availability of nitrogenised fertiliser.Just a few years before he was conferred the Nobel Prize for his discovery, in 1918, Haber – ethnically Jewish but a proud German – had used his talents to create chlorine gas, mustard gas and phosgene, some of which were used against the French Allied troops, during World War 1, initiating the era of chemical warfare. Though outlawed by various conventions, humanity today has never entirely eschewed its use. Just one example being the use of tear gas, first used in 1914, by Delhi police personnel on protesting farmers. As provider and destroyer, the two-faced nature of ‘reactive nitrogen’ – as nitrogen freed from its natural atmosphere state is called – first revealed itself in war. The dark face of nitrogen still shows up in its wide application even in modern-day explosives – think trinitrotoluene and nitroglycerine. Its benign avatar manifests in firecrackers and the thousands of bags of fertiliser that doze farms across the world.However, in the last half a century, science is reconciling with the evidence that fertilisers may have become too much of a good thing.Nitrogen in the air is placid, stable and keeps to itself. It forms a kind of blanket around the earth that keeps the much more flammable oxygen in check. An atom of nitrogen will prefer pairing up with another nitrogen via three strong bonds but once these bonds are broken by bacteria or industrial methods, it becomes extremely reactive.

In its quest for triple-bonded stability, nitrogen often pairs up with multiple atoms of H and O. Nitrogen paired up with three atoms of hydrogen makes the prized ammonia. The industrial fixing of nitrogen to produce ammonia via the Haber-Bosch process relies on burning up fossil fuel to produce high heat and temperature in confined spaces such as boilers and internal combustion engines. When this ammonia is fixed by bacteria or during nitrification, reactive avatar and oxygen form a melange of compounds: Nitric oxide (NO), Nitrogen dioxide (NO2), nitrous oxide (N2O), nitrate (NO3). Before the era of industrialisation, reactive nitrogen was not a problem. Only a small portion of the nitrogen available to bacteria is fixed into compounds such as ammonium and used by plants as nitrate. Other bacteria then work on ‘denitrifying’ the unused nitrate into ammonia and converting it back into nitrogen, which returns to the atmosphere, thus completing the cycle.However, in a reversal of the historical trend, there is now too much ammonia and ammonium nitrate fed into the soil. Being extremely soluble, ammonium nitrates are washed away during rains and enter into canals and streams, and stimulate algal blooms. This process, called eutrophication, ravages biodiversity.



"India is among the worst 12 countries according to World Bank data in the matter of catastrophic health expenditures. We healthcare providers are destroying the social, mental and physical health of more than 4% of the population in a year," Mr Rajagopal criticised.

Village to India team: Pooja Yadav’s hockey dream sparked by shoes with stars



GNS News Agency, April 26

Villagers of Gangapur in Uttar Pradesh’s Varanasi district never quite questioned Mahendra Yadav when he encouraged the youngest of his five daughters, Pooja, to pursue hockey. But neighbours and relatives would often toss a throwaway line: “Hockey mein kuchh nahi hoga iska (She won’t get anywhere in hockey).” Mahendra would nod and say nothing.As Pooja, 20, made it to the Indian hockey team last week, she recalls how her father — a milkman who also tended to the fields — bought her first pair of playing shoes, from the local shoe shop. “The shop owner had a young family. So my father told him he would deliver milk until the shopkeeper had recovered the cost of the shoes. It took a month and half, but I had my first shoes. They had two golden stars,” recalls Pooja of her journey towards being the “only woman from Benaras to ever play for India”.

Playing cricket with the boys helped her in the early days. “One day I spotted hockey at school and was trained by a coach. But those early days of playing cricket helped because I always believed I was equal to the boys,” she says. “Growing up, I was the only girl playing hockey. After hearing of my India selection, now even the villagers are happy. Maybe more girls will play.”The national call-up was a source of huge pride for mother Kalavati and Pooja’s four sisters, all married and stay-at-home wives. “My mother was the one who wouldn’t let me give up. But my four sisters are all supportive and keep telling me they want me to do what they never even dreamt of. They kept pushing me even after I failed the trials. They would tell me to skip housework and go out to train instead,” she says.The family of five sisters, parents, and a brother tilled a small patch of land and owned two buffaloes. While Mahendra turned to milk delivery and worked without a pause, Kalavati tended to the crops. And Pooja played.

The shoes with the golden stars, however, would wear out soon, and Pooja knew she had to secure a spot at the

Lucknow sports hostel so the parents wouldn’t have to spend on her diet and equipment. Five years ago, she found herself at the SAI hostel in Lucknow.Pooja says she always follows her mother’s advice of not being deterred by failures. “My father is proud I persisted because I had failed my first trials,” she says.The early failures came with their share of sceptics. At one point, the pessimism around her got so dire that Pooja would invite the doubters home and forcibly make them watch reruns of ‘Chak de India!’. “I first showed it to my parents and it used to make them very happy imagining I would be like that someday. But it was more important that those who repeated that I wouldn’t be able to make a life out of hockey watched it too,” she recalls.All those reruns of Chak de didn’t go waste as Pooja was picked for the nationals camp in Bengaluru last month.While she looks up to her seniors Navneet Kaur and Neha Goyal, it is Sushila Chanu who has taken Pooja under her wings at the national camp. “I went in with a huge fear of making mistakes. But Sushila didi has been teaching me not to be afraid and always focus on the next match. She keeps stressing that when I receive the ball I should look up, scan the field for exact positioning and not make wrong passes.

The camp in Bengaluru was also the first time her diet had dry fruits and soups instead of the daal-chawal served at hostels. “We never knew there was anything beyond daal-chawal, roti-sabzi, and even that was huge for someone from a poor family. Now we eat food that actually helps in sport for strength,” she says.India women’s head coach Harendra Singh says Pooja is skilled and is a fast learner. “Good passing skills and peripheral vision are what she showed at the nationals. Also, at the camps, she showed improvements, gelling with players, and tactical awareness. Now she needs exposure to cope with top teams like Australia,” he says.

A national selector who oversaw the trials attests to Pooja’s talent. “She has a very good game sense, defence and distribution. Her nimbleness in the midfield helps her to intercept well and defend well and also prompt the attack. Her fitness levels are also high. She doesn’t overcarry — distributes and goes up to support. That’s a good thing because in the centre of the field, you can’t have a shaky structure.”Coach Harendra is excited about his ward from Varanasi. “The city of Mahadeva has contributed to Indian hockey in a big way. Hockey legend Mohd Shahid Saab was from Varanasi and internationals Vivek Singh, Rahul Singh, Prashant Singh are from there too. Currently in the men’s squad, we have Lalit Upadhyay. The Ghazipur-Varanasi-Mirzapur belt is the centre of artistic hockey. Pooja will be a role model for upcoming players and the young generation in the women’s team,” he says.Pooja still watches cricket, especially IPL, and is a fan of Hardik Pandya. But in her spare time, she likes reading stories of athletes from around the world. “Last Sunday, I read about a Pakistani player from a very poor background, and was very inspired. I don’t remember his name, not even his sport... It was either football or badminton. But the story struck a chord.”

How will the Serie A title be decided if Inter and Napoli finish level on points? It isn’t goal difference or head to head

GNS News Agency, April 26

Inter and Napoli are strong candidates to lift the Serie A title at the end of the season. This conclusion is not arrived at by a historical assessment of the two teams or their unbreakable spirit throughout the season, but rather the fact that both teams are inseparable with 71 points from 33 games.Both teams have 21 wins, 8 draws and 4 losses apiece. Only five games remain till the winner is decided and while other top divisions across Europe make use of goal difference or head-to-head as tie breakers, the Serie A has something different in store.

How will the Serie A winner be decided?

Owing to the fact that Inter and Napoli played out 1-1 draws in both of their League meetings, a rule implemented in the 2022/23 season states that if the sides finishing first and second are level on points, the winner of the campaign will be determined through a one-off game, in which the winner takes home the title. This rule is also applied for sides in 17th and 19th, but with the loser dropping down to the second division.The game will be played in a neutral venue. Unlike in knockout matches, the game will not go to extra time if the teams are inseparable at the end of 90 minutes. Rather,a penalty shootout will follow, in which the winner



takes home the Serie A crown.

Inter or Napoli: who has it more difficult?

That being said, there are five more games left for both sides to play. There is added pressure on Inter’s squad, given the fact that Simone Inzaghi’s men are in the running for the UCL, Serie A and the Coppa Italia. In the Serie A, Inter will face the likes of Roma, Lazio and Como, while Napoli have games lined up against Torino, Genoa and Cagliari among two others.

Premier League – List of Relegated and Promoted teams for next season



The end of the English football season means jubilation to those that earn promotion and heart-break for those that drop down to the EFL Championship.

GNS News Agency, April 26

With the Premier League season coming to an end, the race for promotion and survival have entered the final stretch. With just five more games to go till the season ends in the English top flight, two teams have confirmed their demotion to the EFL Championship. In the second tier however, only two games remain before the curtain falls on the competition. Here’s a look at the teams that have earned their spot in the Premier League and also at those that will drop down to the second tier.The EFL Championship this season featured a ruthless chase for promotion. Despite jsut two games left to go till the season ends, the top two sides are inseparable in terms of points. Both Leeds United

and Burnley are on 94 points, with the former grabbing top spot by virtue of its superior goal difference. Leeds United : Under the managerial prowess of Daniel Farke, Leeds staged the ‘most’ successful campaign in club history with respect to points scored – 94. With just two games left to go, the club can make promotion to the PL even more sweet with the Championship title.

Burnley : The Claret’s have been struggling to stay up in the Premier League in recent seasons, given the fact that they earned promotion in 2023 and were relegated the very next year in 2024. However, under the guidance of Scott Parker, the side have once again earned promotion, and sit in second spot with 94 points. The third side is determined through a playoff round, in which the winner from spots 3 to 6 compete for promotion. With two games left for every side in the Championship, as things stand, Sheffield United & Sunderland (3rd and 4th) have a confirmed spot in the playoffs. The other two slots are up for grabs, with Bristol City, Coventry, Middlesbrough, Millwall, Blackburn Rovers, West Brom and Swansea all in the runniSouthampton : The club managed to win just 2 games all season and with just 11 points to their name, they set the ‘unwanted’ record of earliest Premer League relegation. The Saints also parted ways with manager Ivan Juric after failing to stay up in the Premier League.Leicester City : The Foxes became the second of the three sides to go down this season. With only five games to go, the side led by veteran Jamie Vardy in attack only managed a total of 4 wins throughout the campaign.Ipswich Town or West Ham United : Even though it is mathematically still possible for West Ham to be relegated, it is near inevitable that Ipswich Town are going down. Currently sat in 18th, Ipswich will need to win all their remaining matches, and score at least 20 goals to match West Ham’s (17th place) goal difference of -18.

‘Huge inspiration’: World record holder Armand Duplantis praises Neeraj Chopra’s impact on Indian sport



GNS News Agency, April 26

Pole vault world record holder and reigning Olympic champion Armand ‘Mondo’ Duplantis has heaped praise on India’s javelin superstar Neeraj Chopra, calling him a “huge inspiration” and crediting him with sparking a sporting revolution in India.Duplantis also reflected on his long-standing interactions with Chopra, who became India’s first Olympic gold medallist in athletics at Tokyo 2020. The Swedish superstar, widely regarded as one of the finest pole vaulters in history, expressed admiration not only for Chopra’s athletic prowess but also for his humility and influence.

“We’ve interacted quite a bit actually,” Duplantis said. “We met before and after the Tokyo Olympics, and even when he had that big viral moment and inspired the whole country of India, he was still the same guy, same nice, caring guy I met years back.”Their first meeting, Duplantis re-

called, was at the 2016 World Junior Championships, a competition that served as a springboard for both athletes. “He exploded on the scene there,” Duplantis said, noting that Chopra’s potential was evident even then.

Fastforward to the present, with both of them having earned Olympic gold and global acclaim, Duplantis reflected on how Chopra’s success has gone beyond just javelin. He’s a huge, huge inspiration. I love what he does. I think he’s a really talented and great athlete,” he said. “What he’s doing for sports in India is really an amazing thing.”Chopra’s Tokyo triumph (in 2021) catapulted him into stardom in India, and it started a revolution in track and field, and javelin in particular.Duplantis, who has redefined pole vaulting by consistently bettering his world record – his current one stand at 6.27 metres, knows the impact elite athletes can have beyond the field.Asked whether competing in India is on his bucket list, Duplantis said he wants to perform in the country rather than just make a courtesy visit.“I would love to, I’m trying. The goal is with, there’s like the Mandel Classic and my own pole vault competition that I have in Sweden, it would be really nice to branch out and to venture off into different areas and different places,” he said.“It definitely doesn’t just have to be in Europe. It could be in India, that would be amazing, I would love to. I still haven’t been yet. Unfortunately the way the schedule works out is a lot of my travel is competitions and what not.“So the best thing would be to just compete in India and be able to show the Indian people what I can do, and the most entertaining thing I do is definitely jump, not just talking. I would love to come, jump and experience the culture. That’s big-time bucket list.”

Meet Leon Luke Mendonca, the bespectacled smiling assassin of the 64 squares who plays violin

GNS News Agency, April 26

In just 14 moves, Ian Nepomniachtchi was reduced to frowning at his pieces like they were refusing to obey his commands. Things had curdled pretty fast for the Russian on the board in round 3 of the Grenke Freestyle Chess Open 2025. A few moves later, Nepo was pushed past the point of no return. On move 36, he resigned. Against a player who had over 100 rating points less than him. In the next round, it was Hungarian grandmaster Richard Rapport’s turn to endure punishment, and then heartbreak in the form of defeat.The player who had made two of the world’s top chess players roll over in back-to-back games was a 19-year-old grandmaster from India. Not one of the usual suspects of Gukesh, Praggnanandhaa and Arjun Erigaisi. The boy making heads turn at the Grenke Freestyle event over nine rounds was Leon Luke Mendonca, who is contemporary of the Gukesh-Praggnanandhaa-Arjun Erigaisi vintage, and was playing in his first event in freestyle chess — a variant of the sport that has been called by many practitioners as a completely different sport than plan ol’ regular chess.

With Leon’s rating at 2643, six of the nine players he faced in Karlsruhe were rated higher than him. Despite that, in those six games against higher-rated rivals, Leon had two wins over Nepo and Rapport besides three draws against elite grandmasters like Alexey Sarana, Wesley So and Maxime Vachier-Lagrave. At an event where he was 32nd in terms of ratings, he ended 10th in the final standings.

Leon Luke Mendonca takes on Ian Nepomniachtchi in a game at the Grenke Freestyle Chess Open 2025. (Screengrab from Freestyle Chess YouTube) Leon Luke Mendonca takes on Ian Nepomniachtchi in a game at the Grenke Freestyle Chess Open 2025. (Screengrab from Freestyle Chess YouTube)For the Goan prodigy, Karlsruhe has been a breakthrough event. The kind that makes the world sit up and take notice. He could have had this moment earlier this year: at the Tata Steel Masters in Wijk aan Zee; he had Vincent Keymer on the mat in the first round before a single blunder saw him lose. Shaken by that loss, Leon never recovered, ending 13th out of 14 players at Tata Steel with just one win.

But at Grenke Chess, the bespectacled boy with a constant smile on his face and a steady supply of Hawaiian shirts that would impress even Hikaru Nakamura, has enjoyed himself.“This variant is the best thing. I hope this is the future of chess. It kind of forces players to focus on their own skills rather than memorizing opening theory,” said Leon to the tournament’s YouTube handle right after beating Nepo. “It’s my first time playing a freestyle chess tournament. I signed up immediately without any hesitation when I found out that there was an open tournament.”

The making of MendoncaMany chess players who succeed have a one-dimensional approach to life: chess,



and not much else. Not Leon though, who plays the violin so well that he joined the choir of a church in Budapest for a few months when he and his father, Lyndon, were stranded there as the world abruptly shut down due to the coronavirus pandemic in early 2020.“Leon would play the violin and I’d play the guitar in the choir. Even though we were in Budapest for over a year during the pandemic, it was not that we really missed home. We were all alone initially, but we made friends who made us feel at home. Budapest became a second home for us.” Lyndon told The Indian Express earlier this year.One of those friends included a French boy who played basketball with Leon every day (“Leon needs an hour of sweat,” said Lyndon). Another ‘friend’ was chess legend Judit Polgar.

Lyndon says that Leon is the kind of boy who never complains about anything. The father is a bit of the same. During the conversation he casually mentioned how Leon has had no sponsors for a while, but immediately dismissed it as not an issue with a casual, “My wife and I put in all our savings. We chose this path because we always believed in letting our kids do what they love to do. We didn’t have these choices in our time.”Even while things were tough for both of them living abroad on a shoestring budget during the pandemic, not once did Leon grumble. Instead, he found other avenues to liven up the slow and dull COVID life. Like the violin. And basketball.Having left Leon’s regular violin back in India, Lyndon tracked down someone who was selling their old violin on the internet, and Leon ended up giving the boy a few chess lessons in exchange for his violin.When Leon became a grandmaster in late 2020, Lyndon received a text message from Viswanathan Anand asking if his son would be open to getting chess lessons from him at his new academy, WACA.“For me, that invitation was like when you go through a struggle, but there is light at the end of the tunnel. So, for me, this was light. This was like the greatest reward I could ever receive for all the sacrifices that we did: Anand himself inviting him to join his academy,” said Lyndon.

‘I don’t miss tennis because my body couldn’t give any more’: Rafael Nadal after Laureus Awards 2025 win

GNS News Agency, April 26

Rafael Nadal said he is at peace that he gave it all during his career on court. (Reuters)Rafael Nadal said he is at peace that he gave it all during his career on court.Tennis legend Rafael Nadal said that he did not miss his time on the court shortly after he was honoured with the prestigious Sporting Icon honour at the Laureus World Sports Award in Madrid on Monday.The Spaniard had hung up his boots last November after a Davis Cup tie in Malaga.“The truth is that I don’t miss tennis. Zero. I don’t miss it at all,” the 22-time Grand Slam winner told reporters.

“But not because I finished tired of tennis or fighting against tennis, not at all. I finished my career happy, and if I could have, I would have carried on, because I loved what I was doing. It was my passion, and that’s been the case all my life. It’s just that when you realise that physically you can’t do it any more... you try to close that chapter. And I closed it,” he added.Marred by a series of injuries, Nadal said he prolonged his career as much as possible by resisting the urge to retire.“I delayed making my final decision because I needed time to be sure it was the right one. What would have been hard was sitting on my sofa wondering if I should keep trying to play. When I saw that my body wasn’t going to recover to the level I needed to con-



“I delayed making my final decision because I needed time to be sure it was the right one. What would have been hard was sitting on my sofa wondering if I should keep trying to play. When I saw that my body wasn’t going to recover to the level I needed to continue enjoying myself on court, then I made the decision to stop,” the Spaniard said.

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Saif Ali Khan buys ‘holiday home’ in Qatar 3 months after stabbing incident, says ‘it’s very safe’



Saif Ali Khan buys property in Doha three months after stabbing incident in Mumbai. Saif Ali Khan buys property in Doha three months after stabbing incident in Mumbai. Saif Ali Khan is back to work three months after he was attacked inside his Bandra apartment by an intruder. The actor is busy promoting his next film, Kookie Gulati and Robbie Grewal's action thriller The Jewel Thief: The Heist Begins. He took time out from the promotions to attend a press event hosted by the Alfordan Group, where he revealed that he has bought a property at The St Regis Marsa Arabia Island, The Pearl, in Doha, Qatar.

“Think of a holiday home or a second home. There are a few things I think of. One is that it's not very far away and it's easily accessible. And then the other thing is, the most important thing is that it's very safe and it feels very good to be there,” said Saif. This comes three months after he was stabbed with a knife by an intruder inside his 12th floor apartment in upscale the Bandra area on January 16. “I had gone there to do some work, and I was shooting for something, and I stayed at the property, and I thought it was amazing, and there was something about the mixture of privacy and luxury that I really liked,” said Saif, adding, “The main thing really is that it's peaceful and secluded if that's the kind of thing you are looking for.” The actor said he's looking forward to visit the property with his family next, particularly his and wife Kareena Kapoor's sons Taimur Ali Khan and Jehangir Ali Khan. Besides the newly acquired Doha property, Saif also has homes in London and Gstaad. Back in India, besides the Bandra apartment, he often visits his ancestral property of Pataudi Palace in Haryana. After his stabbing incident, Saif had underwent emergency surgery at a private hospital and was discharged five days later. On January 19, the police arrested Shariful Islam (30) from neighbouring Thane. The knife fragment that got lodged near the actor's spine during the attack as well as a part found at the scene of crime have matched with the weapon recovered from the accused. Earlier this month, the police filed a chargesheet in a Mumbai court. The chargesheet, filed by the Bandra police, consists of evidence against the accused Bangladeshi national, Mohammad Shariful Islam. The police also said the offence was very “serious in nature” and “strong evidence” is available against the accused.

BR Chopra stood by Rahi Masoom Raza when Doordarshan questioned how a Muslim man could write the show, ‘It’s not Hindu or Muslim’

Many years ago, Aamir Khan hinted that he was keen on making Mahabharat for the big screen. It wasn't even an announcement but it prompted the trolls. The idea that a Muslim man wanted to make an epic that's sacred for the Hindus was too much for the naysayers. On Tuesday morning, Aamir reiterated his thoughts and said that he would want to make multiple films on the epic as the story is so vast that it can't be summarised in one film. 37 years ago, when BR Chopra made Mahabharat, he faced something similar because he hired a Muslim writer, Rahi Masoom Raza, to write the show. BR Chopra was considered to be one of the pioneers of the Indian film industry. He started making movies in the 1950s and with films like Naya Daur, Waqt, Dhool Ka Phool among many others under his banner BR Films. It was in the 1980s that Doordarshan approached him to make either Ramayan or Mahabharat as a television show, and he chose to make Mahabharat. “Every producer dreams of making Mahabharat. I also wanted to make it but I knew that you can't make it in a three hour film. If you want to make it, you have to make it in a long format, and the only option for that was television,” he shared in the ‘Making of Mahabharat’. Chopra believed that Mahabharat was a bigger challenge as compared to Ramayan as the latter was the story of what to do, and the former was the story of what not to do. Unlike Ramayan, which was seen as a collection of tales of morality, Mahabharat was perceived as a cautionary tale. This was a complex story that went on for generations and here, most characters weren't heroes or villains, but had traits of both. So when BR decided to make Mahabharat, he knew that the key was in the writing.

For the show to work, it was extremely essential that a lay person understood the chronology of events and not lose themselves in the hundreds of characters within the story. After the audience understood the interpersonal relationships, and who could broadly be classified as the ‘good’ and the ‘bad’ guys, the show needed something that could hold it all together and when BR found it with Rahi Masoom Raza, he knew this was the man for the job. In the ‘Making of Mahabharat’, as BR talked about every producer's life-long dream of making Mahabharat, he shared that they knew that they needed a narrator for every episode to set context for the events. After much back and forth, when Rahi came up with the now classic lines ‘Main samay hoon’, and announced that ‘Samay (Time)’ would be the narrator of every episode, BR said an instant yes. “All the restrictions that a Muslim man will write a Hindu story... People think of this as a Hindu story. We don't think so but any-



way... Everything just went out of the window. The way he wrote it, we signed him,” he said. Rahi knew that he could present this story in a “contemporary” way and get people to relate to it.

But, as one would have expected, there was strong opposition to Rahi's inclusion in the writing team. When Doordarshan saw the plan of episodes submitted by BR Films, they were largely satisfied by what they were seeing but they were blunt enough to ask BR Chopra how a Muslim man would write the show. His daughter-in-law Renu, in an earlier appearance on Kapil Sharma's show, recalled his conversation with Doordarshan and shared, “Dad said Mahabharat isn't Hindu or Muslim, it is the story of every family. There is dispute in every family. Every house should have a Mahabharat so people know what they should not be doing. If Rahi saab is asked to leave, then I will walk out as well.” In a 1990 interview with India Today, Rahi opened up about the threats he had received and expressed his shock wondering, “Am I not an Indian?” When asked if “Hindu fundamentalist groups” had threatened him, Rahi said, “I'm hurt and amazed at the furore created about a Muslim writing the script. Am I not an Indian? The Vishwa Hindu Parishad did write a letter, to which I replied. They later sent an apology. The threats don't worry me.”

What Rahi Masoom Raza created with Mahabharat is still seen as a benchmark in storytelling. The visual effects, the costumes and the aesthetic of the Doordarshan show might be dated but the central storyline, which was simplified by the Rahi so it could be understood by the masses, continues to inspire many, including Aamir Khan. It is yet to be seen if Aamir actually gets down to making his Mahabharat because whenever he does so, his films will be compared to what BR Chopra made in 1988.



tire from her once-promising shooting career. She later joined the police force and now works in the special team alongside Dong-ju. Interestingly, her ex-boyfriend Jong-hyeon, played by Lee Sang-yi, is also part of the same team. Spice Up Our Love and No Gain No Love star Lee Sang-yi plays silver medalist Kim Jong-hyeon in the show. Formerly a fencer, Jong-hyeon works hard to graduate from the police academy, driven by his desire to reunite with his former girlfriend, Han-na. Heo Sung-tae, known for his roles in Squid Game and Decoy, plays team leader Ko Man-sik. Finally,

Sunil Dutt would spend entire nights next to Nargis’ grave, was a ‘broken man’ after her death: ‘He started drinking, we were scared’



Former politician Priya Dutt, the daughter of Sunil Dutt and Nargis, spoke about the difficulties they experienced when she was diagnosed with cancer. Nargis died at the age of 51 in 1981, mere days before Sanjay Dutt's acting debut. Her death left Sunil Dutt a ‘broken man’, she said in an interview, recalling how he spiralled into grief, and the incident that brought him out of it. She said that Sunil stopped looking after himself, and took to alco-

hol to cope with the loss. But one day, he realised that his children needed him to be present, and he made the decision to get his life back on track.

This was also when Sanjay was seeking solace in drugs; his addiction would lead to several more years of turbulence for the family. In an interview with Vickey Lalwani, Priya said that Nargis went through hell during her treatment in the United States, but insisted upon returning to India when she felt that the end was nigh. “Our lives changed hugely. A little more than a year later, my father was a completely broken man. We were scared for him. What is he going to do? He used to wake up at 3 or 4 in the morning, and go to the kabristan, and just sit there alone. He couldn't sleep at night, he couldn't work, he couldn't do anything,” she said.

Priya said that one night, she looked at the sky and spotted a star. She told her father that Nargis was looking over them, and protecting them from harm. This triggered something inside Sunil, and he changed overnight into a completely different man. “He was pulled back into reality, and he did a 360 degree turn. He threw out all his cigarettes, every alcohol bottle in the house was thrown out. He'd started drinking. But he cleared up everything overnight. And then, he went on a mission to focus on his kids,” she said. In the same interview, Priya said that her father honoured her mother's wishes to be buried, even though others were telling him to have her cremated. Sanjay also took a few years to re-emerge from his addiction, and what triggered him to change was voice recordings of Nargis; messages that she had left behind for him while undergoing treatment for cancer.

Suniel Shetty calls granddaughter Evaarah ‘Athiya 2.0’; reveals he wants to experience with her all that he missed out on with his kids: ‘I was constantly working’

Mentioning that he and his wife, Mana Shetty, had been fancying having a grandchild for quite some time now, Suniel Shetty stated that being in her presence is the best feeling in the world. Bollywood star Suniel Shetty's daughter Athiya Shetty and her husband, cricketer KL Rahul, became parents to a baby girl, Evaarah, last month.

While many of his contemporaries are going all out to find their voice in the evolving cinema landscape and fit in somehow, Suniel Shetty is busy with the real-life role of “nana” (maternal grandfather) that he took on recently. After his daughter Athiya Shetty and husband, Indian cricketer KL Rahul, welcomed a baby girl last month, Suniel and family are on cloud nine, soaking in the experience of raising a little one all over again.

Mentioning that he and his wife, Mana Shetty, had been fancying having a grandchild for quite some time now, Suniel recently attested that being in her presence is the best feeling in the world. Dubbing it as a “feeling of bliss”, the actor also maintained that he had never experienced something bigger or better than being nana to Evaarah. Sharing that, even at the peak of his career, returning home after hectic schedules filled him with immense joy, Suniel Shetty maintained that the excitement factor has only increased since they welcomed Evaarah into their lives. “Now I want to do everything with my granddaughter that I probably missed out on with Athiya and my son Ahan because I was constantly working. Evaarah is Athiya 2.0 for me,” he said during a chat with Times of India.

The actor is currently busy filming for the much-an-



tipated Priyadarshan directorial Hera Pheri 3, which will mark his reunion with Akshay Kumar and Paresh Rawal. In the movie, all three of them will reprise their respective roles from the comedy blockbuster Hera Pheri (2000) and its sequel Phir Hera Pheri (2006). Opining that only they are equipped to play these characters, Suniel also stated that besides their looks and get-ups, nothing has changed between them in the past 25 years. Last seen in Nadaaniyan, Suniel Shetty also has the much-hyped Welcome To The Jungle in the pipeline.

Apoorva Mukhija aka Rebel Kid says she lost her home, show, and brand deals amid India’s Got Latent row; launches new series



Just weeks after dropping a 35-minute video apologizing for her comments on the now-infamous India's Got Latent episode, digital creator Apoorva Mukhija — better known as The Rebel Kid — has returned with another emotional update. In a new Instagram reel, she reflects on the backlash that followed, the accusations of “playing the victim card,” and how she's trying to rebuild after what she calls a deeply “dehumanising” experience.

The reel features Apoorva narrating parts of her journey, accompanied by a voiceover that outlines the choices she felt she had after the controversy exploded. “One was to stand up and expose everyone who was wrong,” she says, but admits that would have been futile. Another was to give up completely, be depressed and cry all day. And... she chose that one. What followed, she explains, was a personal and professional unravelling. She lost her home, her show, brand partnerships, and faced a tidal wave of public scrutiny. “I thought things couldn't get any worse... but they did,” the voiceover says. Yet amid the chaos,

Apoorva found one thing she held on to — hope. The reel marks the launch of a new video series titled Finding Happiness Again, which will chronicle her journey toward self-discovery, resilience, and healing. Each episode will document personal milestones and life lessons. “So while everything was falling apart, I went on a quest to find myself,” she says, urging viewers to “follow along.”

For those unfamiliar, Apoorva was one of the judges on comedian Samay Raina's now-deleted show India's Got Latent, which faced heavy backlash for a segment that was widely criticized for a comment by YouTuber Ranveer Allahabadi. Following public outrage, the show was taken down from YouTube, FIRs were filed, and investigations launched. The fallout reportedly forced Apoorva to vacate her home and face a barrage of online and offline consequences.

Kartik Aaryan transforms into an Ichhadaari Naag in fantasy thriller 'Naagzilla'

Mumbai: Actor Kartik Aaryan is all set to take a mythical leap as he transforms into an ichchhadhari naag in ‘Naagzilla,’ an upcoming fantasy entertainer backed by Dharma Productions. Blending Indian folklore with modern storytelling, the film promises a never-before-seen avatar of the actor as he steps into the world of shape-shifting serpents and supernatural intrigue.

On Tuesday, Kartik took to his Instagram to announce the film and shared the first-look poster for the upcoming thriller. In the caption, he wrote, “I've seen many human stories, now watch a story of naags. #Naagzilla – Naag lok ka Pehla Kaand... Fun phailaane Aa raha hu main, Preyamvadeshwar Pyare Chand... Naag Panchami par aapke nazdeeki SsSsinemas mein. 4 August 2026 ko.”