

## Student raped by two including friend in Bachupally

Hyderabad: A student was allegedly raped by two youths including her friend in Bachupally.

The 20-year-old woman who is a biomedical final year student from Chennai was brought to the city by her friend Ajay with a promise of arranging her an internship in a pharma firm here.As per available information, accommodation was arranged for her in a ladies' hostel in Kukatpally. Recently, on May 4, she was called by Ajay for a party in his friend Hari's flat in Rajiv Gruhakalpa in Nizampet.The young woman went to the room, where she was allegedly served liquor and after she fell unconscious, Ajay and Hari raped her.

## Cyberabad police recover stolen, lost mobile phones worth Rs. 95 lakh

Hyderabad: The Cyberabad Police have recovered a total of 310 mobile phones worth Rs 95 lakh, which were either stolen or lost in the last one month.The phones were recovered by the law and order police and other wings using the Central Equipment Identity Register (CEIR) portal. The recovered phones were handed over to their owners at an event held at the Cyberabad Police Commissionerate on Monday.DCP (Crimes) LC Naik highlighted how important were mobile phones in today's time and they can be misused if fallen into the hands of thieves. "Despite many people being educated, few are aware of how to prevent stolen mobiles from being misused.

## BJP to Launch Nationwide Tiranga Yatra from May 13 Following Operation Sindoor Success



GNS News Agency, May 12

New Delhi: Following the successful execution of Operation Sindoor in response to the deadly terrorist attack in Pahalgam, Jammu and Kashmir, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) has announced a nationwide Tiranga

Yatra to raise awareness about the operation and its significance. The military operation, which targeted nine terrorist hideouts in Pakistan and led to the elimination of around 100 militants, was a direct response to the tragic loss of 26 civilian lives in the Pahalgam attack on April 22.On Monday, BJP president JP Nadda chaired a meeting with national general secretaries to discuss the progress of Operation Sindoor, its outcomes, and the party's strategy moving forward. As part of the party's efforts to engage with the public, it was decided that the Tiranga Yatra will take place from May 13 to May 23. The 10-day campaign aims to inform citizens about the achievements of Operation Sindoor, while promoting unity and patriotism.

Senior BJP leaders, including Sambit Patra, Vinod Tawde, and Tarun Chugh, will coordinate the initiative, with senior party figures and ministers taking the lead in different regions across the country.Sambit Patra, speaking on

behalf of the party, lauded Prime Minister Modi for fulfilling his promise to punish the perpetrators of the Pahalgam attack. Patra noted that Operation Sindoor had resulted in the destruction of nine terrorist hideouts, the deaths of over 100 terrorists, and significant losses for Pakistan, including the loss of 50 soldiers and strategic assets like 11 airports.He emphasized that the operation was a manifestation of India's new approach to combating terrorism, underlined by a commitment to strike at the heart of terrorist activities, regardless of borders. Patra further remarked that India's decisive military action had garnered global support, particularly from Islamic countries like Saudi Arabia and the UAE, while Pakistan had been increasingly isolated internationally.The BJP believes Operation Sindoor has marked a turning point in India's counter-terrorism strategy, demonstrating that no part of Pakistan is beyond India's reach. The party's announcement of the Tiranga Yatra reflects its intent to both celebrate this success and unite the nation in its resolve against terrorism.

## PM Modi chairs high-level meeting ahead of India, Pakistan DGMOs talk

GNS News Agency, May 12Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday (May 12, 2025) chaired a high-level meeting, which included Defence Minister Rajnath Singh and External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar, ahead of a scheduled talks between the DGMOs of India and Pakistan.NSA Ajit Doval, Chief of Defence Staff General Anil Chauhan and all three service chiefs were among those who attended the meeting.Mr. Modi has been chairing regular meetings with the top government functionaries involved in the country's military and diplomatic response to the Pahalgam terror attack of April 22.India and Pakistan on Saturday (May 10, 2025) last announced reaching an understanding to stop all firings and military actions on land, air and sea, with immediate effect.

Directors General of Military Operations (DGMOs)-level talks between India and Pakistan are set to be held on Monday, May 12, 2025.

## Kohli officially announces retirement from Test cricket



GNS News Agency, May 12

Hyderabad: Virat Kohli put an end to all speculation by formally announcing his retirement from Test cricket on Monday.Kohli, arguably one of India's greatest cricketers ever, said that it had been 14 years since he first wore the baggy blue in Test cricket.

"Honestly, I never imagined the journey this format would take me on. It's tested me, shaped me, and taught me lessons I'll carry for life," Kohli said."There's something deeply personal about playing in whites. The quiet grind, the long days, the small moments that no one sees but that stay with you forever," he said."As I step away from this format, it's not easy – but it feels right. I've given it everything I had, and it's given me back so much more than I could've hoped for.I'm walking away with a heart full of gratitude for the game, for the people I shared the field with, and for every single person who made me feel seen along the way. I'll always look back at my Test career with a smile," he said. For the record, Kohli played 123 Tests, including 68 as captain and scored 9230 runs at an average of 46.85.

## Our fight against terrorism, pity that Pakistan chose to intervene for terrorists: Air Marshal AK Bharti

GNS News Agency, May 12

New Delhi: India on Monday reiterated that Operation Sindoor was a targeted response against terrorism and its support infrastructure, lamenting that Pakistan chose to stand with terrorists rather than remain neutral, prompting a necessary military retaliation."We have also reiterated that our fight was against terrorism and their support infrastructure and not with the Pakistan military. However, it is a pity that the Pakistani military chose to intervene and that for terrorists, which compelled us to respond," said Director of Air Operations Air Marshal A.K. Bharti, Director General Air Operations, during a joint DGMO press briefing.He clarified that India's strikes on May 7 targeted only terrorist hideouts, but Pakistan's direct military



support to the terrorists turned the situation into an avoidable confrontation."Whatever damage they suffered, they are solely responsible for it," Air Marshal Bharti said, asserting that India's defence systems "stood like a wall," preventing enemy breaches.

He highlighted the stellar performance of India's indigenous air defence ecosystem, especially the Akash missile system, in

intercepting and neutralising threats."Waves of drones and unmanned combat aerial vehicles employed by Pakistan were thwarted by indigenously developed soft and hard kill counter-UAS systems," he added.Officials also confirmed that Chinese and Turkish-made drones and PL-15 missiles were intercepted before breaching Indian airspace.Lieutenant General Ghai shared video evidence of an Indian strike

that created a crater at Pakistan's Noor Khan airbase, while affirming that all Indian airfields remain fully functional and operational.The synergy across India's military services, the support of other security forces like the Border Security Force (BSF), and the backing of India's 140 crore citizens were described as the backbone of the country's robust response."Our battle-proven systems stood the test of time.

The integrated, multi-layered air defence shield has become impregnable -- thanks to the budgetary and policy support provided by the government over the past decade," Air Marshal Bharti said.He affirmed that India's focus remains firmly on combating terrorism, and that military action was forced upon the country only by Pakistan's decision to shield those responsible for cross-border terror.



GNS News Agency, May 12

Hyderabad: BRS MLC K Kavitha firmly rebutted the targeted misinformation campaign against her, asserting that her focus remains on strengthening the party.On her recent vocal support for 'Samajika Telangana' (social justice in Telangana), she stated that she was only reflecting the voices of people she met during her tour of 47 constituencies and the prevailing conditions in the State.In an informal interaction with media here, Kavitha said people's trust in the BRS is growing and hence, deliberate attempts were being made to spread falsehoods about her. She ridiculed the rumourmongers who are alleging that there was an internal rift in the party leadership.

"Isn't it enough that I was made to suffer in jail for six months? Do you want to make me suffer more?" she asked the peddlers of misinformation.She stated that she was aware of those spreading rumours against her with malicious intentions and vowed to expose them at appropriate time."When the time comes, everything will come out. I hope the party responds to this misinformation," she remarked. She warned to respond with greater force and intensity if provoked any further.

## India Pakistan ceasefire understanding: DGMO-level talks conclude

GNS News Agency, May 12

The two military officials deliberated on various aspects of the understanding reached between the two sides on May 10 on stopping military actions and firings, it is learnt.The two countries agreed on the understanding after three days of intense military hostilities since May 7, when Operation Sindoor commenced.

The talks over the hotline were previously scheduled at 12 noon. However, it started at around 5 p.m. The outcome of the talks is not yet known.On



Sunday (May 11, 2025), Directors General of the three services addressed a press briefing regarding Operation Sindoor. DGMO Lt. Gen. Rajiv Ghai warned Pakistan that it will pay a very heavy

price if it resorted to any misadventure.The officials, after the announcement of ceasefire asserted that the decision to stop military actions was bilaterally agreed between India and Pakistan

and that the initiation of this "understanding" would not affect several recent punitive decisions that India has taken targeting Pakistan after the deadly terrorist attack in Pahalgam on April 22.Since the beginning of Operation Sindoor, several international stakeholders have reached out to India and Pakistan calling for de-escalation, but India has officially maintained that the two sides had not severed diplomatic contacts as both countries continued to host each other's diplomatic missions despite escalating military clashes.

## Flight operations resume at 32 airports closed due to India-Pakistan



GNS News Agency, May 12

Airports Authority of India (AAI) on Monday (May 12, 2025) announced that civilian flight operations will resume at 32 airports that were temporarily shut last week in view of the military standoff between India and Pakistan.Security measures were enhanced, and at least 32 airports in northern and western parts of the country were temporarily shut in view of the conflict.On Saturday, India and Pakistan reached an understanding to stop all firings and military actions on land, air and sea with immediate effect.

In a statement on Monday, state-owned AAI said the 32 airports that were closed for civilian aircraft operations till 0529 hours of May 15 are now available for operations with immediate effect.Flight services restored at 32 airports amid easing tensions between India and Pakistan

"It is recommended for travellers to check flight status directly with Airlines and monitor airlines' websites for regular updates," the statement said.Civilian flight operations from the 32 airports across northern and western India, including Srinagar and Amritsar, were suspended from May 9 to May 15.

## All military bases, systems remain fully operational: DG Air Operations



GNS News Agency, May 12

India on Monday said all its military bases and systems continue to remain fully operational and ready to undertake any mission if the need arises.At a press briefing in New Delhi, Director General of Air Operations, IAF, Air Marshal A.K. Bharti said India's robust air defence system effectively thwarted Pakistani attempts to target Indian installations.Another highlight was stellar performance of indigenous air defence weapons like Akash system, he said.The Integrated Air Command and Control system thwarted Pakistan's military offensives.

"Our fight was against terror infrastructure and terrorists but the Pakistan military chose to support terrorists and widened the conflict," the top IAF officer said.The Indian Army said earlier this morning, "The night remained largely peaceful across Jammu and Kashmir and other areas along the International Border"."No incidents have been reported, marking the first calm night in recent days," it said in a statement.India launched Operation Sindoor on early May 7 to destroy nine terror infrastructures in Pakistan and Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK) in retaliation to the Pahalgam terror attack.All subsequent retaliations to Pakistani offensives were carried out under 'Operation Sindoor'.India and Pakistan on Saturday (May 10, 2025) last announced reaching an understanding to stop all firings and military actions on land, air and sea, with effect from 5 p.m. that day.

GNS News Agency, May 12

Hyderabad: The BRS leaders paid rich tributes to former Minister Nayani Narasimha Reddy on his 85th birth anniversary at Telangana Bhavan on Monday. They recalled his role in Telangana statehood movement and his contribution to people of Hyderabad.BRS working president KT Rama Rao recalled Narasimha Reddy's commitment to the Telangana statehood movement in 1969 and later, since 2001, throughout the statehood movement. He remembered the latter's dynamic tenure as the State's first Home Minister. "Even at 70, Nayani garu worked with the enthusiasm of a young man. As a Minister, his role in withdrawing false cases during the agitation will always be remembered," he said.Describing him as a leader who prioritised workers' rights over personal gain, Rama Rao said Narasimha Reddy was the founder member of BRS who stood like a brother



with the party chief K Chandrashekhara Rao.



# Indian Chronicle

English Daily

## IPL suspended at last

THE Indian Premier League (IPL), the biggest cash cow in world cricket, has finally been suspended amid escalation in India-Pakistan hostilities. The decision was taken hours after Thursday's match in Dharamsala was called off midway following air raid alerts in neighbouring cities of Jammu and Pathankot. It's unpardonable that the match was allowed to begin in the first place, considering the increasingly volatile situation after the launch of Operation Sindoor. The security of everyone who was present there — players, officials, spectators, etc — was brazenly compromised. It was a huge lapse for which the IPL organisers and the local administration owe an explanation. A floodlit stadium with thousands inside could have been an ideal target for Pakistani drones; it's hard to imagine the scale of the tragedy that could have happened. Moreover, the evacuation led to chaos outside the stadium, with blinding car lights making a mockery of the blackout. War clouds were looming large after the April 22 Pahalgam terror attack, but it remained business as usual in the IPL, which is organised by the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) — one of the richest sports boards in the world. Matches continued to be held with trademark fanfare in packed stadiums, disregarding not only the pandemic anger and grief over the massacre but also the border tensions that were worsening by the day. Unfortunately, this is not the first time that the BCCI has allowed commercial interests to override safety concerns for as long as possible. In 2021, IPL matches continued for four weeks even as cases of Covid-19 infections and deaths rose alarmingly across the country in April. It was decided to postpone the tournament only in the first week of May after several players and support staff tested positive for coronavirus. Sport is one of the most popular modes of entertainment in India and abroad, but it is insensitive and criminally negligent to organise matches when an armed conflict or a pandemic is raging.

**OPPO F29 Series records strong market response; achieves 28% sales growth from Andhra Pradesh during first sale**



Andhra Pradesh :OPPO India is thrilled to announce the remarkable success of its newly launched F29 Series, which has received an outstanding market response. During its first 21-day sale period in Andhra Pradesh, the F29 Series experienced a 28% sales growth over the OPPO F27 Pro+, underscoring its growing popularity and strong demand in the region. OPPO F29 Series: Designed for India, Built for Tough Challenges

The OPPO F29 Series is crafted for India's growing gig economy, catering to drivers, delivery partners, home-service professionals, and small business owners. Combining military-grade toughness, advanced connectivity, and long-lasting battery power, the F29 Series is engineered to take on any challenge in a slim, stylish design. Engineered for India, Tested for India

The F29 Series offers industry-leading dust and liquid protection, tested in India's diverse climates, from Kerala's monsoons to Rajasthan's heat. With IP66, IP68, and IP69 ratings, it withstands powerful water jets, submersion in water, and high-pressure, high-temperature water exposure—making it ideal for industrial workers and those in extreme weather conditions. After water exposure, it even emits a pulsating sound to drain water from the speaker. Tested in India by SGS (Société Générale de Surveillance), Bengaluru, against the highest IP66, IP68, and IP69 standards, the F29 Series is the toughest smartphone in its segment. F29 Series takes liquid resistance even further to offer enhanced protection against heavy rain, river water, hot springs, daily spills from juice, tea, milk, coffee, beer, household liquids such as steam, dishwasher, detergent, and even exposure to ice water, cleaning foam, and muddy water. And after submersion, it emits a unique pulsating sound to drain water from the speaker.

Additionally, when it comes to network, the OPPO F29 Series has also set a new benchmark in network connectivity, verified by Jio, to showcase one of the best 5G performances. Based on Jio's testing, OPPO F29 series has stood out as one of the best devices for network in the INR 20K – INR 30K price segment. The F29 Series has introduced OPPO's exclusive Hunter Antenna Architecture, boosting signal strength by 300%. Its symmetrical antenna layout ensures minimal signal loss, offering stable connectivity even in remote areas, highways, and basement parking. TÜV Rheinland certification guarantees reliable network performance. Slim, Powerful, and Efficient Despite its durability, the F29 Series is slim and lightweight. The F29 is 7.65mm thin, while the F29 Pro is just 7.55mm thin, featuring an impressive display with a 120Hz refresh rate. Ultra Volume Mode ensures audio clarity even in noisy environments, and Hands-Free Mode auto-switches to speakerphone.

## MY Bharat invites youth to enroll as Civil Defence Volunteers

GNS News Agency, May 12

Hyderabad: MY Bharat, Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports, Government of India, is actively mobilising youth across the country to enrol as MY Bharat Civil Defence Volunteers.

This nationwide call is part of a concerted effort to empower young citizens to take up vital roles in national cause, particularly during emergencies and crisis. The initiative aims to build a well-trained, responsive, and resilient volunteer force that can complement civil administration in times of natural disasters, accidents, public emergencies, and other unforeseen situations. a press release said.

## Ganesh Housing unveils the visionary Million Minds Tech City at the ‘Gujarat IT/ITES Policy 2022-27 Roadshow’ held in Hyd



Hyderabad: Ganesh Housing Corporation Limited, in partnership with the Government of Gujarat and the Department of Science and Technology, successfully hosted the third roadshow for the Gujarat IT/ITES Policy 2022-27 in Hyderabad. Organized in association with ASSOCHAM, the event at Hyderabad received a phenomenal response, attracting over 200 leading IT and ITes companies from across India. It showcased Gujarat's transformative initiatives and policies while introducing Ganesh Housing's flagship project, Million Minds Tech City, to Hyderabad's tech network.

The highlight of the roadshow was the unveiling of Million Minds Tech City, an ambitious project by Ganesh Housing Corporation Limited that promises to revolutionize the technology landscape of Gujarat.

The event was graced by distinguished speakers including Mr Srikanth Badiga, Past-Chairman, ASSOCHAM

Telangana State Development Council and Group Director, Phoenix Group & Chairman, EPCES, Ministry of Commerce and Industry, Government of India along with speakers Ms Mona Khandhar, IAS Principal Secretary Department of Science and Technology, Government of Gujarat, Ms. Kavita Rakesh Shah, IAS Director - Directorate of ICT & e-Governance, Government of Gujarat, Shri Sandip Shah, Head-IFSC Department, GIFT CITY, Mr Rambabu Boorugu Convenor, IT & ITES – ASSOCHAM Telangana State Development Council and Executive Director & CTO, Pranava Group as well as Shri Viren Mehta - President, Ganesh Housing Corporation Limited along with prominent industry leaders, policymakers, and senior officials from the Government of Gujarat. The engaging sessions provided insights on the various incentives offered under the Gujarat IT/ITES Policy 2022-27, positioning the state as an emerging technology hub. Commenting on the event, Mr. Anmol Patel, Director of Ganesh Housing Corporation Limited, expressed his enthusiasm: “Hyderabad is rapidly emerging as India's next major IT hub, with several leading tech companies establishing their presence in the city. With this momentum, it was a strategic decision to engage stakeholders here and present the value proposition of our Million Minds Tech City. We are truly honoured by the overwhelming response to the Hyderabad roadshow. The strong commitment shown by industry leaders and stakeholders in Telangana underscores the transformative potential of the Gujarat IT/ITES and GCC Policies in driving digital innovation, nurturing talent, and enabling infrastructure-led growth. We firmly believe that these roadshows are paving the way for meaningful collaborations and long-term investments that will help reshape India's technology landscape.”

## Dollars Diwakar Reddy's Supporters Celebrate His Appointment as TUDA Chairman



““May 12, Indian Chronicle Rayalaseema coordinator””Following the state government's appointment of Dollars Diwakar Reddy, Chairman of Dollars Group and Executive Secretary of the Telugu Desam Party (TDP), as the Chairman of the Tirupati Urban Development Authority (TUDA), his supporters organized large-scale celebratory events. “Ramesh, the ITDP Tiruchanoor President and 10th Ward Member, stated that this appointment once again proves TDP's commitment to supporting those who work hard for the party. “As part of the celebrations, under the leadership of Ramesh, 1116 coconuts were offered at the Alipiri Padala Mandapam on Monday as a form of gratitude and fulfillment of vows. Additionally, significant Annadanam (food donation) programs were organized at the RUIA Hospital and the Indiramma Housing Colony in Daminadu. “Speaking on the occasion, Ramesh expressed his joy over their leader Dollars Diwakar Reddy, who is always at the forefront of social service, being appointed as the TUDA Chairman. He lauded Chief Minister Nara



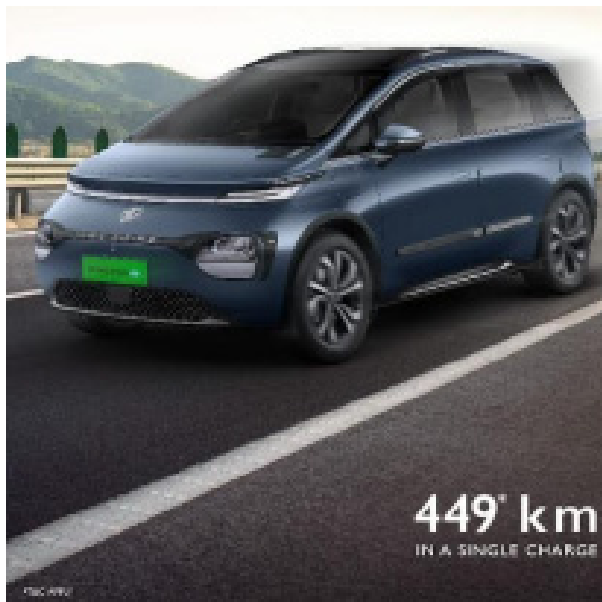
Chandrababu Naidu and IT Minister Nara Lokesh for consistently prioritizing deserving party workers. He further wished that Diwakar Reddy would attain even higher positions in the future. “Approximately 600 underprivileged individuals benefited from the Annadanam event. The program witnessed the participation of Markondaiah, Dollars Groups Supervisor Somu, Sheshu, Venu, Raju, Girish, Meghanath, Vijay, RJ Youth, and many other supporters.

## Kakarlappalli Dalits Petition Collector for Allotment of Government Land



““PS Ashokan”Indian Chronicle “Manthani, May 12. ““A group of Dalit residents from Kakarlappalli village in Manthani mandal called on the District Collector on Monday during the Prajavani grievance redressal programme, seeking the allotment of government ceiling land adjacent to Reddy Cheruvu. ““In a formal representation, the petitioners urged the district administration to allocate 16 acres of land located within the Manthani revenue jurisdiction to eligible and landless Dalit families. They contended that the said parcel of land, despite being earmarked in official ceiling land

**MG Windsor PRO secures 8,000 Bookings within 24 Hours of Launch**  
**The Ex-Showroom price of the MG Windsor PRO is now INR 18,09,800**



Hyderabad:JSW MG Motor India today announced that its recently introduced Windsor PRO has secured 8,000 bookings within 24 hours of its launch. The car will now be available at a BaaS price of INR 13.09L + INR 4.5/km. and Ex-Showroom price of INR 18,09,800.

Commenting on the MG Windsor PRO booking milestone, Rakesh Sen, Head of Sales, JSW MG Motor India, said, “We are grateful for the overwhelming response to the MG Windsor PRO. Within just 24 hours of opening bookings, we have received 8,000 reservations—an achievement that underscores the enduring popularity of the MG Windsor and further strengthens its position as a frontrunner in India's EV landscape. The introduction of the MG Windsor PRO is not just a milestone, but a significant step towards shaping India's more sustainable and technology-driven automotive future. This reaffirms our commitment to innovation and our mission to accelerate the adoption of 4W EVs across the country.”

The new MG Windsor PRO, offered in the single Essence PRO variant, comes with a larger 52.9 kWh battery pack, offering a certified range of 449\* km. It delivers 136 PS of power and 200 Nm of instant torque, ensuring a powerful and efficient driving experience. The car is equipped with Level 2 Advanced Driver Assistance Systems (ADAS) with 12 major features and 3 levels of warning, always ensuring the safety of its passengers. The MG Windsor PRO also features new tech features, including Vehicle-to-Load (V2L) and Vehicle-to-Vehicle (V2V), enhancing its connectivity and convenience. In addition, the Windsor PRO now features a powered tailgate and is available in three new vibrant colour options: Celadon Blue, Aurora Silver, and Glaze Red, adding a touch of style to its design.

About JSW MG Motor India

SAIC Motor, a global Fortune 500 company with a presence in over 100 countries and JSW Group (India's leading conglomerate with interests across B2B and B2C sectors) formed a joint venture - JSW MG Motor India Pvt. Ltd. in 2023. The joint venture aims to build an innovative and sustainable automotive ecosystem while continuing to stay focused on developing a diverse portfolio of vehicles to give car buyers better access to advanced technologies and futuristic products with attractive value propositions. JSW MG Motor India Pvt. Ltd. is committed to introducing world-class technology, strengthening the manufacturing landscape, best of innovation across its business operations, and generating significant employment opportunities through extensive localization.

## Youth Dies in Tragic Tractor Mishap”



PS Ashokan”Indian Chronicle”Manthani May,12”“A heart-wrenching incident took place in Maidambanda village of Mutharam mandal, where a 10th-grade student lost his life in a tractor accident during his summer vacation. ““As per details shared by Mutharam Sub-Inspector Gopati Naresh, the deceased, Mallesh, was the younger son of Pandula Mogili, a resident of Maida Panta village. Mogili has two sons—Shravan and Mallesh—and a married daughter. Mallesh was pursuing his Class 10 studies. ““During the summer holidays, Mallesh had accompanied his close relative, Pandula Shekhar, to the local paddy procurement center for a casual visit. While workers were loading paddy sacks onto a tractor owned by Nimmala Kumar, the vehicle unexpectedly began to move. In an attempt to stop it, Mallesh slipped and was tragically run over by the tractor, resulting in his instant death. ““Following a complaint lodged by the boy's father, the police have registered a case and launched an investigation, SI Naresh confirmed.

## Mahesh Babu expected to appear before ED

Hyderabad: Telugu actor Mahesh Babu is expected to appear before the Enforcement Directorate (ED) officials on Monday in connection with the money laundering investigation involving Hyderabad-based real estate firms Sai Surya Developers and the Surana Group. The ED is probing the allegations that these companies defrauded homebuyers by selling unauthorised plots and failing to deliver on promised projects. Mahesh Babu, who is their brand ambassador, had endorsed several of their ventures and for which he had reportedly received Rs 5.9 crore remuneration for his promotional work. Of the payment, it is alleged that Rs 2.5 crore was paid in cash, which now is under scrutiny by the ED.







# Prajavani applications should be resolved quickly“—



## Additional Collector Sampath Rao received 53 complaints in Prajavani

“Mulugu, Mahipal, Indian Chronicle: District Collector G. Sampath Rao has instructed the concerned officials to give high priority to the applications received in the Prajavani program and resolve them quickly. Additional Collector Sampath Rao, who received complaints from the public at the grievance program organized at the Collectorate on Monday, made several suggestions. Speaking on the occasion, the Additional Collector said that people are approaching Prajavani seeking solutions to their problems and their applications should be resolved quickly. He also ordered that pending applications on the Prajavani portal should

be resolved. He said that the complainants should be informed about the stage of their application. He said that there should be no roaming around the offices and transparency should be maintained. Out of the 53 applications received in the Prajavani program, the highest number of applications were received - 16 related to land issues, 8 related to the housing department, 2 related to pensions and 27 related to other departments. They were ordered to immediately transfer them to the concerned authorities and resolve them. Various district level officials, revenue staff, and others participated in this program.

# Nancharamma Jatara in Mulugu district“



- Thousands of devotees gathered “- Statue installed amidst Vedic chanting “- Telangana Jagruti president Kavitha and Bhupalapalli MLA Gandra Satyanarayana Rao participated in the pujas

““Mulugu, Mahipal, Indian Chronicle: The Nancharamma Jatara of Erukala was held in a grand manner in Ramanujapuram, Venkatapur mandal, Mulugu district on Monday. This Jatara, which is held every year on the full moon day of Vaisakha, was held on Monday morning from Lakshmidivipet village, as per the Erukala custom, with kolata groups and dappu chappulas. After paying obeisances to the village deities in Ramanujapur village, devotees gathered under the leadership of Lokini Raju, the state president of Telangana Adivasi Erukala Sangam, and the Nancharamma idol was installed with the chanting of Vedic scholars. Telangana Jagruti State President Kalvakuntla Kavitha attended the program and paid obeisance. Women dressed as Nancharamma offered obeisance to Kavitha. People from the Erukala caste who had come from four states as well as the people of the villages paid obeisance to Nancharamma. Later, Bhupalapalli MLA Gandra Satyanarayana Rao paid obeisance to Nancharamma. Manupati Samamurthy and Bijili Ramaiah offered food donations at the Nancharamma temple. ““- I came for the self-respect of the Erukala: Telangana Jagruti State President Kalvakuntla Kavitha said that I came all the way from Hyderabad for the self-respect of the Erukala, that I will cooperate in the construction of the Nancharamma temple, and that the festival should be celebrated every year with double the enthusiasm. The leaders of the Erukala Sangam and TRS leaders, under the leadership of Lokini Raju, the state president of the Telangana Adivasi Erukala Sangam and the chairman of the Nancharamma Utsava Committee, warmly welcomed Kalvakuntla Kavitha and said that the program is being held here to protect the Erukala self-respect and to say that this is our culture. They asked for the culture to be protected and the government to also support the festivals. Since Minister Seethakka is from Mulugu, they said that they want special attention to be paid to the development of the temple. He said that when



Chandulal and Satyavati Rathod worked earlier, everyone paid attention and supported these festivals. He said that the Erukala castes are backward and many programs that they should get from the government have been taken up by the elders under the leadership of KCR so far, he said that the Erukala Enterprise Screen Scheme should be called and industrialists from Erukala should come on a large scale and good programs have been taken up with KCR's thinking. Kavitha urged governments to work without stopping such programs, regardless of which party is in power, for the development of communities. She said sodhi (Eruka) to those dressed as Nancharamma and then had a joint meal with everyone. BRS Mulugu District President Kakulamari Laxman Babu, Mandal President Lingala Ramana Reddy, Jagruti leaders Antaati Ramu, Raj Kumar, Erukala Sangam State General Secretary Kuthati Ravikumar, Working President Koneti Narasimha, State Vice Presidents Sriram Anand, Kenzaram Nagulu, Suresh, Ravi, Naresh, Mulugu District President Kethiri Bikshapati leaders Pallakonda Bhaskar, Palakurthi Suresh, Kethiri Sarayya, Ashok Pallakonda Yellawamy, Meda Bangarayya, Salla Babu, Nancharamma leaders of the respective districts participated in the program. ““- Third time visiting the fair: Bhupalpalli MLA Gandra “Bhupalpalli MLA Gandra Satyanarayana Rao said that he first visited the Nancharamma fair before the elections, and came for the second time after winning with Nancharamma's blessings, and that he is visiting Nancharamma for the third consecutive year. On Monday, the MLA who came to the Ramanajapur Nancharamma fair in the mandal was welcomed by Lokini Raju, the state president of the Adivasi Erukala Sangam. After paying the oblations, Satyanarayana Rao spoke. He said that Nancharamma's mother gives blessings not only to the Erukala caste but also to all the people. He said that Panchayat Raj Minister Seethakka spoke to him on the phone today and could not come as he had Ambedkar statue and government programs in Adilabad, and that he had spoken to me that we should definitely go and come so that we can develop the road and temple. He said that the Congress government is working to promote ancient temples in the state. He said that they should give us more power to develop the Nancharamma temple, and similarly, I sincerely request the blessings of the mother so that the people of the constituency, district and state are also happy and content. Erukala Sangam Bhupalapalli leader Kethiri Subhash, Mulugu district president Kethiri Bikshapati leaders Pallakonda Bhaskar, Byreddy Bhagavan Reddy, Burra Sammaiah, former vice MPP Viddineni Ashok, and others participated in the program.“

# Extend welfare schemes to tenant farmers, Congress government urged

GNS News Agency, May 12  
HYDERABAD: Reminding the Congress government about the promises made to tenant farmers, the Rythu Swarajya Vedika demanded that they should be recognised and included in all schemes, besides implementation of Licensed Cultivators Act 2011 from Kharif season 2025.  
Tenant farmers from districts participated in a consultation meeting of the Telangana Agriculture and Farmers Welfare Commission. Later, they addressed media persons on Monday. Rythu Swarajya Vedika representatives including Kiran Kumar Vissa, B Kondal, Kanneganti Ravi and S Ashalatha said that as part of its Warangal Declaration and six guarantees, the Congress had promised to extend benefits under different schemes to the tenant farmers. It has been 18 months since the Congress came to power but no measures were being taken to fulfil the promises made to tenant farmers, the Rythu Swarajya Vedika representatives



alleged.They said among farmers dying by suicide in Telangana, 75 per cent were tenant farmers. The government should initiate measures to identify tenant farmers and provide full support to them, they demanded.

# Gundala Raghu appointed as Mulugu District Convener of Ambedkar Youth Association“

Mulugu, Mahipal, Indian Chronicle: Gundala Raghu from Kasindevipet village has been appointed as the Mulugu District Convener of Telangana Abendkar Youth Association. A meeting was held in Hyderabad on Sunday under the chairmanship of State President CH Ayilaiah to select the constituency conveners of the association's 33 districts. Founder President Dr. JB. Raju participated as the chief guest and handed over the appointment papers to the constituency conveners of the 33 districts. Speaking on the occasion, Raju called for the election of Ambedkar Youth Association Mandal Committees and for the committees to continuously work for the upliftment of SC, ST, BC and minority com-



munities. On this occasion, Gundala Raghu was unanimously elected as the Mulugu District Convener. He expressed special gratitude to the state leadership, joint district president

Middepaka Yellaiah, Mulugu District president Nakka Bikshapati, and state campaign secretary Dikonda Kantarao for entrusting him with the responsibility. He said that he would work for

the strengthening of the association and the upliftment of the weaker sections on his part. Mulugu district leaders Janagaon Ravinder, Dulagonda Sambasiva Rao, Gangili Bharat, and others participated in this program.“

# Kavitha exposes Congress govt’s attempt to convert TGIIC to public company

GNS News Agency, May 12  
Hyderabad: After its decision to sell land in Kancha Gachibowli ending up in the Supreme Court, the Congress government is now betting on nearly 1.75 lakh acres under the control of Telangana Industrial Infrastructure Corporation (TGIIC). Accordingly, the government is now reportedly conspiring to convert the corporation into a public limited company. The government issued GO No.12 on April 15, authorising the change in TGIIC's status from a private limited company to a public limited entity. This shift is meant to facilitate larger borrowings by enabling access to capital markets through bonds, debentures, or even a potential IPO.

Releasing the GO at a press conference at Telangana Bhavan on Monday, BRS MLC K Kavitha charged the Revanth Reddy government with conspiring to mortgage Telangana lands on the stock exchange to raise massive loans. She demanded the immediate withdrawal of the GO, questioning the secrecy behind the move.“I have specific evidence. Why was this change hidden from the public? What will happen to Telangana's lands if there is a loss in the market? This is a betrayal of the people's trust,” she said.

Kavitha reminded that the Revanth Reddy government had borrowed over Rs 1.8 lakh crore in just 16 months, with no major welfare scheme fully implemented.“While part of it was spent for administration and repayment of loans, nearly Rs 1 lakh crore was paid to big contractors, of which Rs 20,000 crore was paid to Revanth Reddy as commission,” she claimed, demanding a white paper on State finances.According to the GO, the number of shareholders has been increased from the existing four to seven, fulfilling the legal criteria for the conversion. The vice chairman and managing director of TGIIC has been directed to take necessary action in this regard.



Sources said consequent to change of status of TGIIC to a public company, status of all its subsidiaries also would change to deemed public companies. The change in status would also result in wider participation of investors in secondary markets for bonds and debentures, enabling the company to raise more loans. Public companies often find it easier to secure future financing i.e. enable them to borrow larger funds.Public companies face stringent reporting, disclosure, and compliance requirements, increasing operational costs and administrative burden, and must disclose financial and operational information to the public. However, public shareholders can influence company decisions, potentially impacting founder control and strategic direction. Such traded companies are vulnerable to hostile takeover attempts as well.

# Dalit Bandhu beneficiaries stage dharna for second installment in Karimnagar



GNS News Agency, May 12  
Karimnagar: Dalit Bandhu beneficiaries from Huzurabad constituency on Monday staged a dharna in front of the Collectorate here demanding the release of the second installment of the scheme.The beneficiaries, who came to the district headquarters to submit a representation during the Prajavani programme, staged a protest, stating officials were not releasing the amount even three months after the proceedings were issued by the State government for completion of grounding of units with the second installment. As the amount has not been released, they were facing troubles to run units established with the first installment, they said, asking the Collector to take the initiative to release the installment.

After 13 months of struggle by the beneficiaries, the State government had on January 27 issued orders unfreezing Dalit Bandhu accounts, which were frozen soon after the Congress government came to power in December 2023. The government had instructed for grounding of units with Rs 324.75 crore pertaining to 9,937 beneficiaries under Dalit Bandhu-I and Rs.9.88 crore pertaining to 471 beneficiaries under DB-II.Though the government gave its nod, the money was not released due to the Graduates and Teachers MLC election code. Even after that, beneficiaries were unable to withdraw the amount from their accounts. Enquiry about grounding and functioning of the units sanctioned in the first phase was stated to be the reason for the stalemate. It is learnt that a few beneficiaries had closed

their units due to various reasons. The government was enquiring into that too.Speaking to Telangana Today, Dalit Bandhu Sadana Samithi member Kalukuri Naresh said though the government issued orders unfreezing Dalit Bandhu accounts on January 27, it had not been implemented due to MLC election code. When they met Collector Pamela Satpathy after the model code was lifted, she had informed them about the enquiry into units grounded in the first phase, he said.Naresh wanted the government to release the second installment without delay since it would be further delayed if the local body elections code came into force.

# Kothagudem court fines 22 for drunk driving

GNS News Agency, May 12  
Kothagudem: Special judicial second class magistrate Mendu Rajamallu on Monday imposed fines on 22 people in drunken driving cases.According to Kothagudem one-town SI, T Rakesh 15 motorists were found to have been driving vehicles after consuming alcohol during breathalyzer tests. Five motorists were each caught by Annapureddypalle SHO, Ch Chandrasekhar and Paloncha town SHO, Jeevan Raj while they were driving under the influence of alcohol.







# Digital services start at 4 Ayushman Arogya Mandir centres

GNS News Agency, May 12

Punjab Governor and Chandigarh Administrator Gulab Chand Kataria visited the upgraded Ayushman Arogya Mandir (AAM) centres at Maloya, Sector 35, Makhan Majra, and Raipur Kalan Kataria's visit was part of the nationwide observance marking the transformation of health and wellness centres into Ayushman Arogya Mandirs under the Ayushman Bharat initiative. The day also marked the launch of digital services at these centres for enhanced efficiency and patient care. "We will cover all 19 centres in phases, as we conduct training and update hardware, as part of this important initiative, that will gradually help us go paperless and the system will ensure efficiency and reduce the waiting time of patients," shared Dr Suman Singh, director, Health Services. As part of the effort, e-registration will be done and a token number generated for the patient. "Now we have posts of staff nurses that were recently approved for all the 19 centres, which will screen all patients who register for diabetes and hypertension, and after taking all the vitals of the patients, will send them to the doctor here, as per the token number," shares Singh, adding that this will reduce crowding outside the room of doctors and save time. With this system, all details of the patients will be on the computer of the doctor in charge, as filled by the staff nurse, and details of investigations, prescription, follow-up date and time will be given to the patients on only one paper.

This paper will be shown to the pharmacist for getting medicines and soon an electronic system that will display the token number will be introduced so that patients do not have to stand in line. "On a slot basis, specialised services



like gynaecology etc, and consultancy of medical officers will be available here at these centres. On average, one doctor sees around 100 patients, and so we need more doctors, and staff, and we hope this initiative will also reduce the number of patients here at GMSH-16, which sees around 3,000 patients daily in the OPD. We have floated a tender for LAN internet connection for better connectivity to increase and improve digital services here at GMSH-16, as this is the need of the hour," explains Singh. The administrator also reviewed the infrastructure, service delivery, and digital health integration at the centres, and interacted with several patients who had come for routine check-ups and consultations, and inquired about the quality, accessibility, and overall experience of services at the centres. He spoke to community health officers and staff to understand the range of free services being provided, including non-communicable disease screenings, telemedicine consultations, maternal and child healthcare, and provision of essential medicines and diagnostics.

# 2 from Rajasthan arrested in stock market scams

GNS News Agency, May 12

The Cyber Crime Cell of Chandigarh has arrested two alleged cyber criminals from Rajasthan in connection with two high-profile stock market investment scams. In the first case, the accused, Mukesh Kumar Gujar, 33, a resident of Rampura Papat, Jaipur, Rajasthan, was apprehended for his involvement in a sophisticated cyber scam, according to the police. The police team said that Gujar had opened a bank account in Rajasthan Marudhara Gramin Bank and handed over the account kit to other fraudsters. The account was used to receive Rs 36 lakh obtained through fraudulent act and subsequently funnelled via RTGS and IMPS to other accounts.

The victim, Ashok Kumar of Sector 35, Chandigarh, reported being lured into fake stock market trading via an app presented as IBKR (Interactive Broker). He was first contacted by a woman named Rekha Aggarwal and later by an alleged client manager, Rajiv Mehta. After investing a total of Rs 56 lakh, he was removed from the group and denied access to the app. According to the second case, another accused, Lalit Saini, 23, from Prem Nagar Vistar, Sanganer, Jaipur, Rajasthan, was nabbed for a similar modus operandi. The cyber police found that Lalit had opened a UCO Bank account and handed over the credentials, which was used to receive Rs 2 lakh from the fraudulent activities.



The money was later routed through electronic transfers to other accounts.

Complainant Vinod Handa of Sector 49-A, Chandigarh, revealed that he was duped of Rs 10.5 lakh after joining a WhatsApp group (Zerodha-VIP.com) linked to an online stock trading promotion he found on Facebook. After seeing an initial small return, he was persuaded to invest larger amounts. His funds were later frozen, and further payments were demanded before he realised it was a scam. Police said that both accused are currently in police custody, and investigations are ongoing to identify other accomplices and bust the larger cyber fraud network.

# Mohali MC disconnects water connections of 9 eateries after complaints of sewage overflow



GNS News Agency, May 12

In a crackdown following repeated complaints of sewage overflow in the Phase 5 market of Mohali, the Municipal Corporation (MC) has taken a stern action against nine restaurants by disconnecting their water and sewage connections. Officials revealed that multiple eateries in the market had been continuously dumping leftover food and waste directly into the sewer lines despite warnings, leading to frequent blockages and dirty water overflow into nearby residential areas, severely threatening public health.

During a joint inspection conducted on May 6, it was found that prominent outlets including Amrit Sweets, Kulcha Theka, Taste Da Adda, Walk N Talk, Awin Kartik, Khalsa

Vaishno Dhaba, Chennai Maratha, Sher-E-Punjab Dhaba, and Liquor Wine & Beer Shop, 6, did not install grease chambers, resulting in leftover food flowing directly into the sewer system, leading to blockages nearly every alternate day.

Officials recalled a similar scenario on March 28, 2025, when challans were issued, but no improvement was observed. The situation has now deteriorated to the point where sewage has started flooding into residential zones, posing a grave health risk. Taking serious note of the matter, the Municipal Commissioner ordered that all water and sewer connections of non-compliant restaurants be disconnected on Tuesday. The operation was executed in coordination with the Public Health Department and field teams from the MC. Reaffirming the commitment to cleanliness and public welfare, officials stated, "no compromise will be tolerated when it comes to public health and sanitation. Any future negligence will lead to strict legal action under environmental and municipal laws". Phase 5 Market president Rajpal Singh Chaudhary said that the outlet owners argued that when the sewer pipes were initially laid behind the shops, the shopkeepers had requested the department to install wider pipes, which was ignored. Rajpal also mentioned that during a meeting with the former Municipal Commissioner, the shopkeepers had agreed to bear the cost of regular pipe cleaning by the department, but the initiative was left incomplete. Restaurants, who faced the action, criticised the move as "arbitrary and a case of pick and choose".

Biswajit Mohanty, Professor of Political Science at Deshbandhu College, Delhi University. "The people were mostly from Bihar and Uttar Pradesh — three-fourth of the population is Muslim, while the rest are Hindus." According to Mohammad Tazeem, who teaches history at the Senior Secondary School in Jamia Millia Islamia, Taimoor Nagar is constructed on the lands of two villages, Kilokari and Khizarabad. "Kilokari and Khizarabad were established during the Sultanate period, he said. "Before that, these were small settlements of Gujjars and Ahirs." He added, "Khizarabad is named after the son of Alauddin Khilji — Khizr Khan. As for Kilokari, it is named after Kaikubad, the grandson of Sultan Balban. These villages became populated in the 13th and 14th century." It is also believed that the earliest documented Sufi presence in Delhi can be traced to Khwaja Qutbuddin Bakhtiyar Kaki, the successor of Khwaja Moinuddin Chishti of Ajmer, who is believed to have first settled in Kilokari — then a quiet riverside hamlet near the present-day Ashram area. With the Yamuna flowing beside it, Kilokari offered the solitude and natural setting ideal for a Sufi mystic's meditation and spiritual practice. British civil servant and historian H C Fanshawe, in his 1902 book, Delhi: Past and Present, described Kilokari as a scenic riverside village that once served as a royal retreat. He noted that it was frequented by Mughal prince Humayun and known for its gardens and proximity to the Yamuna.

# Over 5,000 homeless as Chandigarh administration razes 2,500 shanties in Janta Colony

GNS News Agency, May 12

As the Chandigarh administration conducted the demolition of nearly 2,500 shanties at Janta Colony on Tuesday, around 5,000 dwellers turned homeless. The demolition drive was conducted at 10 acres of prime government land, which was illegally occupied by the dwellers, in Sector 25. This land, as per Estate officials, is valued at around Rs 350 crore. Two weeks ago, the administration also demolished 1,000 makeshift structures in Sanjay Colony, Industrial Area Phase 1, which saw encroachment of nearly six acres of prime land.

The drive on Tuesday began at 5 am in the presence of nearly 1,500 police personnel and 1,500 officials from the municipal corporation and UT Estate Office. With the latest demolition, only two small slums — Shahpur in Sector 38 and another one in Sector 54 — remain, which the Chandigarh Administration also plans to take down soon. The UT administration has been working on making the city slum-free since the early 2000s. In 2006, it came up with a plan to replace slums with alternative housing. In 2013, it razed colony numbers 5 and 4 in 2022. These slums had occupied over 165 acres of government land. Apart from this, it had razed Mazdoor Colony, Kuldeep Colony, Pandit Colony, Nehru Colony, Ambedkar Colony, Kajheri Colony and Madras Colony over the years. Sunita Chautala, a dweller at Sector 25, Janta Colony has been living here with her family for the last 20 years in the area. She mentioned how politicians made false promises of rehabilitation in exchange for votes.

"The local leaders used to come to us asking us to cast our vote for a party, and in return, we were promised that we would be allotted a dwelling unit in the city area as a part of the rehabilitation," Chautala said. "No one turned up today for our help while our houses were demolished. We are forced to move from here and live in a rented house." Another resident Monu Devi, whose house was also demolished, said she had arrived in the area 25 years ago after she got married. She was living here with her in-laws.



"Last night (Monday), we had shifted to a rented property in Dhanas, which has a rent of Rs 5,000 per month. My husband is ill and I work as a maid in the city, earning Rs 10,000 per month. How does the administration think we will be able to survive on rent? Neither the administration nor any local political party came to help us," Devi said. Sumit Kumar, who had been living in Janta Colony with his 11 family members, said, "After our house has been demolished, we aren't able to find a house on rent. Since our family is big, the landlord says he cannot allow us to stay for a rent of Rs 7,000." Sandeep Kumar, who works as a waiter in a hotel at Mohali, said, "The government should have thought about allocating another space to us, before conducting the demolition." Chandigarh Congress has condemned the demolition, terming it a "heartless act against the poor". Party spokesperson Rajiv Sharma criticised the "BJP-led administration" for "neglecting" the welfare of economically weaker and middle-class residents via a lack of housing schemes in the last 11 years and "continuous harassment" via penalties and taxes. Part president H S Lucky called the move "utterly inhumane," highlighting the plight of children, women, and the elderly left homeless. He demanded immediate rehabilitation for the affected families and urged the administration to act with compassion, rather than following what he termed as "dictatorial and anti-people orders" of the BJP.

# Sharp decline in special needs children enrolling in Kerala schools, Centre urges state to act

GNS News Agency, May 12

children with special needs, Ministry of School Education, Kerala, Kerala schools, Kerala schools special needs children, special needs children, Indian express news, current affairs Out of the total 1,310 secondary and senior secondary schools, 29 do not have ICT labs and 70 don't have smart classrooms. Besides, out of 851 senior secondary schools, 37 don't have Physics labs, 31 don't have Chemistry labs, and 67 don't have Biology labs. The Union Ministry of School Education has raised concern about the "significant decline" in the number of children with special needs enrolling in schools in Kerala, especially at the secondary level, and has directed the state government to take action.

"There is a significant decline in the percentage share of CwSN (children with special needs) in secondary grades and only 39% of teachers have been trained in inclusive education," the ministry said in a review of the Samagra Shiksha, or inclusive education, programme in Kerala for the last academic year. A report on the review was released on May 2. According to the report, children with special needs make up just 2% of the total student enrolment in schools in the state. The report advised the state to use the PRASHAST app — an application developed by NCERT for schools to screen students for potential disabilities — to identify children with special needs providing assistance accordingly. On the infrastructure front, the report pointed out several gaps, which the state was told to rectify. It said that out of 15,864 schools, 13,029 (82%) are equipped with ramps, but only 4,504 (29%) have CwSN-friendly boys toilets, and 4,102 (26%) have CwSN-friendly girls toilets. The report said, "There are six schools without provision of electricity, nine without drinking water, 21 without girls toilets, 41 without boys toilets." The state was told to ensure 100% coverage of these facilities in all government schools in 2025-26. Out of the total 1,310 secondary and senior secondary schools, 29 do not have ICT labs and 70 don't have smart classrooms. Besides, out of 851 senior secondary schools, 37 don't have Physics labs, 31 don't have Chemistry labs, and 67 don't have Biology labs. The Union ministry also raised concern about the reduction in the total number of enrolments in government and aided schools, from 46,37,701 in 2022-23 to 45,50,822 in 2023-24. The Kerala government has said the "state has done data cleansing exercises using Aadhaar verification. Apart from this, the state is also making an automated permanent academic account registry in order to validate enrollment details".



# After Ziddi Girls controversy, Miranda House is coming up with a filming policy

GNS News Agency, May 12

Delhi University's Miranda House is in the final stages of adopting a formal policy to regulate filming on its campus, The Indian Express has learnt. The move comes in the aftermath of the controversy linked to Ziddi Girls, an Amazon Prime series accused of portraying a fictional college, "Matilda House", bearing an "unmistakable resemblance" to Miranda House. With the proposed regulations, DU's prestigious women's college aims to ensure that future creative projects do not distort or damage its public image, said people in the know.

Directed by Miranda House alumna Shonali Bose, the series sparked protests from students and alumni who said the similarities were too stark to ignore, including the short-form reference. The college had issued a legal notice to the show's makers in February, demanding the removal of the short-form reference, "MH", and seeking a pre-release preview of the series by the administration and the students' union. A faculty-student committee then proposed a filming policy in April. "Teachers and students have come up with a policy, and the college is looking into it," Principal Bijayalaxmi Nanda told The Draft, which is yet to be finalised by a committee, "reviewing the use of college space by outsiders", lays out a detailed approval process requiring filmmakers to submit a written request at least 15 days in advance. The proposal must include the script, project overview, and a clear explanation of how the college will be depicted. "The college administration will review the script and decide whether the project aligns with the values and reputation of Miranda House," the draft states. "Any content that misrepresents the college or negatively impacts its image will not be approved." Once approved, the production team must sign a formal contract. "Filming must be done in a way that does not disturb classes, students, or faculty," reads a clause. Any damage to college property must be compensated by the production team, it said.

An administrative official involved in the drafting process emphasised that commercial gain has never been the motivation behind granting access. "It is never a matter of money coming in for this college through the shooting of films and ad films. The college has always given permission only to a few very important projects, like those driven by its alumni. The effort through this policy is to make sure film shooting takes place vigilantly, under supervision, and without disturbing the academic spaces for students." Before release, the college reserves the right to view the final footage to ensure it aligns with the agreed portrayal, the guidelines note. If any changes are needed,



With the proposed regulations, DU's prestigious women's college aims to ensure that future creative projects do not distort or damage its public image, said people in the know

the team will be required to make the necessary edits. "The college name and logo must not be used in credits, promotions, or any form of branding unless explicitly approved." The guidelines also focus on legal accountability. "Any violation of this policy may result in legal action or a permanent ban on future filming requests. The contract will outline legal consequences in case of policy violations," the document states. The college also insists on a complete preview of the final product. "After completion of the shoot and before launching, it should be seen by the administration." Perhaps most significantly, the policy prohibits filmmakers from deviating from the agreed script under the pretext of artistic freedom. "The overview of the script provided to the college authorities should not contrast with the actual story to be streamlined. The use of 'creative license' as an excuse for the same will not be entertained," it reads. Once adopted, the policy is expected to set a precedent for other academic institutions too. Earlier, in a statement before the release of the series, the Miranda House Students' Union said: "MHSU expresses its deep outrage and profound condemnation over the recent release of the 'Ziddi Girls' trailer on Amazon Prime. The circulating trailer contains content that raises serious objections, particularly regarding the dignity of our esteemed institution. It tarnishes, defames, and demeans the 77-year-old legacy of Miranda House, a college renowned for its commitment to women's education and emancipation."



# Israeli strikes kill 15 in Gaza school housing displaced families, medics say



CAIRO/GAZA -GNS News Agency, May 12, Israeli strikes on a school housing displaced families in northern Gaza killed 15 Palestinians on Wednesday, local health authorities said, as Israeli forces continued to demolish homes and buildings in Rafah in the south of the enclave.Medics said two strikes targeted the Karama School in Tuffah, a suburb of Gaza City. Among those killed was a local journalist, Nour Abdu, Palestinian media said. There was no immediate comment from the Israeli army.The Reuters Tariff Watch newsletter is your daily guide to the latest global trade and tariff news. Sign up here.

Two Israeli airstrikes on another school, housing displaced people in Bureij camp in central Gaza, killed at least 33 people, including women and children, on Tuesday, local health authorities said. The Israeli military said it struck "terrorists" operating from a command center in the compound. The strike, which smashed classrooms and destroyed furniture, caused a large crater in the school campus, where the displaced people who had sought shelter there on Wednesday sifted through rubble to look for some of their belongings."What happened is an earthquake. The Israeli occupation hit a school housing children. They are children," said eyewitness Ali Al-Shaqra. He said the school housed 300 families.

"Here is the building; it was razed to the ground. We cannot find the gas cylinder, the flour bag we had, the kilo of rice, or the meal we got from the Tukkiyah (community kitchen). Thank God we are left with the clothes we had on," Shaqra added.In Rafah in the southern Gaza Strip, near

the border with Egypt, residents and Hamas sources said Israeli forces, who have taken control of the city, continued to blow up and demolish houses and buildings.Al-Qassam Brigades, the military wing of the Palestinian militant group Hamas, said on Wednesday their fighters had detonated a pre-planted minefield targeting an Israeli armoured force east of Khan Younis in the south. They said they inflicted casualties, followed by mortar shelling of the area.Israel resumed its offensive in March after the collapse of a U.S.-backed ceasefire that had halted fighting for two months. It has since imposed an aid blockade, drawing warnings from the UN that the 2.3 million population faces imminent famine.Israeli troops have already taken over an area amounting to around a third of Gaza, displacing the population and building watchtowers and surveillance posts on cleared ground the military has described as security zones.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has said he will expand the offensive against Hamas after his security cabinet approved plans that may include seizing the entire Gaza Strip and controlling aid.But an Israeli defence official said on Monday the operation would not be launched before U.S. President Donald Trump concludes his visit next week to the Middle East, and there was a "window of opportunity" for a ceasefire and hostage release deal during Trump's visit.A senior Hamas official said on Wednesday Hamas would not agree to any interim truce in return for a resumption of aid for a few days, and insisted on a full ceasefire deal to end the war.

Basem Naim said Hamas would not accept "desperate attempts before Trump's visit, through the crime of starvation, the continuation of genocide, and the threat of expanding military action to achieve a partial agreement that returns some (Israeli) prisoners in exchange for a few days of food and drink."The war began on October 7, 2023, when Hamas killed 1,200 people and took 251 hostage, according to Israeli tallies.Israel's campaign has killed more than 52,000 Palestinians, mostly civilians, according to Hamas-run health authorities, and reduced much of Gaza to ruins.The Hamas-run Gaza government media office said the death of Nour Abdu on Wednesday raised to 213 the number of Palestinian journalists killed by Israeli fire since the war began.A senior correspondent with nearly 25 years' experience covering the Palestinian-Israeli conflict including several wars and the signing of the first historic peace accord between the two sides.

# Cardinals set to enter conclave to decide who follows Pope Francis

VATICAN CITYGNS News Agency, May 12, Roman Catholic cardinals will begin the task on Wednesday of electing a new pope, locking themselves away from the world until they choose the man they hope can unite a diverse but divided global Church.In a ritual dating back to medieval times, the cardinals will file into the Vatican's frescoed Sistine Chapel after a public Mass in St. Peter's Basilica and start their secret conclave for a successor to Pope Francis, who died last month.

The Reuters Tariff Watch newsletter is your daily guide to the latest global trade and tariff news. Sign up here.No pope has been elected on the first day of a conclave for centuries, so voting could continue for several days before one of the red-hatted princes of the Church receives the necessary two-thirds majority to become the 267th pontiff.There will be only one ballot on Wednesday. Thereafter, the cardinals can vote as many as four times a day.They will burn their ballots, with black smoke from a chimney on the roof of the chapel marking an inconclusive vote, while white smoke and the peeling of bells signalling that the 1.4 billion member Church has a new leader.

The pope's influence reaches well beyond the Catholic Church, providing a moral voice and a call to conscience that no other global leader can match.At a Mass in St. Peter's Basilica on Wednesday morning before entering the conclave, the cardinals prayed that God would help them find a pope who would exercise "watchful care" over the world.

In a sermon, Italian Cardinal Giovanni Battista Re told his peers they must set aside "every personal consideration" in choosing the new pontiff and keep in mind "only ... the good of the Church and of humanity".Re, the dean of the College of Cardinals, is 91 and will not enter the conclave, which is reserved for cardinals under the age of 80.

Cardinals in recent days have offered different assessments of what they are looking for in the next pontiff.While some have called for continuity with Francis' vision of greater openness and reform, others have said they want to turn the clock back and embrace old traditions. Many have indicated they want a more predictable, measured pontificate.Salvadoran Cardinal Gregorio Rosa Chavez said he did not think the cardinals would retreat from Francis' vision for the Church.Item 1 of 5 Members of the clergy gather on the day the Dean of the College of Cardinals, Cardinal Giovanni Battista Re presides over the Holy Mass, celebrated for the election of the new pope, in St. Peter's Basilica, at the Vatican."There will not be a step backwards," Rosa Chavez, aged 82, told the Corriere della Sera newspaper. "It is not possible.""Whoever is chosen, I think it will be a pope who continues the work begun by Francis," he

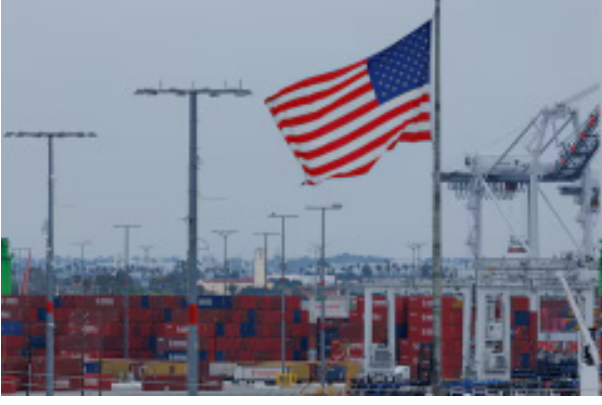
# Why is end to war in Gaza so elusive?

GNS News Agency, May 12  
Tel Aviv: The war in Gaza may be on the cusp of a new phase after Israel approved plans over the weekend to intensify its operations. Which raises the question: After 19 months of bloodshed and destruction, why is there still no end in sight?Israel and Hamas appear to only be growing further apart. Israel unleashed fierce strikes in March, shattering a truce that had freed hostages and sent in badly needed aid. Israel's new plans include seizing the strip, forcibly displacing hundreds of thousands of Palestinians and asserting greater control over the distribution of aid in the territory, according to Israeli officials.Mounting Israeli public support for an end to the war has not swayed Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu from his stance that Hamas must be destroyed first. The military pressure, vast destruction in Gaza and rising death toll have so far not budged Hamas from its position demanding an end to the war and a full Israeli withdrawal from Gaza.

The war began on October 7, 2023, when Hamas militants attacked southern Israel, killing 1,200 and taking 251 hostages. Israel's massive retaliation has killed over 52,000 people in Gaza, according to local health authorities, whose count does not differentiate between militants and civilians.The Hamas attack upended Israel's longstanding security doctrine. For years, Israel weathered threats along its borders, launching periodic operations to contain them.

Hamas' surprise assault broke that cycle.Israel says it is no longer willing to accept a reality where such an attack can reoccur. It has gone to great lengths to reshape the region according to that new doctrine. Israeli forces have seized areas in Lebanon and Syria and cracked down in the West Bank, displacing tens of thousands. In Gaza, they intend to remain in the territory in a bid to eliminate Hamas' ability to regroup.Israel shows no sign of relenting, despite war crimes accusations at international courts.Experts say Hamas no longer has the capacity to stage an October 7-style attack — yet it cannot be easily stamped out, either. The drive to dismantle Hamas' military and governing capabilities by force has so far proven incompatible with Israel's other war aim: freeing hostages. The captives' relatives fear any escalation in fighting endangers them.Netanyahu has said he is prepared to end the war if Hamas gives up power, disarms and leaves Gaza. But even after that, Israel appears poised to keep troops in corridors carving up Gaza — effectively a new form of occupation.Hamas has offered to release all hostages in return for a full Israeli withdrawal from Gaza and an end to the war. It says it's willing to cede power in Gaza to other Palestinians but has refused to disarm, offering instead a long-term truce with Israel.Netanyahu has rejected the notion of Gaza being run by the more moderate Palestinian Authority, but has offered no concrete alternative.

# US, China to hold ice-breaker trade talks in Geneva



WASHINGTON/BEIJING, U.S. Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent and chief trade negotiator Jameson Greer will meet China's economic tsar He Lifeng in Switzerland this weekend for talks that could be the first step toward resolving a trade war disrupting the global economy.News of the planned Geneva meeting, first announced by Washington late Tuesday, sent U.S. equity index futures higher. Stock markets in China and Hong Kong followed suit during Asian trading The Reuters Tariff Watch newsletter is your daily guide to the latest global trade and tariff news. Sign up here.

The talks come after weeks of escalating tensions that have seen duties on goods imports between the world's two largest economies soar well beyond 100%, amounting to what Bessent on Tuesday described as the equivalent of a trade embargo.The impasse, alongside U.S. President Donald Trump's decision last month to slap sweeping duties on dozens of other countries, has upended supply chains, roiled financial markets and stoked fears of a sharp downturn in global growth.

The negotiating teams convening in Switzerland, known for its neutrality, are expected to discuss reductions to the broader tariffs, two sources familiar with the planning said. The talks should also cover duties on specific products, export controls and Trump's decision to end de minimis exemptions on low-value imports, one of the sources added.China's State Council did not immediately reply to a faxed request for comment."My sense is this will be about de-escalation," Bessent told Fox News after the announcement. "We've got to de-escalate before we can move forward."A Chinese commerce ministry spokesperson later confirmed that China had agreed to meet the U.S. envoys."On the basis of fully considering global expectations, China's interests, and the appeals of U.S. industry and consumers, China has decided to re-engage the U.S.," the spokesperson said, citing a proverb about actions speaking louder than words.This is the first meeting between senior Chinese and U.S. officials since U.S. Senator Steve Daines met Premier Li Qiang in Beijing in March.Beijing has largely adopted a fiery rhetoric as tensions with Washington have ratcheted up, repeatedly saying it would not engage in negotiations unless the U.S. withdrew its tariffs.Signaling a change in tack, however, China's commerce ministry on Friday said it was "evaluating" an offer from Washington to hold talks.

Asked about the apparent U-turn on Wednesday, China's foreign ministry spokesperson Lin Jian told a daily press conference that Beijing's "position of firmly opposing U.S. abuse of tariffs has not changed".The stakes for China's economy are high, with its vast factory sector already bearing the brunt of the tariffs. Many analysts have downgraded

# Israel hits Yemen's main airport in airstrike against Houthis

ADEN,GNS News Agency, May 12, The Israeli military carried out an airstrike on Yemen's main airport in Sanaa on Tuesday, its second attack in two days on Iran-aligned Houthi rebels, after the group launched a missile attack near Israel's Ben Gurion Airport.Three people were killed in the latest Israeli strike, according to Houthi-run Al-Masirah TV.The Reuters Tariff Watch newsletter is your daily guide to the latest global trade and tariff news. Sign up here.

Israel warned people to leave the area around Sanaa International Airport before Tuesday's attack, which it said targeted Houthi infrastructure and "fully disabled the airport". Witnesses later reported four strikes in the capital.Tensions have been high since the Gaza war began, but have risen further since a Houthi missile landed near Israel's Ben Gurion Airport on Sunday, prompting Israeli airstrikes on Yemen's Hodeidah port on Monday."A short while ago, IDF (Israel Defence Forces) fighter jets struck and dismantled Houthi terrorist infrastructure at the main airport in Sanaa, fully disabling the airport," the Israeli military said."The strike was carried out in response to the attack launched by the Houthi terrorist regime against Ben Gurion Airport. Flight runways, aircraft, and infrastructure at the airport were struck," it said referring to the Yemen airport.The airport's general director said on Wednesday that all flights to and from the airport have been suspended until further notice.The Israeli strikes resulted in "extensive damage" to the airport, Khaled al-Shaief added in a post on X.Three airport sources had told Reuters that the strikes targeted three civilian airplanes, the departures hall, the airport runway and a military air base under Houthi control.The Israeli military said the airport had been "a central hub for the Houthi terrorist regime to transfer weapons and operatives.""The operations of our armed forces will continue and the support by Yemen to Palestine will only end with the end of the aggression and siege against Gaza."

The United Nations Special Envoy to Yemen Hans Grundberg said on X that the latest hostilities "mark a grave escalation in an already fragile and volatile regional context".An official at Yemen's flag carrier Yemenia Airways told Reuters that three of its aircraft were destroyed according to an initial assessment.The Houthis have been firing at Israel and at shipping in the Red Sea since Israel began its military offensive against Hamas in Gaza after the Palestinian militant group's deadly attack on Israel on October 7, 2023.The Houthis say they are doing so in solidarity with the Palestinians and have pressed on with attacks in response to Israel expanding its military operations in the Gaza Strip.The Houthis said on Sunday they would impose a "comprehensive" aerial blockade on Israel by repeatedly targeting its airports.Sixty percent of Yemenis live under the control of the Houthis, a resilient group that withstood years of Saudi-led bombing during the country's devastating civil war.The Houthis are part of Iran's "Axis of Resistance" against Israeli and U.S. interests in the Middle East, which also includes Hamas and Lebanon's Hezbollah.While Israel has weakened those groups by assassinating top leaders and destroying military infrastructure since the Gaza war began, the Houthis are still a force to be reckoned with The Israeli strikes around Hodeidah on

their 2025 economic growth forecast for the Asian giant, while investment bank Nomura has warned the trade war could cost China up to 16 million jobs.China's central bank on Wednesday announced fresh monetary stimulus, flagging rate cuts and a liquidity injection into the banking system aimed at countering the economic impact of the duties.Analysts described the move as measured and tactical."There's almost certainly also an element of signaling to the U.S. government ahead of the upcoming meeting," said Christopher Beddor, deputy China research director at Gavekal Dragonomics."The message is that Chinese officials are not panicked or scrambling to shore up economic growth, and they're not going to be negotiating from a position of weakness."U.S. officials have held a flurry of meetings with trading partners since the president announced a 10% tariff on most countries on April 2, along with higher tariff rates that will kick in on July 9, barring separate trade agreements.Trump has also imposed 25% tariffs on autos, steel and aluminum, 25% levies on Canada and Mexico, and 145% tariffs on China, with further duties expected on pharmaceuticals in coming weeks.China retaliated by boosting its tariffs on U.S. goods to 125%. The European Union is also readying countermeasures.

While Saturday's talks are aimed at easing tensions, it remains unclear how substantive they could prove, said Bo Zhengyuan, partner at Shanghai-based policy consultancy Plenum."For more comprehensive geopolitical negotiations to be possible, tariffs would need to be lowered first - the key is whether both sides can agree on the extent and scope of tariff rollbacks, as well as on follow-up talks," Bo said.Bessent told Fox News the two sides would work out during their meeting on Saturday "what to talk about.""Look, we have a shared interest that this isn't sustainable," Bessent said. "And 145%, 125% is the equivalent of an embargo. We don't want to decouple. What we want is fair trade."Trump and his trade team have sent mixed signals over progress in talks with major trading partners rushing to cement agreements with Washington and avoid the imposition of hefty import taxes on their goods.Bessent told lawmakers earlier in the day that the Trump administration was negotiating with 17 major trading partners and could announce trade agreements with some of them as early as this week.

Trump told reporters before a meeting with Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney that he and top administration officials will review potential trade deals over the next two weeks to decide which ones to accept.U.S. and Britain have made progress towards a trade deal, a British official said, while Bessent has said many other countries including Indonesia have made good offers to reduce tariffs and non-tariff barriers, such as subsidies.Trump's moves on tariffs, which he says are aimed in part at reducing the U.S. trade deficit, are so far having an opposite effect, with the gap hitting a record in March as businesses rushed to import goods ahead of the levies.Notably, though, the U.S. trade deficit with China narrowed sharply as the crushing levies Trump has imposed cut deeply into Chinese imports.Reporting by Andrea Shalal, Steve Holland and David Ljungren in Washington, David Lawder in Chicago, Jarrett Renshaw in Philadelphia, Laurie Chen, Liz Lee and Joe Cash in Beijing, and Catarina Demony in London; Writing by Andrea Shalal and John Geddie; Editing by Dan Burns, Howard Goller and Shri NavaratnamLaurie Chen is a China Correspondent at Reuters' Beijing bureau, covering politics and general news. Before joining Reuters, she reported on China for six years at Agence France-Presse and the South China Morning Post in Hong Kong. She speaks fluent Mandarin.



Monday killed four people and wounded 39, the Houthi-run health ministry said.Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu had vowed to retaliate after the missile launched by the Houthis landed near Ben Gurion Airport and led to European and U.S. airlines cancelling flights.Additional reporting by Tala Ramadan and Ahmed Elimam in Dubai, Menna Alaa El Din, Ahmed Tolba and Enas Alashray in Cairo; Writing by Ahmed Elimam and Michael Georgy; Editing by Ros Russell, Timothy Heritage, Gareth Jones and Michael Perry

# India destroys JeM's Markaz Subhan Allah terror camp in Pakistan's Bahawalpur

Lucknow: In a major counter-terrorism offensive, India on Wednesday destroyed 'Markaz Subhan Allah', the Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM) terror headquarters and training facility in Bahawalpur, Pakistan.

Once a key base for terrorist operations, the site has been reduced to rubble, signalling a strong response to ongoing cross-border threats. Videos show the extent of damage caused to the terrorist base. The morning visuals show the building reduced to rubble with gaping holes in the roof and concrete lying all around.Although bodies could not be seen in the available video but fallen slabs could be seen. The video also shows a few men scurrying around the fallen building. The video was shot in the day's light after the airstrikes by the Indian Air Force and exhibits the precision power of the force.Bahawalpur is deep inside Pakistan and is the 12th largest city, and serves as the nerve centre of Jaish-e-Mohammed. The JeM has been responsible for multiple attacks on Indian soil over the past two decades.Located around 161 km from the India-Pakistan border, Bahawalpur houses the group's operational headquarters at the Jamia Masjid Subhan Allah, also known as the Usman-o-Ali campus.India successfully destroyed terrorists' hideouts here and exposed the total failure of the Pakistan air defence.



# Before Russia-Ukraine war, Western oil firms ‘cut deals’ to favour Moscow’s allies



FOR all the current discourse on global sanctions and censure, before the Russian invasion of Ukraine in 2022, Western oil giants, including affiliates of Chevron, Shell and Exxon Mobil, signed off on allegedly inflated budgets, rigged bids, and gave lucrative contracts worth hundreds of millions of dollars to allies of Russian President Vladimir Putin and the Kazakhstan elite. This is one of the key revelations of Caspian Cabals, an investigation by the International Consortium of Investigative Journalists, of which The Indian Express is a partner, into the 1500-km Caspian Pipeline Consortium (CPC), one of the world’s largest crude oil pipeline systems used by both Russia and Kazakhstan. The CPC takes crude from large oil fields in western Kazakhstan and also from Russian producers to Russia’s Black Sea port of Novorossiysk, from where it is transported to buyers globally through tankers. In 2023, CPC carried 63.5 million tons of oil to international markets — around 10 per cent of CPC crude is Russian, the rest is from Kazakhstan’s large oil fields Kashagan and Karachaganak. Since the start of the Ukraine war in 2022, CPC paid at least \$816 million to shareholders Transneft and Rosneft, Russia’s biggest oil company – and \$321 million in taxes to Russian authorities. Western companies, led by Chevron Corp., made payments to subcontractors who didn’t perform the work. In one case, they authorized a \$48-million advance payment for work — including building electricity lines to a new pumping station in southern Russia — that went missing as soon as it was paid. Western oil companies — affiliates of Chevron, ExxonMobil, Italy’s Eni S.p.A. and Shell — sought to curry favor with Putin allies and the politically influential Kazakh elite by granting them hefty contracts CPC cut corners on safety and downplayed the severity of a 2021 oil spill that didn’t just lead to environmental damage but also to allegations of financial corruption. The consortium ultimately lost a Russian court case and paid a \$98.7-million fine for environmental damage. At least five whistleblowers alleged that Western oil companies’ dealings in Russia or Kazakhstan included improper payments in violation of the Foreign Corrupt Practices Act, a US law that prohibits bribes to foreign officials. Although the Russian government effectively controls the pipeline, since the war on Ukraine, Kazakhstan hired a US lobbying firm for a nearly \$4-mn annual contract, to help the pipeline remain sanctions-free.

Caspian Cabals Caspian Cabals is an investigation by the International Consortium of Investigative Journalists into the 1500-km Caspian Pipeline Consortium (CPC), one of the world’s largest crude oil pipeline systems used by both Russia and Kazakhstan. In a statement to ICIJ, Sally Jones, a senior media adviser for Chevron, said Chevron and international oil companies “have sought to provide critical technical support to enable safe and reliable operations of the Caspian Pipeline Consortium.” “Chevron is committed to ethical business practices, operating responsibly, conducting its business with integrity and in accordance with the laws and regulations of each of the jurisdictions in which it operates,” she said. She did not respond directly to ques-

tions about Chevron’s role in the pipeline or complaints about overpriced contracts, alleged kickbacks or conflicts of interest. Exxon did not respond to requests for comment, nor did the governments of Kazakhstan or Russia. A spokesman for Shell said the company does not tolerate bribery in any form. An Eni spokesperson said, “We are committed to upholding the highest standards of transparency, ethical conduct and environmental responsibility.” Eni referred questions about the pipeline to CPC, which did not respond to multiple requests for comment. Notably, India did not feature on the destination map for CPC oil — Kazakh as well as Russian — until early 2022. Now, India has emerged as the biggest market for CPC-Russia (CPC-R) oil, followed by Turkey and China. Tanker data from commodity market analytics firm Kpler shows that nearly 67 per cent of CPC-R crude made its way to India in the first nine months of 2024, while the figure for 2023 was even higher at 83 per cent. Consider this: Between March 2022 and March 2024, 82 of the 117 oil tankers carrying CPC-R oil, that set sail from the Black Sea loading terminal, discharged the oil at Indian ports. Between January 2021 and February 2022, just five of the 72 tankers hauling CPC-R had undertaken the long journey to Indian ports. The reason, industry insiders and experts say, is rather simple. When Russian oil was allowed to flow freely globally, it made little sense financially and logistically for Indian refiners to buy crude from a far-away geography like Russia. The discounts, however, have turned that argument on its head.

While India’s private sector refining giant Reliance Industries (RIL) has been the biggest buyer of CPC-R crude, public sector players Indian Oil Corporation (IOC), Bharat Petroleum Corporation (BPCL), Hindustan Petroleum Corporation (HPCL), and Mangalore Refinery and Petrochemicals (MRPL) have also been buying this oil, vessel tracking data shows. In the first nine months of 2024, Indian refiners cumulatively imported over 30 million barrels of CPC-R crude, with shipments coming in every month, vessel data shows. In all, 45.56 million barrels of CPC-R crude were shipped globally during the period, the other notable importers being Turkey and China, while some volumes went to Pakistan. CPC-R accounted for over 6 per cent of India’s overall oil imports from Russia for the period. Russia accounts for over 40 per cent of India’s total oil imports.

In contrast, the CPC-Kazakhstan (CPC-K) crude purchases by Indian refiners have been few and far between, with isolated cargoes coming to India sporadically, just as the case was with CPC-R oil before Russia invaded Ukraine. “The Kazakh part (of CPC oil going to India) is still minimal. The CPC-K is really mostly traded in the Mediterranean region. So, it would be going towards the Mediterranean refiners,” said Viktor Katona, head of crude analysis at Kpler. RIL, IOC, BPCL, HPCL, and MRPL did not respond to The Indian Express’s request for comments. But officials in the Indian government and refining sector The Indian Express spoke to underlined that Indian oil and gas companies are neither part of the CPC project nor its stakeholders, but they are its customers. “We buy oil from many countries and many companies. As customers, we can only ensure that our deals are clean. What happened or what may happen internally in a supplying company or country is something beyond our control and most often also beyond our knowledge,” an oil industry source in India said. India is the world’s third-largest consumer of crude oil and depends on imports to meet over 85 per cent of its requirement. New Delhi has time and again emphasised that its priority is to secure its energy supplies and that the country is willing to buy oil from any country or company that is not under sanctions. Russian oil is technically not under any sanction by the US or its allies, and is only subject to the

# Why do we have Governors in every State? | Explained



The Supreme Court on April 8, 2025 delivered a significant verdict delineating the powers of the President and the Governors, on the issue of grant of assent to Bills passed by State legislatures, under Articles 201 and 200 respectively of the Constitution. The judgement has sparked a debate across the country and therefore, it becomes imperative to look into the history of the institution of Raj Bhavans in every State. Interestingly, the 415-page judgement of the top court itself provides a valuable insight into the past.

When did the office of Governor come into existence?

In their exhaustive verdict, Justices J.B. Pardiwala and R. Mahadevan point out that the administration of country transitioned from the East India Company to the British Crown with the enactment of the Government of India (GoI) Act of 1858 which brought about a new administrative framework in which the Governor, as an agent of the Crown, operated under the general supervision of a higher authority titled as Governor General. Though this structure prevailed for quite a few years, the Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms of 1919 aimed at increasing increased Indian participation in governance, led to the enactment of the GoI Act of 1919. Even after the enactment of the new law, the Governor remained central to the provincial administration in the country and continued to wield significant authority. Subsequently, the GoI Act of 1935 ushered in the era of provincial autonomy and formally required the Governor to act on the advice of the Ministers. Yet, the 1935 law too safeguarded the discretionary powers of the Governor such as vetoing a Bill passed by a legislative council. When the country was nearing Independence, almost every other document including the Commonwealth India Bill of 1925, the Nehru Report of 1928 and the Constitution of Hindustan Free State Act, an aspirational document prepared by the All India Hindu Mahasabha in 1944, advocated for adopting the westminster style of polity and insisted on retaining the office of the Governor.

What were the changes made to the office of Governor?

Justice Pardiwala points out that the declaration of Independence brought about a fundamental transformation in the role of the Governor. Until the Constitution came into effect in 1950, the provisions of the GoI Act of 1935 as modified by the India (Provisional Constitution) Order of 1947 governed the administration of the country. Significantly, the 1947 Order omitted the expressions ‘in his discretion,’ ‘acting in his discretion,’ and ‘exercising his individual judgment’ from the Act, signaling a departure from the colonial framework. One of the key decisions that the framers of the Constitution had to take was to decide whether the Governor should be elected by way of a direct election or selected from a panel of names suggested by the State legislature or nominated by the President. While in the early days, the Constituent Assembly leaned towards having an elected Governor; as the framing of the Constitution neared its conclusion, there was increasing support in favour of having a Governor nominated by the President. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru attributed this shift of opinion to the bitter experience of partition, which, according to him, opened the eyes of the Constituent Assembly to the dangers of separatism and the need for having a political structure which focused more on the character of the nation as a Union of States rather than a federation.

How did the Constituent Assembly deal with the office of Governor?

Constituent Assembly member H.V. Kamath argued that an elected Governor, being a partisan figure, would inevitably clash with the Chief Minister, thereby disrupting the functioning of a cabinet style government. According to him, the role of a constitutional head should be impartial and symbolic, and therefore, the nomination system was better suited to uphold these principles. Hukam Singh treaded a middle path by acknowledging the difficulties inherent in both pure election and pure nomination for the purpose of appointment of Governors. Recognising the high costs involved in conducting elections, he proposed a balanced alternative, sug-

gesting that a panel of candidates be nominated by the State legislature and a Governor be chosen from the said panel.

Rohini Kumar Chaudhari was prophetic in his argument before the Constituent Assembly. He opposed the nomination of Governors by cautioning that a Governor appointed by the Centre and belonging to a different political party than the provincial government, could lead to discord between him and the provincial governments and thereby undermine provincial autonomy. While many other members too expressed their opinions, Nehru felt that an elected Governor could exacerbate provincial divisions and weaken ties with the Centre. “I feel that if we have an elected Governor that would to some extent encourage separatist provincial tendency more than otherwise. There will be far fewer common links with the Centre,” he told the Constituent Assembly which finally agreed upon appointment of Governor through Presidential nomination.

Does the Governor enjoy discretionary powers?

Article 163 of the Constitution states that the Governor shall exercise his functions on the aid and advice of a council of ministers headed by the Chief Minister “except in so far as he is by or under this Constitution required to exercise his functions or any of them in his discretion.” When the Constituent Assembly debated the necessity for providing such discretion to the Governor, B.R. Ambedkar said, the discretion was of limited nature and could be exercised only within the parameters of the constitutional provisions. He pointed out that the words intended to be included in Article 163 (then numbered as draft Article 143) were ‘except in so far as he is by or under this Constitution’ and not ‘except wherever he thinks that he should exercise this power of discretion against the wishes or against the advice of the ministers.’ When the discussion turned towards Article 200 (then numbered as draft Article 175), which mandates Governor’s assent to a Bill passed by the legislature for it to become an Act, Ambedkar himself moved an amendment on July 30, 1949 to remove the expression ‘in his discretion’ from the Article. He felt that “in a responsible government, there can be no room for the Governor acting on discretion.” The amendment was successfully carried out after a debate and the expression was removed.

What has the Supreme Court held now?

It is by relying upon the Constituent Assembly debates to understand the intent behind the framing of Article 200, the Bench comprising Justices Pardiwala and Mahadevan have now held that the Governors do not enjoy either the power to veto (withholding assent to a Bill indefinitely without assigning reasons) or pocket veto (keeping a Bill pending without taking any decision for an indefinite period) a legislation passed by an elected legislature. Since neither Article 200 nor 201 lays down timeline for grant of assent, the court has prescribed timelines for the President as well as the Governor when it comes to granting assent to Bills. The judges took note that the first Administrative Reforms Commission established by the Union Home Ministry in 1966 as well as the Rajamannar Commission set up by the Tamil Nadu government in 1969 had recommended framing of guidelines on the discretionary powers of the Governor. Similarly, the Sarkaria Commission established in 1983 and the Punchi Commission constituted in 2007 had recommended adoption of definite timelines for processing State Bills.

What is difference between prescribing and reading in timelines?

Taking a cue from those recommendations as well as a February 4, 2016 office memorandum of the Union Home Ministry which insists on clearing State legislations sent for President’s assent within three months, the judges ordered that the President must take a decision on grant of assent within three months. Similarly, they prescribed a time line of one to three months for the Governors to either grant assent, withhold assent or refer the Bill to the President. The judges made it clear that they were only prescribing the timelines and not reading them into Article 200 since the latter course would amount to amending the Constitution. Explaining the need for prescribing the timelines, the judges said, failure to adhere to these timelines would enable the State government concerned to approach the court for an appropriate remedy and also provide an opportunity for the office of the Governor to explain the delay thereby enabling the court to take a decision on a case-by-case basis. “Any deliberate inaction on part of the Governor in assenting to Bills or reserving them for the consideration of the President, thus, has to be viewed as a serious threat to the federal polity of the country and the aggrieved governments cannot be left remediless, desperately waiting for a decision at the hands of the Governor,” the Bench said thereby bringing in a new dimension to the functioning of the age-

# As malaria cases fall, a look at Tamil Nadu’s strategies for elimination

Reports from the World Health Organization and the Commonwealth Malaria Report have indicated that India is set to eliminate malaria by 2030. The number of deaths from malaria has significantly fallen, with better surveillance and access to diagnosis and medicines, the reports add. Malaria, the WHO says, is a life-threatening disease spread to humans by some types of mosquitoes. It is mostly found in tropical countries. It is preventable and curable. The infection is caused by a parasite and does not spread from person to person. Malaria can be prevented by avoiding mosquito bites and with medicines. Treatments can stop mild cases from getting worse.

In Tamil Nadu, for the past two years, only around 340 cases were reported, says Director of Public Health T.S. Selvavinayagam. This turnaround was made possible due to steady surveillance, he adds. “When fever is reported the entire area is brought under surveillance. All institutions must be notified of fever surveillance. This enables the Health Department to get details of where the fever has occurred, who is affected and in which location,” he explains. Dr. Selvavinayagam goes on to detail: “Once we identify the location where there has been a fever case, the environmental factors are identified. These could be water stagnation or issues with water storage containers. Then we expand the periphery of surveillance and we continue to monitor intensively, undertake anti-vector activities etc. We rapidly search for hidden cases as we know what the precipitating factor is. The idea is to explore the hidden cases and bring them to light.”

The Health Department then takes up routine anti-malarial activities. “We continue to monitor the area for years together if it is a high risk area,” he says. The female Anopheles mosquitoes that spread malaria breed in fresh water, coastal and dirty water. Four types of malaria are commonly found in the country: Plasmodium vivax, plasmodium falciparum, plasmodium ovale and plasmodium malariae. “In Tamil Nadu we see two varieties of malaria commonly –

vivax and falciparum. The latter is imported,” says former DPH K. Kolandaisamy. “Uncovered overhead tanks, wells, riverine areas and quarries are breeding sources,” he explains. Other areas include coconut groves and places of religious congregations such as Rameswaram. Symptoms of malaria can be mild or life-threatening. Because some malaria symptoms are not specific, getting tested early is important. The most common early symptoms of malaria are fever, headache and chills. Severe symptoms include extreme tiredness and fatigue, impaired consciousness, multiple convulsions, difficulty breathing, dark or bloody urine, jaundice (yellowing of the eyes and skin), abnormal bleeding. Infants, children under 5 years, pregnant women and girls, travellers and people with HIV or AIDS are at higher risk of severe infection. Malaria elimination strategy includes taking a peripheral blood smear of the patient. “A health inspector should carry with them a needle and a slide box to collect the blood smear; a ladle, and a torch,” says Dr. Kolandaisamy. The last two items would help the inspector identify the disease-causing mosquitoes. They should also have a chloroscope to check for chlorine in water body, he adds. All fever is tested for suspicion of malaria. If the malaria is suspected to be imported (travel-related), we ask for travel history to help control the spread of the disease, Dr. Kolandaisamy says. Healthcare workers are deployed to spray insecticides. Years of surveillance and publicising the requirement to cover overhead tanks and wells has resulted in eliminating mosquito breeding spots, the doctor says. Malaria is introduced into the State by travellers however, says the public health expert. The Falciparum variety of malaria spreads through travel. The challenge lies in identifying the source of the infection, he points out. “The biggest challenge is lack of health and sanitary inspectors. The number of posts have been reduced. These are ‘invisible jobs’ of the public health sector. This invisible force, if not maintained, could increase the burden on staff and lead to a surge in the disease, Dr. Kolandaisamy avers.

# The road to gender-equal pay

Gender inequality is a global phenomenon ingrained into the fabric of society, manifesting itself in all aspects of life. In November 2024, India spoke on its commitment to gender equality in the UN Asia-Pacific Ministerial Conference on the Beijing+30 Review. The statement by the Women and Child Development Ministry highlights the progress made since 2019. This year, India boasts an allocation of \$37 billion to gender equality budgeting and has the highest proportion of women in STEM disciplines globally. However, the Ministry’s statement also acknowledges that many issues have yet to be addressed, such as the gender pay gap. Indeed, a key component of gender inequality is the global gender pay disparity. Closing India’s gender wage gap is the first step towards gender equality in India, allowing women to equally contribute to, and benefit from, India’s economic growth. What is India’s progress on the fight for gender-equal pay, and what measures will it take to reach such equality?

Regarding the wider global context, the fight for gender equality has greatly progressed around the world — with key milestones such as the international Suffrage Movements of the 17th and 18th centuries, which fought for women’s right to vote, and the 1979 Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), which defined gender-based discrimination and committed signatories to increase gender equality. Furthermore, the UN Sustainable Development Goals from 2015 included global women’s empowerment and gender equality within its agenda. Despite the UNSDGs’ 2030 target, however, the gender gap remains significant. A 2024 report by Focus 2030 says it would take a staggering 131 years to achieve worldwide gender equality.

Falling participation Overall, women’s global workforce participation has reduced compared with previous years, with a World Economic Forum (WEF) analysis of 2024 LinkedIn data showing that women account for 42% of the global workforce and 31.7% of senior leaders. A factor that perpetuates gender inequality in the workplace is the notion that women bear the responsibilities of the house (especially regarding childcare); this affects promotions and negotiation outcomes and restricts access to high-paying professions. Additionally, as women’s careers advance, the wage gap between them and men in the same position grows.

While India has ratified a number of conventions relating to women in the workplace, such as the International Labour Organisation (ILO) Employment and Occupation Convention recognising discrimination as a “violation of rights”, it still has a long way to go. The WEF’s Global Gender Gap Report, 2024 places India at 129th out of 146 countries, with 64.1% of its gender equality gap closed. A 2023 report by Azim Premji University indicates that salaried women in India still earn an average of 76% of what salaried men do per year, with self-employed women earning 40% of what self-employed men do. While Azim Premji’s 2023 report found that wage equality for women has been improving since 2004, they also uncovered cause for concern. Controlling for factors such as caste and class revealed increasing discrimination against women that hin-

dered full attainment of gendered wage equality. Maternal pay gap Despite improvements in recent years, women often occupy lower-paying jobs and mothers are subject to a maternal pay gap as they often earn less than women without children. This was made worse by the COVID-19 pandemic as women took on increased caregiving responsibilities to the extent that the pay gap grew by 7% from 2019 to 2021. World Bank estimates put the percentage of Indian women working and seeking jobs at 33% of all women in 2023, rising from 26% in 2020; Indian men, contrastingly, had rates of 77% and 74%, respectively. Moreover, the digital gender divide in India remains another obstacle to women’s economic participation. The Annual Status of Education (ASER), 2023 Report highlights how girls, especially in rural areas, have less access to technology than boys and their technical skills are resultantly worse than those of their male counterparts. This means women have unequal access to jobs requiring digital skills which is detrimental in today’s increasingly digital world.

As such, attaining gender equality in India — starting with the gender wage gap — requires a multifaceted approach that both breaks down social norms while concurrently implementing legal frameworks to create more equitable work environments. Changes to education, care, and architectural infrastructure can address the systemic barriers that perpetuate gender inequality. For instance, investments in the completion of secondary education and soft-skill acquisition can equip women for diverse employment opportunities. This is especially relevant in India as high rates of child marriage in rural areas mean many girls drop out of school. Furthermore, access to high-quality, low-cost childcare through government incentives and tax breaks enhances economic development as by reducing the burden of childcare on women. Commutes to work and school can be made safer through improvements to public infrastructure such as lighting and security. Women and girls would thus have better access to education, support for childcare, and safe travel to work and school without fear. Social, cultural barriers

Underpinning these infrastructure changes would be efforts to reduce social and cultural barriers to gender equality, such as using community-based initiatives such as equality-focused collectives to address negative stereotypes about women’s contributions in the workforce, provide the childcare and schooling help listed above, or awareness campaigns about women’s safety and bystander intervention. Corporate-facing legislation and revamped corporate processes are crucial in closing the gender pay gap. Enhancing anti-discrimination laws in India and implementing pay transparency systems are critical in instilling a sense of security and value among woman employees, while inclusive workplace policies that support recruitment and career progression ensure equal access to opportunities. Moreover, conducting regular gender pay audits can detect and resolve compensation discrepancies alongside providing data for action plans aimed at solving these disparities. Companies which publicly commit to these action plans also demonstrate their dedication to gender equality, presenting them as desirable employers to talented woman workers. Lastly, women in leadership roles serve as powerful role models.



# Tiny farmers: Ants began farming fungi 66 million years ago, says new study



Long before humans planted crops like wheat or rice, ants were already farming. These tiny animals have been cultivating fungi for millions of years, developing a system that rivals our own agriculture in complexity. New research led by entomologist Ted Schultz from the Smithsonian’s National Museum of Natural History traces this practice back 66 million years, right after the asteroid that wiped out the dinosaurs.

In a study, published earlier this month in Science, Schultz and his team used genetic data to uncover the early stages of this farming relationship. After the asteroid impact ended the Cretaceous period, plants across the globe began dying. But fungi thrived, feeding on decaying plant material. For ants, this provided the ideal conditions to start cultivating fungi as a reliable food source. Schultz explained that the aftermath of the asteroid impact created ideal conditions for fungi to flourish. While it was a disaster for plants and dinosaurs, it created new opportunities for the organisms studied by the researchers.

The study revealed that 66 million years ago, ants began collecting organic debris to fuel fungal growth. This was the beginning of ant farming. Over time, their agriculture became more specialised. Around 27 million years ago, as the planet’s climate cooled, ants domesticated certain fungi. These species became fully dependent on the ants for survival, while the ants relied on them for food. Similar to humans domesticating crops, ants took their fungi from tropical forests into drier environments. These isolated fungi became reliant on the ants’ care in the new, more arid habitats. Leafcutter ants, for example, now grow a specific fungus that produces nutritious food bodies called gongyliidia,

which are used to feed their young. Ants also practice many behaviours that mirror human farming. They weed their fungal gardens, use bacteria on their bodies to apply antibiotics, and even pass down their crops to future generations. When a new queen establishes a colony, she carries a piece of her mother’s fungal garden to start the next farm. Currently, there are 247 species of fungus-farming ants found across the Americas. These species are all descended from the first ants that began farming after the asteroid impact. Leafcutter ants were first observed farming fungi 150 years ago by naturalists, and Schultz’s study adds new depth to this discovery, using advanced genetic tools to map out their evolutionary history. Why did ants start farming? Schultz believes the asteroid played a major role. When the dust and debris from the impact blocked out the sun, many plants and the animals that fed on them died off. Fungi, however, thrived in the dead vegetation. Ants, already familiar with fungi, began farming them, setting off a relationship that has lasted for millions of years.

The research also highlights a key moment 27 million years ago, when ants began practicing “higher” agriculture, fully domesticating fungi that could no longer live independently. This advanced farming allowed ants to thrive in new environments where their crops depended on carefully controlled conditions. Despite facing challenges that human farmers also face, such as managing disease in their monocultures, ants have maintained a stable farming system. Schultz points out that while human monocultures are vulnerable to crop failure, ants have somehow managed to avoid this, possibly through their use of antibiotics. Researchers are still investigating how ants maintain this balance. Ant agriculture offers a glimpse into a system that has survived mass extinctions, climate change, and infectious diseases. Schultz believes there is still a lot to uncover about these tiny farmers.

He highlights the vast diversity among fungus-farming ants, many of which are still waiting to be discovered. “Ants have been practicing agriculture and fungus farming for much longer than humans have existed,” says Schultz, adding that “we could probably learn something from the agricultural success of these ants over the past 66 million years.” Anirban Mahapatra is a scientist and author, most recently of the popular science book ‘When The Drugs Don’t Work: The Hidden Pandemic That Could End Medicine’. The views expressed are personal.

# Why is the rupee weakening against the dollar? | Explained



The story so far: In the last week of December, 2024, the rupee breached the 85 mark against the U.S. dollar, touching an all-time low of 85.81. The currency depreciated about 3% in 2024, continuing its long-term trend of gradually but consistently losing value against the dollar.

What causes a currency to depreciate?

The price of any currency in the foreign exchange market is determined by the demand for the currency vis-a-vis its supply. This is similar to how the price of any other product is determined in the marketplace. When the demand for a product rises while its supply remains constant, this causes the price of the product to rise in order to ration the available supply. On the other hand, when the demand for a product drops while its supply remains constant, this causes sellers to drop the price of the product in order to attract sufficient buyers. The only difference between the goods market and the forex market is that currencies are exchanged for other currencies rather than for goods in the foreign exchange market. A currency depreciates against a foreign currency when the demand for it (in terms of the foreign currency) drops compared to its available supply in the market. When the currency’s value depreciates, the value of the foreign currency automatically appreciates on the other side. This is similar to how the purchasing power of your money depreciates or appreciates when the price of goods in the marketplace rise or fall, respectively. There are various factors that determine the demand for and the supply of any currency in the foreign exchange market.

One of the most important determinants of the supply of a currency in the market is the monetary policy of a country’s central bank. A central bank adopting looser monetary policy compared with other central banks will cause the supply of its currency in the market (for both goods trade

and investment purposes) to rise relative to other currencies, causing the currency’s value to drop. Central banks adopting relatively tighter monetary policy, on the other hand, are likely to see their currencies appreciate in value. A crucial factor that determines the demand for any currency, on the other hand, is the demand among foreigners for the goods and assets of the country. Since foreigners will first have to purchase the local currency before they can purchase a country’s goods and assets, high demand for a country’s goods and assets translates to high demand for its currency and which in turn leads to a rise in the value of the currency. A fall in demand for a country’s goods or assets, on the other hand, will cause the value of its currency to fall.

What is behind the rupee’s fall?

The current bout of rupee depreciation is seen as driven primarily by the exit of foreign investors from India, which has put pressure on the rupee. Global investors have been shuffling their investments across countries as central banks recalibrate their monetary policies to varying degrees. High inflation in the aftermath of the coronavirus pandemic led to monetary tightening by central banks which is now being reversed as inflation comes more under control. This has pushed investors to withdraw money from markets like India and invest in more advanced markets. Meanwhile, the longer term trend of the rupee’s depreciation against the dollar is attributed to higher inflation in India than in the U.S. due to the Reserve Bank of India’s looser monetary policy compared to the U.S. Federal Reserve. India’s traditional demand for high-value imports such as crude oil and gold (which boosts demand for the dollar and weakens the rupee) to keep its economy going and its inability to boost exports (which can help boost demand for the rupee) have also contributed to the lackluster performance of the rupee. The RBI has been using its dollar reserves to prop up the value of the rupee by artificially increasing the supply of dollars in the foreign exchange market, and thus the dollar demand for rupees. As a result, the value of India’s foreign exchange reserves dropped to an eight-month low of \$640 billion as of the last week of December from over \$700 billion in September. Analysts believe the rupee’s depreciation would have been far worse if not for the RBI’s intervention to support the rupee against the dollar. The RBI’s traditional stance has been to manage the rupee’s exchange value in such a way as to allow for a gradual depreciation in its value without too much volatility that could disrupt the economy.

# As climate talks enter uncertainty, can countries deliver in 2025



he Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) Synthesis Report and United Nations Emission Gap report comes have the same old story to tell --- climate change is a discussion for ballrooms over expensive food and drinks, and not for real change on the ground.

The Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) Synthesis Report and United Nations Emission Gap report comes have the same old story to tell --- climate change is a discussion for ballrooms over expensive food and drinks, and not for real change on the ground. Even 26 years after the first climate protocol was enforced, the emission trajectory continues to grow and has not slowed down to the level, which can save the world from warming two degrees more than the pre-industrial level. The context for the reports -- which highlight the collective failure of the world towards achieving climate change goals -- is that by next year countries have to submit fresh NDCs to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). Climate scientists and activists are asking policy makers to substantially increase country-wise targets under the NDCs to reduce emissions and for quicker transition towards net zero, latest by 2040. The synthesis report’s findings are stark but not surprising -- current national climate plans fall miles short of what’s needed to stop global heating from crippling every economy, and wrecking billions of lives and livelihoods across every country. Current plans combined -- if fully implemented -- would see emissions of 51.5 gigatonnes of CO2 equivalent in 2030 - a level only 2.6% lower than in 2019. Greenhouse gas pollution at these levels will guarantee a human and economic wreck for every country, without exception. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change has said that that greenhouse gas emissions (GHG) need to be cut 43% by 2030, compared to 2019 levels. By 2035, net global greenhouse gas emissions need to be cut by 60% compared to 2019 levels. This is critical to limiting global heating to 1.5°C this century to avert the worst impacts of climate change. Every fraction of a degree matters, as climate disasters get rapidly worse. The UN Emission Gap Report said the GHG emissions increase will lead to temperature rise by 2.6 to 3.1 degrees Celsius by turn of the century as emissions have risen two times compared to the pre-industrial level and 43% since 1990, when the first conference of climate change was held in Rio De Janeiro, leading to signing of UNFCCC. It also said that emission cut of 42% by 2030 and 57% by 2035 to get on track for 1.5°C. It remains technically possible to get on a 1.5°C pathway, with solar, wind and forests holding real promise for sweeping and fast emissions cuts, the emission gap report said, stating that sufficiently strong NDCs need to be backed urgently by a whole-of-government approach, measures that maximise

socio-economic and environmental co-benefits, enhanced international collaboration that includes reform of the global financial architecture, strong private sector action and a minimum six-fold increase in mitigation investment. The UNFCCC has urged nations to deliver on the next round of national climate plans and to have enough “ambition” to drastically cut emissions rather than just slowing down the emission trajectory and need to pass the ABC test: new emissions cut targets should be economy-wide, covering all greenhouse gases; keeping 1.5 degrees alive; must be broken down into sectors and gases and must be credible, backed up by substantive regulations, laws, and funding to ensure goals are met and plans implemented. The UN has called on nations to ensure that the new NDCs detail adaptation priorities and investments to protect critical sectors, infrastructure and people from climate impacts, and align with National Adaptation Plan processes. They should have a time horizon until 2035, with much stronger 2030 targets to drive the deep emissions cuts needed globally this decade, the UN said, while releasing the synthesis report. The COP29 conference to be held in November in Baku, Azerbaijan, is expected to frame the contours for NDCs, providing enabling economic frameworks for the needs of developing countries and more accountability from the developed world, which is responsible for 80% of the collective emissions. The COP29 comes at the time when there is a war in the middle-east with United States backed Israel on side and Iran-backed Hamas on the other and the impending United States presidential elections. If former President Donald Trump wins, the future of climate talks will be uncertain. In 2016, when Trump won for the first time, US walked out of the Paris climate deal, to return only when Democrats led by Jim Biden returned to power. In wake of these uncertainties, not much should be expected from Baku climate conference. However, if the countries agree on a robust and “real” emission reduction NDC framework, it would be an achievement as the first NDC framework under the Paris Agreement was weak as it aimed to bring as many countries on board of the voluntary global regime. It would be interesting to see whether Baku agrees to voluntary emission reduction targets for emerging economies such as China and India, the clamour for which is rising globally as the two countries progress to enter the club of developed nations. With India setting a target to become a developed country by 2047, beating this clamour will not ease on the global climate stage.

# India needs to prioritise preventive care

India is facing a healthcare crisis that is growing both in scope and cost. We face an alarming dichotomy today: while life expectancy of Indians is expected to increase further, many are facing disease burden earlier. As the country sees an alarming rise in non-communicable diseases (NCDs) such as heart disease, stroke, diabetes, and cancer, the financial burden on individuals and the healthcare system continues to escalate. NCDs accounted for about 65% of all deaths in 2022, up from about 50% in 2010-13, as per the National Family Health Survey-5. The prevalence of risk factors for NCDs is worryingly high. One in four adult men are hypertensive. One in eight are diabetic. Further, breast, lung, and cervical cancer are on the rise, with the median age of diagnosis occurring earlier than global averages.

Millions of people who are facing these conditions could have been managed better, at often lower costs, had they been diagnosed earlier. In this context, shifting the focus from reactive treatment to proactive prevention is crucial, not only to improve health outcomes but also to control the ever-increasing healthcare expenses. A growing economic burden

The Union Budget for 2024 allocated ₹87,657 crore to the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, marking a 13% increase from the previous year. While this is a step forward, experts agree that this allocation remains insufficient given the scale of India’s health challenges. The National Health Accounts show the total current health expenditure estimate in 2021-22 as ₹7.9 lakh crore, growing at a rate more than overall inflation. The share of household health expenditure, including insurance contributions, while decreasing over time, still drives nearly 50%+ of the spend. This remains one of the highest globally. The World Health Organization (WHO) projects that the economic burden of NCDs in India will surpass ₹280 lakh crore by 2030 — a cost equivalent to ₹2 lakh per household. This escalating cost, driven by rising healthcare expenses and productivity losses, poses a severe threat to financial stability, particularly for middle and lower-income families. Regular screenings, especially for high-risk individuals, could significantly reduce the incidence of serious, life-threatening and debilitating conditions and its resultant cascading economic and social effects. In a large hospital network, for every 1,000 people screened, at least three people are identified for pre-emptive cardiac or cancer interventions. Targeted but periodic screening investigations for individuals such as mammograms for breast cancer, pap smears for cervical cancer, X-ray or low-dose computed tomography for lung cancer, ultrasound for liver disease, echo cardiography and treadmill stress test for heart disease beyond the physical vitals and blood tests enable early intervention. Unfortunately, comprehensive health checks (which can cost anywhere between ₹8,000 and ₹15,000 in metro cities today) are perceived as expensive. If the government were to enable a step change in preventive health services adoption, it could significantly reduce the overall financial burden on individuals and the healthcare system. Tax incentives, subsidised screenings, and public awareness are key policy tools that can enable this. As part of the Finance Act, 2013, the Union government made efforts to encourage preventive healthcare by offering a ₹5,000 tax deduction under Section 80D of the Income Tax Act for health checks. However, this amount has remained stagnant for the last decade, despite the 12-14% estimated healthcare inflation rate and the rising cost of healthcare services. Thus, it would be prudent for our policymakers to consider revising the tax deduction limit to at least ₹15,000 in the Union Budget for 2025-26. This would incentivise more individuals to undergo preventive health checks, potentially saving the nation several thousand of crores in future healthcare costs. The incremental tax foregone to the exchequer from such a measure is estimated to be less than ₹5,000 crore, a worthy investment towards improving the health of the nation.

The path forward We need to prioritise preventive care to mitigate the increasing economic and financial burden of chronic diseases. A three-pronged approach can potentially drive a change in the adoption of preventive health services. First, we need to strengthen early intervention capabilities through the Ayushman Health and Wellness Centres, including capturing trends effectively and enabling risk-driven targeted screening using AI-enabled imaging



modalities to offer lower cost screenings at-scale. Second, we need to improve the adoption of screening at private centres by encouraging insurers and private health providers to offer a subsidised minimum screening programme for every individual between 40-60 years. For example, for women after the age of 40, a mammogram is necessary annually or once in two years, based on her risk factors. Exploring part funding through allocations from proceeds from the healthcare cess or the proposed 35% GST slab on tobacco and sugar products can help reduce funding needs. Finally, the increase in tax deduction limit can further incentivise people to complete comprehensive health checks. By prioritising preventive care over reactive treatments, India can pave the way for a healthier and more economically resilient future.

# Reel consumers get note from Karan Johar

Mumbai: Filmmaker Karan Johar has shared a message for ‘avid reel consumers’ and talked about how they have bid adieu to the ‘silently suffering attention span’. Karan took to his Instagram stories, where he shared the profound note, which also talked about killing books courtesy the consumption of clips. “Dear avid REEL consumer, You have officially bid goodbye to the silently suffering Attention Span... and as far as I am concerned you killed me a decade ago. Regretfully yours, BOOK,” he wrote as the caption. An avid user of social media himself, Karan often posts thought-provoking yet hilarious quotes on his social media.

Earlier this week, KJo reflected on his fond memories and reopened his ‘yaadon ka dabba’. He penned a nostalgic post about the Ranbir Kapoor-starrer ‘Yeh Jawaani Hai Deewani’, which released in 2013. It read, “It’s time to relive this yaadon ka mithai ka dabba! #YehJawaaniHaiDeewani in select cinemas near you – book your tickets now!” KJo’s latest Insta post also included a collage of some special moments from the film, capturing its essence of “Pyaar, Sapna, Deewanapan, Dosti”. Made under the direction of Ayan Mukerji, “Yeh Jawaani Hai Deewani” starred Ranbir Kapoor, Deepika Padukone, Aditya Roy Kapur, and Kalki Koechlin in pivotal roles. Bankrolled by Hiroo Yash Johar and Karan Johar under the banner of Dharma Productions, Pritam has provided the tunes for the movie. “Yeh Jawaani Hai Deewani” shares the tale of four classmates, who end up going on a trekking trip together, changing the dynamics of their friendship forever.

The drama is also credited with some memorable songs such as ‘Badtameez Dil’, ‘Balam Pichkari’, ‘Subhanallah’, ‘Kabira’, ‘Ilaahi’, and ‘Dilliwaali Girlfriend’. Karan on January 2 had revealed what he considers to be his biggest passion. He wrote, “Filme.. What we live and die for...” It should not come as any surprise, given that Karan Johar has dedicated all his life to making movies, and continues to do so even today. As far as Karan Johar’s next project is concerned, the director recently joined forces with Kartik Aryan for a romantic comedy titled ‘Tu Meri Main Tera, Main Tera Tu Meri’. Sameer Vidwans will be helming the movie scheduled to be out in the theatres in 2026.



# SEBI bars Synoptics Technologies, promoters for siphoning off IPO funds



Synoptics TechnologiesThe regulator has prohibited First Overseas Capital Ltd, which acted as the lead manager to the IPO of STL, from taking up any new assignment relating to merchant banking The Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) on Tuesday barred Mumbai-based Synoptics Technologies Ltd (STL) and its promoters from trading in securities market for siphoning away funds raised through the initial public offering (IPO).The regulator has prohibited First Overseas Capital Ltd, which acted as the lead manager to the IPO of STL, from taking up any new assignment relating to merchant banking activities in the securities market till further directions.

“The facts brought out during the examination reveal a well laid out plan of the Company and the Lead Manager, FOCL, to siphon away funds raised in the IPO,” SEBI said in the interim order.STL came out with a Rs 54.04 crore IPO and got listed on the SME Platform of NSE Ltd on July 13, 2023. Of the Rs 54.04 crore, Rs 35.08 crore was raised through a fresh issue of shares and the remaining Rs 18.96 crore was through an offer for sale of shares made by two promoters – Jatin Shah, also the company’s Managing Director, and Jagmohan Manilal Shah.

As per the disclosures made in the Red Herring Prospectus (RHP) filed by STL, issue-related expenses amounted to Rs 80 lakh, of which Rs 50 lakh was to be paid from the proceeds of the fresh issue, while the remain-

ing Rs 30 lakh was to be met by the selling shareholders under the offer for sale. Net of these expenses, STL was projected to receive Rs 34.58 crore from the public issue, to be utilized for repayment of borrowings (Rs 5 crore), working capital (Rs 17.58 crore), investment in strategic acquisition/ joint venture (Rs 5.3 crore) and general corporate purpose (Rs 6.7 crore).In its investigation, SEBI found that Rs 19 crore from the issue proceeds was transferred out of the escrow account on July 12, 2023 – a day prior to the listing of the shares of the company and the grant of trading approval. These transfers were effected based on an instruction issued by FOCL to HDFC Bank on July 12, 2023, for release of issue-related expenses.The order said that the amount transferred ostensibly for meeting issue related expenses —Rs 19 crore—was grossly disproportionate to the Rs 80 lakh disclosed as issue expenses in the RHP, and accounted for more than 54 per cent of the total proceeds raised by Synoptics through the fresh issue of shares and 35 per cent of the total issue size.“The actions of FOCL in giving instructions for the transfers to HDFC Bank, Fort Branch, Mumbai, are shocking and stunning at the same time,” the order said.

When asked for a clarification, STL said the payments were not related to issue expenses and were instead for working capital (payment made to Dev Solutions) and strategic investment/joint venture objects (payment made to CN IT Solution and ABS Tech Services).STL had disclosed that the target entities for the proposed strategic investment had not yet been identified. However, within 20 days of the RHP filing—and on the very day the IPO proceeds were credited to the issue account—funds earmarked for strategic investment and general corporate purposes were transferred to CN IT Solutions and ABS Tech Services toward the object of strategic acquisition. SEBI said during a site visit conducted by NSE, it was found that neither of the entities was present/located at the stated address.In respect of Rs 6 crore transferred to Dev Solutions, a site visit by NSE revealed that no such business existed at the stated location.

# Long-delayed Free trade Agreement: Amid Trump tariff pressure, India-UK bridge divide after ‘round-the-clock negotiations’

India and the UK appeared close to signing a trade deal on several occasions—first under former UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson, who had set a Diwali 2022 deadline, and later under Indian-origin British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak—but the agreement was ultimately concluded against the backdrop of tariff pressures from US President Donald Trump.

A statement released by the UK suggested that the agreement was finalised after “round-the-clock negotiations” that continued until last week, when Business and Trade Secretary Jonathan Reynolds and Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal held the final round of talks in London. Negotiations had first begun in 2013 but were abandoned due to differences.Despite continuing differences on environmental and labour-related issues, both countries seized a historic geopolitical opportunity—amid growing anti-China sentiment in the West and India’s increasing openness to integrating more fully into global supply chains, something that India lagged a decade ago.

The India–UK agreement is particularly significant as it marks India’s first full-fledged trade deal with a Western nation. While India has signed a partial agreement with Australia, negotiations for a comprehensive deal have yet to be concluded.The Trump-era tariffs have reignited political momentum for trade agreements. Trade deals are now increasingly viewed through a geo-strategic lens, with greater involvement from the Ministry of External Affairs and the Prime Minister’s Office—apparently aimed at countering China and positioning India as an alternative manufacturing hub.Indian government officials have said the UK deal will better position India to negotiate an FTA with the European Union, which could offer broader benefits—not only for labour-intensive sectors but also for industrial goods.

The UK deal comes at a time when US tariffs on Chi-



nese imports have surged to record highs. However, the US is not alone in seeking to reduce import dependence on China; the UK and EU have also introduced a range of anti-dumping measures to protect their domestic markets.India signalling openness to trade deals amid US–China tensions could help attract greater foreign investment, as global supply chains are being realigned in response to US tariffs.

Richard Baldwin, Professor of International Economics at IMD Business School, told The Indian Express that as the US and China drift apart in a tariff war, third countries such as India are becoming more attractive trade partners. “The EU is increasingly interested in signing agreements with India,” he said. “Remember, the US accounts for less than 15 per cent of world imports—85 per cent of the global market remains accessible. Maintaining access through smart FTAs while managing dumping risks is crucial,” he added. The trade deal with the UK is particularly significant for India’s rapidly growing services sector, as integration with the UK—where 80 per cent of output comes from services—could boost India’s growth. However, the fine print of the deal will provide a more accurate picture.

# Most comprehensive trade deal India has negotiated, to be the template for future engagements: Commerce Ministry

The India-UK trade deal is significant in being the most comprehensive free trade deal that New Delhi has entered into so far and could serve as the template for future trade engagements, including the multiple bilateral deals currently under negotiation.These include the complex trade deal under discussion with the 27-nation European Union and the fast-tracked deal being negotiated with the US.

The impetus to wrap up the trade deal comes against the backdrop of the US catalysing a major reset in global trade order after the series of protectionist measures rolled out by the Donald Trump administration.While full details of the India-UK agreements are awaited, negotiators on the Indian side have been cognizant of the fact that any concessions, tariff or otherwise, made in this FTA would have to be potentially replicated in the ongoing trade deal negotiations, especially with the US and the EU.Also, a contentious bilateral investment treaty between India and the UK continues to hang fire, with both sides finding it difficult to ease out differences related to some of the clauses of the investment pact. This bilateral trade deal was also slightly complicated given that both India and the UK are services hubs and there was much less complementarity on issues, as compared to, for instance, the pact negotiated earlier with Australia. Also, London was explicitly clear about it not wanting an early harvest deal, of the kind that India had signed with Australia.

After the signing of the UK deal, India’s Ministry of Commerce and Industry said Tuesday that the trade deal will open up export opportunities for labour-intensive sectors such as textiles, marine products and leather, among others, as around 99 per cent of Indian exports will benefit from zero-duty access to the UK market. The India-UK Free Trade Agreement (FTA), it said, ensured “comprehensive market access for goods across all sectors, covering all of India’s export interests” and that India will gain from tariff elimination on approximately 99 per cent of tariff lines. This will cover “almost 100 per cent of trade value” — offering



opportunities to increase bilateral trade between India and the UK.The Ministry also said that India has secured “significant commitments on digitally delivered services for Indian service suppliers”, especially in professional services such as architecture and engineering, computer-related services, and telecommunications services, a major area of concession for the Indian side.While both governments are expected to release the official text of the trade deal in due course, New Delhi’s view is that an exemption secured for Indian workers temporarily in the UK — and their employers — from paying social security contributions for a period of three years under the Double Contribution Convention is a net positive for India. This, Ministry officials said, will result in “significant financial gains for Indian service providers”.The Ministry said that the FTA eases mobility for professionals, including contractual service suppliers; business visitors; investors; intra-corporate transferees; partners and dependent children of intra-corporate transferees with the right to work; and independent professionals such as yoga instructors, musicians and chefs.“This agreement sets a new benchmark for equitable and ambitious trade between two large economies. It will benefit Indian farmers, fishermen, workers, MSMEs, start-ups, and innovators.

# Drinkable sunscreen is the new rage; here’s all you need to know about this ‘liquid supplement’



With an increased awareness of skin health and the need to protect it from harmful UV rays, drinkable sunscreen has become a new trend in the wellness industry. But what exactly is it, and can this liquid supplement provide internal defense against damaging UV rays, potentially replacing conventional topical sunscreens? We asked experts.The most common type of drinkable sunscreen is a liquid supplement that includes antioxidants, plant extracts such as Polypodium leucotomos, and occasionally vitamins like astaxanthin or beta-carotene, said Dr Karuna Malhotra, an aesthetic physician and cosmetologist from Cosmetic Skin and Homeo Clinic in Rajouri Garden, New Delhi. “These ingredients are believed to support the skin’s ability to fight UV-induced oxidative stress from the inside out,” added Dr Malhotra.Unlike topical sunscreens, which physically block or absorb UV rays, drinkable sunscreens work on a systemic level. “They don’t create a physical barrier on the skin. Instead, they aim to enhance your skin’s resilience by reducing the cellular damage caused by sun exposure, albeit from the inside,” said Dr Malhotra.

# The temperature-asthma link: increasing heat is worsening symptoms in asthma patients, causing new cases among the healthy

Asthma in India has a disproportionately high death rate, representing three times greater mortality and over two times greater Disability-Adjusted Life Years (DALYs) than the global share of the asthma burden. While asthma is recognised by a multitude of symptoms including shortness of breath, wheezing, coughing, and tightness in the chest, in the wake of rising temperatures, unprecedented heat, and the relentless progress of climate change, it is becoming an underappreciated threat to respiratory health, especially for those who already have asthma. Aside from the unpleasantness of the blistering heat, environmental changes can aggravate asthma symptoms and, worse, seem to be causing new cases among healthy people.

Patients with severe asthma have an enhanced sensitivity of their airways to dry air. This dryness causes a reduction in water content of the airway, which evokes an inflammatory response. This inflammation, in turn, makes the airways narrowed, a process also referred to as airway constriction, which further restricts breathing. The already vulnerable respiratory system cannot handle the additional load of intense heat and therefore, has more episodes of asthma attacks.The scenario is further compounded by the synergistic effects of increasing temperatures and intensifying air pollution - a direct fallout of urbanisation and industrialisation driving climate change. This causes injury to the epithelial cells of the airway, the defensive lining of the respiratory tract. This makes the respiratory system more vulnerable to high temperatures, and also enhances the allergenicity of current pollutants. The twin burden of heat and pollution results in a more reactive and susceptible respiratory bed.

Clinicians are now seeing an increase in patients with asthma-like symptoms who have no previous history of respiratory ailments. Although severe temperatures can cause mild respiratory symptoms even in normal individuals, the growing frequency and duration of heat waves, combined with increased levels of allergens, could be tipping some over an edge, precipitating the onset of asthma.Interestingly, when asked about new or unforeseen environmental irritants within their practice that were not widespread a few years ago, there was a negative response. This indicates that as the intensity and effect of current irritants intensify, completely new triggers are perhaps not yet the main issue.

There are particular groups of patients at risk of asthma exacerbations when the weather is very hot or unstable. As medical officers have pointed out, the extremes of age: very young children and the old are especially at risk. Their physiological reserve and regulatory capacity might be less, and so they are less capable of coping with acute or sustained temperature stress.In terms of geographical patterns in weather-related asthma severity, the general opinion is that the risk is more or less similar in urban and rural settings, mainly as a result of the general influence of industrialisation and related pollution. Although urban areas tend to have greater levels of pollutants, rural settings may also be influenced by agricultural activities and long-range transport of air pollutants.

With these escalating dangers, proactive measures are important for asthma patients on extremely hot or smoggy days. Physicians advise proper hydration to offset the dehydrating properties of dry air. Staying indoors during the most intensely hot part of the day is also necessary to avoid heat and pollutants. Wearing a clean mask can serve as an immediate physical shield against airborne allergens. Importantly, patients need to follow their physician’s instructions carefully regarding the use of regular inhalers to control their baseline inflammation and keep quick-relief medication handy.For those who do not have asthma but have seasonal respiratory symptoms that may be climate-related, the recommendation is slightly different. Although routine preventative inhaler use is not usually advisable in the absence of a proper asthma diagnosis, seeing a healthcare provider to determine specific triggers and create an individualised management plan is recommended. This may involve such strategies as avoiding known allergens or taking over-the-counter medication for mild symptoms.

The long-term health impacts of deteriorating climate trends are becoming a major concern. Physicians are highlighting the imperative for community action to reverse climate change. Actions like reforestation to enhance air quality and fostering a healthier environment are crucial. A priority of making a “breathful India” through sustainable environmental management is viewed as vital to protect the respiratory health of all individuals. Finally, a focus on the underlying causes of climate change is critical to protecting

Are they effective?

These supplements are typically taken orally once daily, ideally before exposure to the sun. However, Dr Malhotra said that the absorption and effectiveness can vary from person to person. “And it won’t work instantly,” said Dr Malhotra.Concurred Dr Shareefa Chause, dermatologist, Dr Shareefa Skin Care Clinic, Mumbai, and said that drinkable sunscreens work from within and take time to build protection. “They are not a substitute for topical sunscreen,” she emphasised.Dr Malhotra noted that while there is some scientific backing for ingredients like Polypodium leucotomos in reducing sunburn risk, she cautioned against seeing drinkable sunscreen as a standalone solution. “Since the research is limited, the evidence is still evolving, and it should never replace your SPF lotion or sunblock. It can supplement your skincare routine, but relying solely on it could leave your skin unprotected,” said Dr Malhotra.Dr Malhotra said not everyone is a good fit for drinkable sunscreen. “It is typically safe for adults, but without a doctor’s approval, it might not be appropriate for children, expectant mothers, or those with specific medical concerns, she advised.“Drinkable sunscreen might support skin health, but it’s not a shortcut. Think of it as an internal antioxidant boost, not a shield. Traditional sunscreen is still your first line of defense. Relying solely on these supplements can give a false sense of security, especially during peak UV hours. For optimal protection, always combine internal care with external sun safety practices,” said Dr Malhotra.Dr. Chause mentioned that it’s safer to continue using proven methods, such as broad-spectrum SPF creams, hats, and shade, while treating drinkable sunscreens only as a possible supplement, not a replacement. “Don’t just blindly use a sunscreen because it has been promoted on social media. Speak to the expert before trying out any product,” said Dr Chause.



vulnerable groups and helping everyone breathe easily and safely in the future.This is especially significant, as India has a heavy asthma burden. Estimates are difficult to get, but the Global Burden of Disease study (1990-2019) has estimated approximately 34.3 million individuals with asthma in India, which represents about 13.09% of the worldwide burden. A high proportion of asthma cases in India are not diagnosed. It has been estimated by experts that more than 80% of the cases of asthma in India may go undiagnosed, and this can progress over a period of time. There are differences in prevalence among regions and populations. There is evidence of increased prevalence in rural locations and in females. Childhood asthma is a significant reason for emergency department visits, hospitalisations, and school absence.Higher temperatures are likely to intensify air pollution, notably ground-level ozone, which is a confirmed asthma inducer. Heatwaves also have the potential to aggravate respiratory diseases. Climate change can result in longer pollen seasons and higher pollen production, impacting people with allergic asthma. Alterations in rainfall patterns and higher humidity can foster the development of mould and dust mites, indoor allergens that induce asthma. Severe weather conditions such as wildfires, increasingly caused by global warming, emit particulate matter and smoke that can lead to asthma attacks.While the impacts of climate change are now increasingly being felt, air pollution still remains a severe environmental and health emergency in India. The recent statistics from the World Air Quality Report 2024 indicate that India was the fifth most polluted nation in the world, with a mean PM2.5, more than ten times the World Health Organization safe threshold. Particulate pollution (PM2.5) is a significant issue. Between 1998 and 2021, the Indian average annual particulate pollution grew by 67.7%, lowering average life expectancy by roughly 2.3 years. An estimated 59.1% of the world’s growth in pollution between 2013 and 2021 originated from India.Protecting vulnerable populations, especially children and the elderly, requires proactive strategies at both individual and societal levels. Ultimately, safeguarding the right to breathe clean air necessitates a concerted effort to mitigate climate change, implement stringent pollution control measures, and prioritise public health to prevent a future where respiratory distress becomes the norm.

# Gaganyaan mission pushed to first quarter of 2027

New Delhi: The launch of India’s maiden human space flight — Gaganyaan — has been pushed to the first quarter of 2027, nearly five years later than the original schedule as it races to ace technologies for such complex projects.

The first uncrewed mission of the Gaganyaan project is expected to be launched later this year, which will be followed by two similar missions in 2026, Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) Chairman V Narayanan said at a press conference. “The first crewed mission is targeted for the first quarter of 2027,” Narayanan said and added ISRO would send a half-humanoid robot — Vyommitra — as part of the uncrewed mission before sending astronauts into low-Earth orbit.

“The Gaganyaan programme represents India’s rise as a global space power, built on indigenous technology, fiscal prudence and visionary political leadership,” Union Science and Technology Minister Jitendra Singh said.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced the Gaganyaan project during his Independence Day address in 2018 and set a target of 2022 for achieving India’s maiden human space flight



# Selectors to remove Rohit Sharma from Test captaincy



GNS News Agency, May 12

The national selectors have decided to remove Rohit Sharma as captain of India's Test team, and go with a new leader for the tour of England that starts next month. It remains to be seen if Rohit travels to England as a specialist opening batsman. learns that the Indian cricket board will back the selectors' decision.It's a move not driven by a need for transition or to cull out aging players, but understood to be based on Rohit's performances and his form in red-ball cricket. It is learnt that the 38-year-old will continue to be in India's ODI plans.

This newspaper had reported in March how the board was keen on Rohit to lead on the England tour after his success in the ICC Champions Trophy. Rohit, too, on a recent appearance on former Australian captain Michael Clarke's podcast, 'Beyond 23', had talked about his excitement in leading an attack with Jasprit Bumrah, Mohammed Shami and Mohammed Siraj in England. The selectors had a series of discussions last month over Rohit's future in the Indian Test team, and also deliberated on the issue in Mumbai on Tuesday, before sharing their vision with the BCCI.

"The selectors' thought process is clear. They want a new leader for the England tour and Rohit doesn't fit in as a captain, especially considering his red-ball form. They want to groom a young leader for the next Test cycle and the selection committee has informed the BCCI that Rohit won't lead the team," a source in the Indian board informed this newspaper. It is understood that the decision-makers don't want to repeat the lack of stability seen during India's tour

of Australia. Rohit had struggled in that series, averaging just 6.20 in five innings and also dropped himself for the final Test. In the Test series prior to that, against New Zealand at home late last year, he averaged just 15.16 in three Tests. Considering his red-ball form, the selectors are hesitant in making him the captain. As a specialist batsman, he can be dropped from the playing XI if performances don't stack up, but it gets complicated if he is the captain. It also can have an adverse effect on the team, those in the know say, as it was felt on the Australia tour.Rohit didn't travel to Australia last year for the first Test in Perth due to the birth of his second child and Yashasvi Jaiswal and KL Rahul opened the innings. When he returned for the second Test, Rohit demoted himself in the batting order, then returned as opener for the Boxing Day Test in Melbourne, before dropping himself from the match in Sydney.India had won the first Test under Bumrah's captaincy but went on to lose the Border-Gavaskar Trophy. India had also lost the home series to New Zealand 0-3 under Rohit.Rohit averages 40.57 from 67 Tests. That drops to 31.01 in Tests outside India. He averages 24.38 in Australia and 16.63 in South Africa but the average jumps to 44.66 in England, where India play next. As an opener, he averages nearly the same (44.54) in Tests in England., head coach Gautam Gambhir had said any decision regarding Rohit's future in the team would be taken by the selectors."First things first, a coach's job isn't selecting the team. It is the job of the selectors to select. The coach only selects the 11 who will play a match. Neither those who coached before me were selectors nor am I a selector," Gambhir said at ABP News' 'India At 2047' Summit.When pressed further about the veterans' (Rohit and Virat Kohli) future, Gambhir said no player should be pressed into retirement.

"Till the time they are performing, they should be a part of the team. When you start and when you end is your individual decision. No coach, no selector, no BCCI can tell you when you should call it quits. If you perform, then why 40, you can jolly well play till 45, who's stopping you?" he said."That (playing the 2027 ODI World Cup) will depend on their performance. Only that can ensure their selection. And what should I say about their performance? The world saw how they performed in the Champions Trophy," Gambhir had said.

# Taipei Open badminton: Ayush Shetty defeats All England finalist Lee Chia-hao to set up R16 clash against Srikanth Kidambi

GNS News Agency, May 12

Continuing his good form on the BWF circuit this year, world No. 44 Ayush Shetty defeated world No. 13 Lee Chia Hao 21-17, 21-18 to notch up an upset at the Taipei Open Super 300 badminton tournament on Wednesday. Ayush, who had earlier this year reached the semifinal at Orleans Masters with a series of good wins, was impressive in his clash against the All England 2025 finalist Lee as he set up a round of 16 meeting against Indian veteran Srikanth Kidambi

The tall Mangalorean is a former World Junior bronze medallist and impressed Viktor Axelsen last year after a sparing stint with the Danish superstar. In the opening game, he recovered from a slow start where he was down 3-7 to stay in touch with the speedy right-hander who produced a stunning run in Birmingham few weeks back at the prestigious All England. In the endgame, Ayush pushed ahead from 16-16 to take the lead.

Lee was bound to make a comeback, especially playing at his home event, and in the second game Ayush trailed for majority of the time. Down 15-17, it seemed Ayush would have had to contend with playing the decider but a combination of errors from Lee, who repeatedly missed the lines while attempting to smash, and the Indian keeping things steady at the front court, he reeled off 5 straight points to have match point opportunities. The point at 17-17 was criti-



cal and a fine illustration of Ayush's all-court game as he wrong-footed Lee with a tap at the net. Ayush eventually prevailed in 50 minutes.Ayush will next face former world No 1 Srikanth, who overcame another Indian Junior Worlds medallist in Sankar Subramanian 21-16 21-15 in just 35 minutes. Ayush and Srikanth have faced twice on the BWF circuit, winning one each, with the youngster prevailing the last time they met at the Indonesia Masters earlier this year in January.Earlier in the day, Tarun Mannepalli also reached the men's singles prequarterfinals with a hard-fought 21-12, 19-21, 21-17 win against Japan's Shogo Ogawa.In women's singles, teenager Unnati Hooda progressed to the pre-quarters with a victory over compatriot Anupama Upadhyaya.

# 'Poor execution costed us the game'- Mahela Jayawardene on MI's loss vs GT



GNS News Agency, May 12

Mumbai Indians lost to Gujarat Titans in a rain-affected game despite being ahead on Duckworth-Lewis System when rain halted the play. Head coach Mahela Jayawardene believes that the team erred in execution and from now on will treat every remaining match as a "playoffs" from hereon."I think it sums it up. It is margins, but I probably, both teams made quite a few mistakes out there in the middle and we probably made more than them," Jayawardene told the media after the match.After scoring 155 for eight in the first innings, MI reduced GT to 126 for six but a second rain interruption saw the target being revised to 15 needed off the final over.

GT got over the line on the final ball to go to the top of the points table, while MI will now need to win both their remaining matches to qualify for the playoffs.He also lamented the lack of runs on the board and praised bowlers for their gritty performance.

"We were probably 30 runs short on that wicket and the guys bowled really well, created a lot of opportunities, fielded really well (and) fought for everything so that's good signs and we'll treat every game as a playoff game for us now," he said.When the rain hit second time, GT was behind on the par DLS score and needed 15 runs for the revised target. Deepak Chahar conceded two boundaries and bowled a no-ball making meal of the advantage. However, Jayawardene said MI lost control of the game when they were still on top and that was the reason for their defeat."I could have bowled (Will Jacks) Jacksy, Karn Sharma, or whoever (was) left (with) overs, but I think Deepak did that

job for us in the first few games as well," he said.It wasn't the decision, it was the execution and that's not where we lost the game. My thinking is (that) we lost the game when we had control of it and that was disappointing," he added.Mumbai Indians are placed fourth in the points table with seven wins from 12 matches and 14 points.

# Indian probables to train for FIFA window named

GNS News Agency, May 12

Hyderabad: Head coach Manolo Márquez announced the 28-member Indian probables squad that will assemble in Kolkata on May 18 to train for the FIFA International window in June.India is on the preparation path for the AFC Asian Cup 2027 Final Round qualifiers, where they are placed in Group C, along with Bangladesh, Hong Kong China, and Singapore, with the qualifiers being played in a home-and-away round robin format.

The Blue Tigers' next big challenge is against Hong Kong, China, whom they will play away on June 10 at the Kai Tak Sports Park, in Kowloon City.The first two matches in Group C, between India and Bangladesh in Shillong, and between Singapore and Hong Kong, China, in Singapore, ended in stalemates, leaving all four teams with a point apiece.As part of their preparations for the Asian Cup qualifier against Hong Kong, the Blue Tigers will have a 10-day training camp in Kolkata before they fly off to Bangkok to play a FIFA International Friendly against Thailand on June 4. The team will subsequently travel to Hong Kong for their Asian Cup qualifier.

Defenders: Naorem Roshan Singh, Rahul Bheke, Konsham Chinglensana Singh, Anwar Ali, Thangiam Boris Singh, Sandesh Jhingan, Asish Rai, Subhasish Bose, Mehtab Singh, Tekcham Abhishek Singh, Nikhil Prabhu.

Midfielders: Suresh Singh Wangiam, Naorem Mahesh Singh, Ayush Dev Chhetri, Udanta Singh Kumam, Lalengmawia Ralte, Liston Colaco, Ashique Kuruniyan, Brandon Fernandes.Forwards: Sunil Chhetri, Irfan Yadwad, Manvir Singh, Suhail Ahmad Bhat, Lallianzuala Chhangte.

# 'Don't want to talk much about referee, every 50-50 decision went Inter's way': Barca manager Flick after UCL semis loss



GNS News Agency, May 12

An upset Barcelona manager, Hansi Flick, criticised refereeing decisions in his side's 4-3 loss against Inter Milan in the second leg of the UEFA Champions League (UCL) that stopped the Catalans reaching their first Champions League final in a decade after an extra-time goal by home substitute Davide Frattesi."I don't want to talk too much about the referee, but every decision that was 50-50 went (Inter's) way," said Flick after the match. The German criticised Polish referee Szymon Marciniak, who had a busy night in the semi-final, second leg at San Siro, with Inter advancing 7-6 on aggregate to face the winner of Paris Saint-

Germain vs Arsenal.

Marciniak awarded Inter a penalty after a VAR review for a challenge by Pau Cubarsi on Lautaro Martinez that he did not deem an infringement and later reversed a decision he had signalled as a spot kick for Barcelona, with VAR saying Henrikh Mkhitaryan's foul on Lamine Yamal was just outside the box.Barca were at the cusp of the win after they roared back from two goals down to grab a 3-2 lead with Raphinha's goal in the 87th minute, however, Inter equalised through Francesco Acerbi in added time to stay alive before scoring the extra-time winner.Barca's players and bench also complained about what they thought was handball inside the box by Inter defender Acerbi and a foul by fullback Denzel Dumfries on Gerard Martin in the build-up to the equaliser, which took the game to extra time.

"I am disappointed, but not with my team. They tried everything. It's the way it is. We are out, but next year we will try again to make the fans happy. It makes me sad ... My team did an excellent job. I don't like talking about the referee ... I've told him what I think, but I'm not going to say it here what I've said..." he added.Barca were chasing a treble after winning the Copa del Rey, but will now turn their focus to La Liga, where they top the table and on Sunday host rivals Real Madrid, who trail them by four points with four games to go.

# 'It creates mess for Esports World Cup qualification': Anish Giri questions lineup for Champions Chess Tour; advocates for separate EWC qualifier event

GNS News Agency, May 12

Dutch Grandmaster Anish Giri questioned the lineup for the upcoming Champions Chess Tour (CCT) and advocated for a separate qualifier event for the Esports World Cup (EWC) qualification. His response came after chess.com announced that Magnus Carlsen, Hikaru Nakamura and Ian Nepomniachtchi — the three already qualified players for EWC 2025 set to happen in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, later this year — will feature in the second (and last) CCT event, named Chess.com Classic.The two-legged CCT is acting as a qualifier pathway for EWC, where a total of 12 players will qualify from these events. Four more players will qualify through the Last Chance Qualifier event later.

Anish took to X (formerly Twitter) and wrote, "I understand that you want the big stars in the Champions Tour event, but it creates a mess for Esports World Cup qualification, since they have already qualified. I think the CCTour and EWC qualifiers should be separate events. What do you guys think?" wrote Anish. I understand that you want the big stars in the Champions Tour event, but it creates a mess for Esports World Cup qualification, since they have already qualified.Daniel Rensch, Chief Chess Officer and the face of chess.com, welcomed the changes, citing Anish's criticism as "fair". He replied, "While I'd say the twitterverse is often biased (whether they realize it or not), in this case, the criticism is fair. We moved quickly in partnership with the EWC this year and evolved our CCT format as best we could, but there will be (Exciting!? Important!? We think good!?) changes next year."Apart from Carlsen, Nakamura and Nepomniachtchi, current World Champion D. Gukesh and his predecessor, China's Ding Liren, are set to participate in the Chess.com Classic event.

What is the Esports World Cup?

The Esports World Cup brings together top esports clubs across 24 popular titles. EWC 2025 will run in Riyadh from July 7 to August 24, featuring chess as an online event for the first time. The inaugural 2024 edition spanned eight weeks, while the 2025 event will be history's largest multi-title esports tournament with 2,000+ players, 200+ teams, and a \$70 million (?7602 crore) prize pool.

# Anna Muzychuk says Stavanger tournament will be 'strongest women's event'

GNS News Agency, May 12

Anna Muzychuk finished as the runner-up last year in the inaugural edition of Norway Chess Women's tournament. (PHOTO: Norway Chess)Anna Muzychuk finished as the runner-up last year in the inaugural edition of Norway Chess Women's tournament.

World No 8 women's chess player Anna Muzychuk believes that the upcoming Norway Chess women's event will be the strongest women's event in the sport. Besides Muzychuk (rated 2526), the Norway Chess women's event this year will see the following players: Ju Wenjun (FIDE rating: 2580), who recently won her fourth women's world championship title; Lei Tingjie (rated 2552), who is the Women's World No 3; Humpy Koneru (rated 2543), who is women's World No.5 and a two-time World Rapid Champion; Vaishali Rameshbabu (rated 2475), a bronze medal winner at the Women's World Blitz Championship and a Olympiad gold winner; and Sara Khadem (rated 2449).Anna, who finished as the runner-up last year in the inaugural



edition of Norway Chess Women's tournament, expects a strong and unpredictable competition this year."I think it's the strongest women's event if we are looking at the ratings. It will be super tough. Each participant has a real chance to win it. I think it will be exciting, and I am really looking forward to it," she said.

After a remarkable win at the prestigious Nicosia Women's Grand Prix in March, the Ukrainian Grandmaster shifted her focus completely towards the Austria Grand Prix, currently underway. While it would be her final Grand Prix of the ongoing cycle, the 35-year-old would travel a week later

for the highly anticipated 2025 edition of Norway Women's Chess to compete against some of the top talents of the sport."It's great to have successes, but you always have to go forward and focus on the next tournaments and next goals," Anna said.Anna explained the challenges that come with a life in chess. "In chess, we can see young players becoming grandmasters at the age of 12. To achieve that, you have to work a lot," Anna said."Nowadays, you cannot start too late if you want to be a top level player. Every time, you have to think if you are ready to sacrifice your childhood. Whether you

want to be a part of fun activities with other children or work on chess and try to achieve more. It depends on the child and also a lot on the parents because they have to be supportive," she added.Anna has also been quite vocal on equal rights for women over the years and also has been an advocate for growth of female players in chess. With Norway Chess providing equal pay for men and women, Anna feels it will motivate more female players to pick up the sport."All the participants are really thankful to the organizers of the Norway Chess for making equal price fund for both men and women.



## Esha Deol opens up about her new ‘dynamic’ with ex-husband Bharat Takhtani, says she doesn’t ‘like to think of herself as a single mom’



Actor Esha Deol, who is the daughter of veteran stars Hema Malini and Dharmendra, went through a separation with husband Bharat Takhtani in 2024. In a recent interview, Esha was asked about single parenthood since her separation and the actor shared that Bharat and her have developed a new dynamic for the sake of their two daughters – Radhya and Miraya. Esha said the parents, as mature individuals, must work out a new dynamic so the family unit can stay together even when the parents have decided to part ways.

In a chat with YouTube channel Mamaraazzi, Esha was asked if “being a single mom was more rewarding or it takes a toll.” To this, Esha said that she doesn’t like to think of herself as a single mother and shared, “I don’t like to

think of myself as a single mother because I don’t behave like one nor do I let the other person behave that way with me. It’s just that in life, sometimes, due to certain things, roles change. And if it doesn’t work out in a certain equation of what two people were at one point, you must take it upon you, especially when you have children, the two mature individuals must take it upon them to work out in another dynamic but keep the unit together for the sake of the children. And that’s exactly what Bharat and I do.”

In the same chat, Esha was also asked how she manages her time between her work and her kids and she said that all the working mothers have to ace the art of time management as it is extremely essential. “Because without it, if your schedule goes for a toss, it creates guilt and there is mismanagement,” she said. Esha shared that sometimes, she plans her schedule a month in advance so she can carve time out for her daughters. “For instance, if one day, I have to shoot for 10 or 12 hours, I try and spend at least 4 hours with my daughters with complete dedication. On an off day, I spend the entire day with my kids. I do things that they enjoy so they feel satisfied and fulfilled that I am giving them 100 percent attention. I meet my friends less, I go out less because that the only way to balance it,” she said. Esha and Bharat got married in 2012. They announced their separation in 2024 with a statement that read, “We have mutually and amicably decided to part ways. Through this shift in our lives, the best interests and welfare of our two children is and will be of utmost importance to us. We’d appreciate our privacy is respected.”

## Supriya Pathak says Shahid Kapoor was always part of her and Pankaj Kapur’s life: ‘He was always there’

Veteran actors Supriya Pathak and Pankaj Kapur have been married for 37 years, and the secret to their long-lasting relationship is being friends first. Supriya is Pankaj’s second wife; he was earlier married to Neelima Azeem, with whom he shares a son — Bollywood actor Shahid Kapoor. In a recent interaction, Supriya spoke about the dynamics of her marriage and how Shahid was always part of their lives.

Speaking to Filmfare about her marriage to Pankaj, she said, “What works for me and Pankaj in our marriage is that we are really good friends. I enjoy spending time with him. We have been married for 37 years and I sometimes feel, ‘Tum log jao na abhi. Let me and Pankaj have a cup of tea alone.’ My kids Sanah and Ruhaan often say that ‘You guy are better off without us than with us.’”

She also spoke about managing a work-life balance after marriage. Supriya admitted that she willingly quit the film industry after becoming a mother. She said, “I took a definite break because I wanted to have kids and I wanted to be with them. My elder daughter is Sanah and my younger one is my son Ruhaan, and of course Shahid was always there but he was a bigger boy by then. Till Sanah was about 12 I didn’t work.” However, staying out of work made Supriya anxious, but her husband quickly came to



her support. “But since I am an actor, I became a pain for my husband because he was working and I was not. So, I was like you are still getting work and I am still staying at home. Though it was my decision. Pankaj always tells me, ‘Tum hamesha roti rahi hu (You always cry).’” Supriya then shared that for her sake, Pankaj started a production company and wrote, directed, and produced projects, making her the executive producer — a job she initially knew nothing about but learned over time. She also revealed that they ran this company together for 5–6 years.

## Aamir Khan hints at the possibility of playing Lord Krishna in Mahabharat, says, ‘I find him deeply impactful, very inspired by him’



Aamir Khan has never shied away from expressing his long-standing ambition of bringing the Mahabharat to the big screen. Over the years, the actor-producer has hinted at his vision of adapting the epic, but now the dream is officially taking shape. Speaking at the India@2047 Summit hosted by ABP Live, he opened up about the magnitude of the project and why it remains so close to his heart. “Yeh mera sapna hai ke main bana paun Mahabharat, lekin bohot mushkil sapna hai woh... (It is my dream to make the Mahabharat, but it’s a very difficult dream...) see, Mahabharat will never let you down... but you might let Mahabharat down,” Aamir said candidly, underlining the responsibility such a revered story carries.

He had earlier this month confirmed that the project is being envisioned as a grand franchise, with multiple directors helming different segments. When asked which character he would personally like to portray, Aamir shared, “Actually... mujhe Krishna ka kirdaar bohot hi prabhavit karta hai... I’m very inspired by him. So that’s a character I really love (Actually... I find the character of Krishna deeply impactful... I’m very inspired by him. So that’s a character I really love).” However, he was careful not to reveal too much about the ambitious venture just yet. “Kyunki yeh bohot bada project hai, toh main kuch badi cheezein bolna nahi cha raha hoon (Since this is such a big project, I don’t want to say anything major right now),” he said, acknowledging the scale and sensitivity of the adaptation. Aamir humbly admitted that he isn’t sure whether this dream of his will ever be fulfilled. But regardless, he emphasised the importance of bringing such a monumental story to life for Indian and global audiences. “Chahe main banaun ya koi aur... hum chahenge ki Bharat mein yeh film bane aur hum

duniya bhar ko dikhayein ki humare paas kya hai (Whether I make it or someone else does... we would want this film to be made in India and show the world what we have).” For now, he is focused on his upcoming film Sitaare Zameen Par, which is in the final stages of post-production. He said, “Meri yeh soch hai ki meri ek dafa film release ho jaye... kyunki 20 June tak main kaafi masroof rahunga... jaise film release ho jaayegi... uske baad main kaam shuru kar sakta (My thought is that once my film releases—because I’ll be very busy until June 20...after that, I can start working on it).”

## ‘Squid Game’ Season 3 teaser out, final chapter premieres on June 27



Hyderabad: Netflix has officially announced that the third and final season of the popular South Korean crime drama Squid Game will release on June 27, 2025. The streaming platform also dropped a gripping teaser with the caption, “It’s time to play one last time.”

The teaser gives a thrilling look into what fans can expect in the last chapter. It opens with player number 456, Lee Jung-jae, returning in a coffin. He is on a risky mission to find the man behind the deadly game. Meanwhile, other players from Season 2 continue to fight for the huge cash prize. Some powerful visuals stand out in the teaser, including a giant gumball machine dropping red and blue balls and a chilling baby’s cry at the end. The dark and intense background music also sets the mood for a more emotional and brutal survival story.

## If implemented, Trump's 100 per cent tariff threat will impact business of Indian films in US: producers



Mumbai: US President Donald Trump’s announcement threatening 100 per cent tariff on movies produced outside and coming to the US will impact the box office business of Indian films and may lead to an increase in ticket prices for Indian films, say producers in India. Though there is little clarity just yet, the fear is that it will impact the footfall for Indian movies screened in the US, according to a section of industry insiders, including Shibasish Sarkar, president of the Producers Guild of India, filmmaker Vivek Agnihotri and exhibitor-distributor Akshay Rath. “It is a little early to comment on this because whatever kind of tariff got announced in the last 30 to 45 days is going through various changes and discussions... But if it gets implemented, the first impact I foresee is on the theatrical business of our films in the US market,” Sarkar told. Indian films gross around USD 100 million (over Rs 800 crore) at the US box office, he said.

“If this tariff is implemented, exhibitors will increase ticket prices and make it expensive for consumers because of which even footfalls will drop dramatically. If the exhibitors want to absorb the price, they will pass on that loss to producers, so their share will also come down drastically. Either way, there will be an impact on the producer’s share from a theatrical point of view,” Sarkar explained. In a post on his Truth Social platform, Trump said on Sunday that he has authorised the Department of Commerce and the Office of the US Trade Representative to slap a 100 per cent tariff “on any and all Movies coming into our Country that are produced in Foreign Lands”.

Agnihotri, known for films such as “The Kashmir Files” and “The Tashkent Files”, agreed with Sarkar and said ticket prices of Indian movies will increase in the US if these tariffs come into effect. “The diaspora market, which is price sensitive, became a revenue source for Indian films. Movies such as ‘Jawan’ and ‘Baahubali’ did good business outside of India. If ticket prices are doubled (in the US), I don’t think anybody will watch them in theatres, especially when the films will be available on Netflix, Amazon, etc. Films such as ‘RRR’ and ‘The Kashmir Files’ did great numbers

in non-diaspora markets,” Agnihotri told PTI. Sarkar added that other than an impact on the theatrical releases of local films in the US, these tariffs will have a bearing on global digital and pay TV deals for Indian producers.

“If US consumers are seeing Indian content and identified cost (price increase) towards that, then it will have an impact. From plain reading, it seems any revenue of Indian content, which is generated in the US, will attract the tariff, so that will have an impact on us.” Indian films releasing in the US will face higher taxation so the contribution from the North American box office of Indian films will reduce, said exhibitor-distributor Rath. “The way he played the tariff war on various countries, it was different tariffs for different countries. For all you know, it may be a more fluid thing given India’s good relations with the US and vice versa, so it may be a little more favourable for India than other countries,” Rath said. However, Trump’s tariff threat may not influence the movie production as most Indian producers find US an expensive location to shoot. “The primary objective of President Trump is that if US films are getting shot outside the US, then they’re losing the opportunity. Some films do come to India to shoot. That also will be impacted,” Sarkar said. In his view, Trump’s new announcement will have little impact on Indian movie shoots and business in the US as the country is just one of the many markets for diaspora audiences.

“There’s a presence of Indians in the UK, the Middle East, Singapore, Australia, and all over the world. If my film doesn’t release in one market (the US), it doesn’t make that much of a difference. It is a ridiculous thing he is doing. He doesn’t even realise he is killing Hollywood. We are talking for a reciprocal time, and this has happened,” Bhatt told PTI. According to the veteran filmmaker, most Indian films are not even shot in the US because it’s an expensive affair. “Hindi films are usually shot in the UK because they give us a subsidy, and in other places around the world,” he added. Another major Indian producer, who didn’t wish to be named, echoed Bhatt. “Our films are not shot in the US. Indian films are usually shot in the UK, Mauritius or Malaysia, and other countries. Wherever we get a subsidy, we go and shoot there,” he said. According to director Shekhar Kapur, Trump’s move could backfire and instead push Hollywood filmmakers to leave the country. Kapur, known for films such as “Mr India”, the “Elizabeth” franchise starring Cate Blanchett and “What’s Love Got to Do with It?”, said over “75% of box office” of Hollywood films comes from outside the US. “And significant part of the budget of those films are spent outside the US. President Trump’s imposition of 100% tariff on all films imported into the US may encourage Hollywood to move outside the US! Quite the opposite of what he intended. #Hollywood #tariff #DonaldTrump #tariffonfilm (sic)” the director wrote on X.

## Anjali Nair shares details about daughter Aavni’s burn injuries during Retro shoot; Suriya says she returned after 30-min break: ‘Braveheart’

Renowned Malayalam actor Anjali Nair’s daughter Aavni is already making strides as a teen artiste, appearing in massive films headlined by South cinema heavyweights like Suriya and Vikram, among others. Recently, Suriya himself showered praise on the little actor for her dedication to the craft, recalling how she continued filming for her scene in their recent Retro even after facing a fire accident on the set in which she suffered some burn injuries. The Tamil star maintained that she returned for shooting after taking rest for just 30 minutes, underscoring her resilience.

During an event organised as part of the Kerala leg of Retro’s promotions, Suriya invited Aavni onto the stage and commended her bravery and dedication. “There was a fire accident, and Aavni suffered burn injuries on her hand from the elbow to the wrist. Notwithstanding any of that, she returned for the shoot after taking a break for just half an hour because we could shoot there only for one day. She is such a brave-hearted girl,” he said.

Later, Aavni’s mother, Anjali, herself took to social media to explain what had happened. Sharing photos and videos of the injuries she faced, the actor wrote that their family were shocked by the incident and, at the same time, deeply moved by her passion and dedication to acting. Apparently, the teenager suffered burn injuries to her eyes, eyebrows, hair, ears and hands. Despite the director and other members of the movie’s team advising her to return home and take a rest, Aavni paid no attention to it. She, instead, took a short break and returned to complete her scenes in no time. “As Aavni’s mother, I feel blessed to have such a daughter. As an actress, I admire her strength and resilience. God bless you, Kanna,” Anjali added. She also thanked Malayalam megastar Mammooty and actor-screenwriter Vishnu Unnikrishnan for recommending the right doctors who could assist them. “Thank you so much; it means a lot.” Parmeet Sethi wrote Badmaash Company ‘out of frustration’, didn’t want to cast Anushka Sharma: ‘Aditya Chopra said tu bas actor ka naam le mai usko lekar



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Having made her debut in 5 Sundarikal (2013) while she was just a baby, Aavni later appeared in Malayalam movies such as Kammara Sambhavam (2018), Santhosham (2023), Phoenix (2023), Pendulum (2023), Ajayante Randam Moshanam (2024), and Machante Maalakra (2025). She also acted in Tamil movies such as Rajinikanth’s Annaatthe (2021) and “Chiyaan” Vikram’s Veera Dheera Sooran (2025). Aavni is the daughter of actor Anjali Nair and her former husband, filmmaker Aneesh Upasana.

## Dulquer Salmaan teaches daughter Maryam how to handle their Ultraviolet electric superbike.

While Dulquer Salmaan has captured the hearts of millions with his charming performances, the role his fans love seeing him in most is that of a family man. Not just on screen, but in real life too: a compassionate husband, a loving son, an affectionate brother, and a caring father. Regardless of his busy schedules, Dulquer never misses any opportunity to spend quality time with his family, and he followed the same on the occasion of his daughter’s, Maryam Ameerah Salmaan, eighth birthday recently as well.

Now, a picture of Maryam with Dulquer has grabbed attention on social media, showing the actor teaching his young daughter how to handle a two-wheeler. In the photo, they are seen sitting on Dulquer’s Ultraviolet electric superbike. While Dulquer balances the bike with his legs, Maryam is seen leaning forward, sitting in front of him, and cheerfully gripping the handle.

Bearing a Tamil Nadu registration, the superbike’s



number is 369 — a number close to his father Mammooty’s heart, which is why most of their vehicles carry it.