

Indian Chronicle

English Daily

CJIs legacy of integrity: From Justice Khanna to Justice Gavai

The ouging CJI delivered impactful judgments on civil rights, bail jurisprudence and institutional transparency. AS Justice BR Gavai assumes office as the 52nd Chief Justice of India (CJI), his swearing-in marks a historic moment: the first Buddhist and only the second Dalit to rise to this apex constitutional post. While his tenure is brief — spanning just six months — it carries immense symbolic and substantive expectations. He inherits not just the responsibilities of heading the judiciary but also the high bar set by his predecessor, Justice Sanjiv Khanna. Though CJI Khanna also served for just over six months, he leaves behind a rich judicial legacy marked by moral clarity, institutional humility and a refusal to blur the line between judiciary and executive.

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Cong wants local units to decide on allies in local body polls



A day after Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) constituent Nationalist Congress Party (SP) discussed giving authority to local units on deciding who to ally with in the upcoming local body polls, Maharashtra Congress too on Thursday said that the party has authorised district committees to decide on alliances. “The 73rd and 74th constitutional amendment paved the way for decentralisation of power by giving constitutional status to rural and urban local bodies. The Congress party too believes in decentralisation of power. And therefore we have decided to give authority to our district committees on forming the alliances in the local body polls,” Maharashtra Congress chief Harshvardhan Sapkal said at a press conference. He was replying to a query on whether the MVA will contest the upcoming local body election together.

Sapkal said that the local district units will take a political decision based on the conditions at respective areas. When asked about whether the party will maintain the alliance with Shiv Sena (UBT) for Mumbai, Sapkal said, “Our Mumbai committee is currently holding discussions regarding this with all involved stakeholders. A decision will be taken by them.”

Earlier, Sapkal demanded a time-bound caste census programme using the Telangana and Karnataka pattern. “Caste census is not mere counting but a social agenda. The central government had to take the decision because of the persistent efforts from our leader Rahul Gandhi. The government must seek help and guidance from Telangana and Karnataka who have successfully undertaken caste census and declare a time-bound programme for the same,” he said. On Wednesday, NCP (SP) state chief Jayant Patil held a meeting with party office bearers where the issue of local body polls was discussed. According to sources within the NCP (SP), the party has decided to entrust local units on political alliances for the upcoming local body polls.

UPSC recruitment calender for 2026 released

GNS News Agency, May 15

Hyderabad: The union Public Service Commission (UPSC) on Thursday released the annual recruitment calendar for 2026, scheduling the Civil Services preliminary examination on May 24, 2026.

The notification will be issued on January 14, 2026, and the last date register for the Civil Services will be February 23. The same schedule will be applicable for the Indian Forest Service Examination. Following the conduct of the preliminary exam, the UPSC has scheduled for the Civil Services Main Examinations for five days starting August 21, 2026.

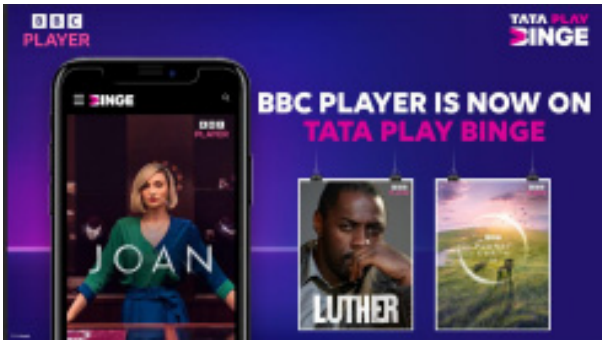
As per the calendar, Engineering Services Examination 2026 notification will be issued on September 17, 2025, and preliminary examination will be held on February 8, 2026. Similarly, the UPSC will issue the CISF assistant commandants (executive) limited departmental competitive examination notification on December 3, 2025 and examination is on March 8, 2026.

The National Defence Academy and Naval Academy Examination, and Combined Defence Services Examination 2026 notification will be out on December 10, 2025 with examinations scheduled for April 12, 2026.

Further, the Indian Economic Service/Indian Statistical Service Examination notification will be released on February 11, 2026, and examination will be conducted for three days commencing June 19, 2026.

The UPSC will notify the Central Armed Police Forces assistant commandants examination on February 18, 2026 and examination will be held on July 19.

Tata Play Bingo partners with BBC Player to bring the Finest British Entertainment to India



Hyderabad: Tata Play Bingo today announced an exciting new partnership with BBC Player, enriching its diverse content library with globally acclaimed British entertainment. This collaboration gives Tata Play Bingo users access to a wide range of award-winning titles from one of the world's most respected content providers. With this announcement, Tata Play Bingo continues its mission to offer unmatched entertainment experiences catering to the evolving tastes of the Indian audiences.

BBC Player offers an unparalleled, comprehensive catalogue ranging from different genres like iconic dramas, sharp-witted comedies, genre-defining documentaries, safe and trusted animated series for kids and family, gripping thrillers, inspiring factual programming and more. Audiences are in for a treat with celebrated BBC titles like Luther, Pride and Prejudice, Doctor Who, and Top Gear, along with critically acclaimed series such as Grand Indian Hotel, Citizen Khan, Mr. Bean, and The Great British Bake Off. Food enthusiasts can indulge in culinary journeys with celebrity chefs Nigella Lawson in Nigella's Cook, Eat, Repeat and Jamie Oliver in Jamie Oliver: Cooking for Less. BBC Player also brings to screens the genre-defining natural history epic Planet Earth III. For young viewers, the offering includes

engaging titles like Andy's Aquatic Adventures, JoJo and Gran Gran, and Junior Bake Off, among many others, ensuring there's something for every member of the family.

Speaking on the partnership Pallavi Puri, Tata Play's Chief Commercial and Content Officer said, “This partnership underscores our commitment to bringing the best of global content to our viewers, all in one place. BBC Studio's premium storytelling and rich library of highly celebrated shows perfectly complement our growing content roster, and we are confident that our users will love this addition.” Stanley Fernandes, Vice President Distribution, South Asia, BBC Studios said, “We're excited to bring BBC Player to more homes across India with Tata Play Bingo, offering the best of British entertainment—from acclaimed dramas to inspiring lifestyle shows and kids' favourites—all in one place. This marks a new chapter in our partnership with Tata Play as we expand into their OTT aggregation space, building on our strong collaboration.” BBC Player will join other popular OTT platforms on Tata Play Bingo like Apple TV+, JioHotstar, ZEE5, Lionsgate Play, Amazon Prime Video, Discovery+, FanCode, Sun NXT, Aha, Fuser+, Hallmark Movies Now, PTC Play, Animax, VROTT, STAGE, ReelDrama, Chaupal, Namma Flix, , manoramaMAX, iStream, Tarang Plus, Hungama Play, ShemarooMe, SonyLIV, Curiosity Stream, EPIC ON, Travelxp, DocuBay, ShortsTV, Playfix, KiiKK, Distro TV, MX Player along with Gaming. Content from all these platforms is available to the viewers of Tata Play Bingo through a single subscription and a single user interface. Additionally, Netflix can be availed as a combo pack with DTH channels for all Tata Play DTH subscribers whereas Amazon Prime Video content can be accessed as an add-on by all Tata Play Bingo subscribers, who also have the DTH connection. Viewers can enjoy all 30+ apps on smartphones, large screen connected devices through LG, Samsung and Android smart TV's, Desktop, Laptop, Tablets, Tata Play edition of the Amazon FireTV Stick and www.TataplayBingo.com.

Kerala Bar Council Disbars Advocate Beyline Das Over Assault on Junior Lawyer“

“Ps Ashokan” Indian Chronicle “Manthani, May, 15” “The Bar Council of Kerala has disbarred Advocate Beyline Das from practising law after allegations surfaced that he assaulted a junior lawyer in Thiruvananthapuram on Tuesday.” “This action follows the suspension of Das by the Trivandrum Bar Association, based on charges that he physically attacked a junior female advocate. A case has been registered against him under Sections 126(2) (wrongful restraint), 74 (assault or use of criminal force against a woman), and 115(2) (voluntarily inflicting injury) of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS).” “In the aftermath of the suspension, the Trivandrum Bar Association submitted a report urging further disciplinary measures against Das. Acting on this, the State Bar Council initiated suo motu disciplinary proceedings and served him a show-cause notice.” “The Council has also received formal complaints



from both the affected advocate and the Bar Association. Advocate Das has been prohibited from practising law pending the outcome of the disciplinary inquiry.

Olympic Dreams Take Flight: Aarini's Martial Arts Journey from Manthani to America



“PS Ashokan” Indian Chronicle “Manthani, May, 15” “Varahala Aarini, a spirited young girl from Manthani who now lives in the United States, is gaining recognition in the world of Taekwondo, a Korean martial art that has earned a prominent place in the Olympic Games. With determination and focus, Aarini has been pursuing this sport for the past three years, and her goal is clear — to one day represent at the Olympics.” “Taekwondo has transformed my life. It keeps me physically fit, mentally sharp, and builds confidence,” says Aarini. She believes that just as Karra Saamu is an important martial tradition in Telangana and Andhra Pradesh, martial arts like Taekwondo hold deep cultural and athletic value across the world.” “Aarini shared that her training includes not only powerful kicks and punches, but also poomsae (pattern movements) and daily physical exercises. She strongly believes that staying active is essential, especially in an age where many spend long hours sitting. “Taekwondo helps every part of the body stay healthy and strong,” she explains. “Now, with years of training and growing skill, Aarini has set her sights on international com-

petitions. Her dream — to qualify and compete in the Olympics — is backed by relentless effort and passion.” “Her grandfather, Varahala Aravind, expressed pride in her journey and urged parents to support their children's interests. “When children are encouraged in what they love, their talents find the right path. Aarini's journey is a true reflection of that,” he said.

Woman throws son into Nizam Sagar, jumps in; both die

Sangareddy: A woman threw her son into the Nizam Sagar reservoir before jumping into the water body. Both died. They were identified as Pramila (30) and Akshay (8), residents of Munikepally in Nizampet mandal of Sangareddy district. The bodies were retrieved from the water a few hours after the incident on Thursday.

Meru International School Shines Bright in CBSE Board Results



Hyderabad: Meru International School has once again demonstrated its unwavering commitment to academic excellence, achieving remarkable results in the CBSE Grade 10 and 12 Board Examinations for the academic year 2024–25. The school has consistently maintained high academic standards, and this year's outcomes further reinforce its dedication to fostering an environment of educational success.

In the Grade 10 examinations, Nihaal Puvvada emerged as the school topper with an impressive score of 98.8%. He was closely followed by Smaya Nellipudi, who secured 95.8%, and Sri Harsha Vibhas Varigonda, who achieved 95.4%. These outstanding scores indicate the rigorous academic framework in place at Meru International School, with an impressive 26% of students scoring above 90% and 70% achieving above 80%. Additionally, a remarkable 96% of the Grade 10 students secured First Division or higher.

Grade 12 students also showcased their exceptional capabilities, successfully attaining a 100% pass rate alongside a school average of 78.2%. The noteworthy performances in Grade 12 were led by Gajulapalle Satya Joshita, the school topper in Commerce, with a remarkable 93.2%. Priyanka Nayak achieved an impressive 91% as the Science topper, followed closely by Akshat Kumar Kushwaha with a score of 90.6%. To highlight the quality of education at Meru, two students even attained a perfect score of 100 in Informatics Practices (IP), reflecting the depth of knowledge instilled by the school's dedicated faculty.

In 15th such case in Gujarat, man arrested for ‘anti-national post’ on Indian air strikes on Pakistan

GNS News Agency, May 15

valsad, gujarat, anti national post, With this development, the number of FIRs lodged in Gujarat for “anti-national posts” related to Operation Sindoor has reached 15.

Valsad police arrested a scrap godown owner on Wednesday for allegedly making “anti-national” posts on social media. This comes just over a week after May 7, when Valsad police arrested a hair-cutting saloon staffer of Vapi for his remarks on the Indian air strike on Pakistan, a purported video of which went viral on social media platforms.

The Minister of State for Home Harsh Sanghavi had earlier directed state police department officials to keep watch on social media and take action against those who post “anti-national” messages. With this development, the number of FIRs lodged in Gujarat for “anti-national posts” related to Operation Sindoor has reached 15.

Police had zeroed in on a post forwarded on Facebook by an account holder named Vasim Khan. The cops found that the post was “anti-national and objectionable”, in relation to the air strike carried out by the Indian army at different locations in Pakistan.

Using surveillance of mobile networks, Umbergaon police apprehended Vasim Khan from his house at Khattalwada village in Umbergaon on Wednesday and booked him under BNS Sections 192 (wantonly giving provocation to cause riots), 196 (promoting enmity between different groups on the grounds of religion, race, place of birth), 353 (statements conducing to public mischief), and 356 (criminal defamation). Talking to The Indian Express, Valsad district Superintendent of Police Karanraj Vaghela said, “This is our second case and police arrest for the alleged involvement of the accused in putting objectionable posts and promoting enmity between different religions and groups. Earlier, we arrested one Shahid Salmani, who works in a saloon in Vapi, on May 7.” He said, “Vasim has been living in the Umbergaon taluka for the past few years and does scrap business. He hails from Uttar Pradesh. He is currently under one day of police remand, and we will try to get more information from him. He received an anti-national post on his Facebook account, which he forwarded to other people.”

Fake educational certificates racket busted, three held

Hyderabad: The Task Force (West) team along with the Masab Tank police have busted a fake educational certificate racket and arrested three persons on Thursday. Officials seized 15 fake educational certificates belonging to various institutions across the country. Police said the suspects were supplying fake educational documents to drop out and job aspirants and made easy money.

The arrested persons are Shaibaaz Khan from Masab Tank, Mohd Abdul Ismail from Yakutpura and K Ramesh, a lawyer from Shalivahana Nagar. According to the police, Shaibaaz Khan confessed of procuring fake educational documents of various universities from Mohammed Abdul Ismail. Further, Ismail revealed that he acquired these documents through advocate Kadari Ramesh. Further inquiries led to the arrest of Kadari Ramesh, who admitted to acting as a facilitator. He connected clients seeking fake educational certificates with agents like Mohammed Abdul Ismail and delivered the forged documents to customers. Ramesh disclosed that the certificates were ultimately sourced from an individual named Sagar from New Delhi.

Unanimous Election of New Executive Body for Manthani Mandal Chemists & Druggists Association



“PS Ashokan”Indian Chronicle”Manthani May,15”“In a display of unity and mutual trust, the Manthani Mandal Chemists and Druggists Association unanimously elected its new executive committee on Thursday.”“Kyatham Kumar was re-elected unopposed as President for a second term, reflecting his commendable leadership and the confidence placed in him by the association members.”“The newly elected office bearers are as follows:”“Vice President: Nooka Srinivas”“General Secretary: Chintapandu Raju”“Treasurer: Kanukuntla Purushotham”“Additional Secretary: Are Kumar”“Organising Secretary: Arakala Koteswara”“Advisor: Motkuri Srinivas”“The elections were conducted under the supervision of the District Chemists & Druggists Association, led by District President Mamidi Vinod Kumar, General Secretary Rajender, and Treasurer

P. Satish.”“Addressing the gathering, Vinod Kumar congratulated the newly elected team and emphasized the ethical responsibilities of pharmacists. He issued a stern advisory against the sale of government-banned drugs and urged all members to exercise extreme caution in preventing the distribution of spurious or counterfeit medicines.”“He assured the association that the District Union stands fully committed to supporting its members, especially in resolving commercial or regulatory challenges faced in the profession.”“The event was graced by the presence of respected figures such as Dr. Bhaskar, senior pharmacy owners J.S. Reddy and Ilandula Ramu, and representatives from Chemists Associations of Mutharam, Ramagiri, and Kamanpur mandals. District union officials and local members also participated in large numbers, marking the occasion as both successful and significant.

Saraswati Pushkaralu Begin at Kaleshwaram”– Ceremonially inaugurated by Sri Sri Sri Madhavananda Saraswati and Minister Sridhar Babu“



“PS Ashokan”Indian Chronicle”Manthani May,15.”“The auspicious Saraswati Pushkaralu commenced at the re-

nowned pilgrimage site of Kaleshwaram, located in the Manthani Assembly constituency, at 5:44 AM on Wednesday. The sacred ritual of Pushkara Snanam (holy river bath) was formally initiated by Sri Sri Sri Madhavananda Saraswati, following an invocation with Ganapati Puja.”“Local MLA and State Minister for IT and Industries Duddilla Sridhar Babu, accompanied by State Principal Secretary for Endowments Shailaja Ramaiyar and her husband, as well as the Minister’s mother Jayaprada, took part in the holy dip.”“

The occasion witnessed the participation of District Collector Rahul Sharma, Bhupalpally MLA Gandra Satyanarayana Rao, and High Court Judge Surapalli Nanda, among other dignitaries.”“Later in the evening, at 5:00 PM, Chief Minister Revanth Reddy and his spouse are scheduled to take part in the Pushkaralu rituals.”“The riverbanks were filled with a large influx of devotees on the first day, creating a spiritually charged atmosphere.

Telangana Jagruti to host young poets' meet on June 2 to mark Telangana Formation Day

GNS News Agency,May 15

Hyderabad: Telangana Jagruti will host a young poets’s meet, Yuva Kavi Sammelanam, on June 2 to mark Telangana Formation Day. Telangana Jagruti president and MLC K Kavitha unveiled the event’s poster at her residence on Thursday. The meet will take place at Telangana Saraswata Parishad. In a statement, Kavitha said the event aims to highlight Telangana’s cultural richness and inspire youth through literature. Poets under 35 can recite in Telugu, Hindi, English, or Urdu. Registrations are open till May 26 and can be sent to kavitha.telangana@gmail.com. The BRS leader stressed the role of poets and writers in shaping social awareness. She wanted poetry at the meet to reflect upon the Telangana statehood movement, its rich history, culture, harmony, integrity, unity and self-respect, among others. She slammed the Congress government for ignoring Telangana’s literary icons, citing its apathy towards Dasarathi and Biruduraju centenary celebrations. She said the government was ignoring poets, .



Former MLA Puttamadhukar Receives Warm Welcome at Garepalli Residence.

“PS Ashokan”Indian Chronicle”Manthani May,15.”“In a gesture reflecting mutual respect and strong grassroots connect, legislative luminary and former Manthani MLA Sri Puttamadhukar paid a cordial visit to the residence of Shri Gaddam Lakshmaiah at the Employees’ Colony in Garepalli village, Katharam Mandal, following a personal invitation extended by the host.”“The occasion was marked by a warm and gracious reception, with Shri Lakshmaiah and his family extending heartfelt hospitality to the esteemed guest. Known for his people-centric leadership and enduring rapport with the public, Sri Puttamadhukar engaged in meaningful interaction with the family and local residents.”“During his address, he conveyed gratitude for the affection shown and emphasized his ongoing dedication to community welfare. “Leadership does not end with office — it is a lifelong commitment to the



people’s progress,” he stated.”“The visit drew notable attention from villagers and local admirers, who appreciated his humility, accessibility, and continued

engagement with the region’s development. Several community members also seized the opportunity to voice their thoughts and local aspirations.”“Such in-

teractions reaffirm the deep-rooted connection between public representatives and the communities they serve, fostering trust, dialogue, and development.

"Let’s Make the Nationwide Strike a Big Success”– Erravelli Muthyam Rao, CITU District General Secretary.“



“PS Ashokan”Indian Chronicle”Manthani May,15.”“Today, the CITU organized the release of strike booklets at the Manthani Municipal office. Speaking at the event, Erravelli Muthyam Rao said that trade unions across the country have called for a nationwide strike on the 20th of this month to oppose the Central Government’s anti-worker and anti-farmer policies.”“He said that workers are demanding a minimum salary of ?26,000, proper enforcement of 8-hour work shifts, and protection of the right to form unions and the right to strike. The strike is also meant

to protect 29 existing labor laws that workers have earned over the last 100 years and to oppose the new four labor codes introduced by the government.”“He urged workers and employees from the Manthani area to take part in large numbers and help make the strike a strong success.”“CITU district committee members Budida Ganesh, and union leaders Chippakurthi Chandu, Singarapu Gattayya, Malleesh, Rajayya, Sammayya, Devender, Jampayya, Pochamma, Bhagya, Chukkamma, and others were present at the event.

Incessant rain forecast in Telangana to impact paddy procurement operations

GNS News Agency,May 15

Hyderabad: With heavy rainfall and thunderstorms expected to continue in the State, paddy procurement operations are likely to be impacted further in a big way. The unstable weather conditions have already caused serious disruptions to the procurement and added to the losses of Rabi farmers. There seems to be no letup to their travails.

The India Meteorological Department (IMD) has issued alerts for heavy rainfall and thunderstorms across Telangana. Gusty winds ranging from 30-60 kmph are expected across the State for the next one week. Light to moderate rain or thundershowers are very likely to occur at many places starting from Thursday. The adverse weather is delaying transportation of paddy from procurement centres to rice mills. With continuous heavy rain, open procurement centres are struggling to protect paddy stocks, leading to heavy spoilage. The Rabi 2024-25 marketing season

has been marked by unprecedented hardships in paddy procurement, with logistical and coordination issues causing delays that have frustrated farmers. Telangana had set an ambitious target of 70 lakh metric tonnes of paddy procurement this season, backed by a budget of over Rs 15,000 crore and 8,381 procurement centres across the State. As of May 14, the State had procured close to 44 lakh metric tonnes, valued at over 10,000 crore. This marks a 44 per cent increase compared to the same period in the Rabi 2023-24 season. But the overall procurement remains marginally above the halfway mark, with only 61.6 per cent of the target met. Farmers have been complaining of severe delays in moving paddy from procurement centres to rice mills, with trucks from multiple regions converging at places leading to four- to five-day wait times for unloading. Protests have erupted across the State as farmers express frustration over delays in lifting their produce.

DICV demonstrates resilience in a challenging 2024 and sets the course for sustainable growth

Hyderabad:Daimler India Commercial Vehicles (DICV), a wholly-owned subsidiary of Daimler Truck AG (“Daimler Truck”), today reflected on its resilient and transformative performance in 2024. Despite the Indian commercial vehicle market experiencing an overall ten percent decline due to macroeconomic challenges, elections, erratic monsoon, and sectoral uncertainties, DICV strengthened its core operations and laid a strong foundation for sustainable growth through a firm commitment in innovation, sustainability, quality, and customer-centric solutions.

While an overall market recovery was anticipated post-election, the demand in the Indian commercial vehicle industry remained subdued across several key sectors. Despite facing this challenging market environment, DICV achieved its highest ever annual bus sales of around 2,200 units, representing a 10.5% year-on-year growth driven by replacement demand and the expansion of transportation solutions. DICV bus exports also increased by 65.9% to about 1,000 units, reflecting growing global demand for high-quality and made-in-India buses. Customer service revenue rose to INR 1,381 Cr., marking a 27.8% increase over the previous year, while aftermarket revenue grew 18% year-on-year. Collectively, both segments now contribute a significant share of the company’s top line with their strong



performance in 2024. Satyakam Arya, Managing Director and CEO, Daimler India Commercial Vehicles, said: “Despite numerous challenges, 2024 has been a year of resilience for us. In a time marked by geopolitical tensions and domestic elections, our entire industry faced significant tests. However, through collective strength, we have emerged stronger by focusing on what truly matters - our customers, products, and people.

Hyderabad police warn citizens of cyber-attack risks amid tensions with Pakistan



GNS News Agency,May 15

Hyderabad: The Hyderabad city police in wake of the escalating Indo-Pakistan conflicts have warned the citizens about risk of cyber-attacks, particularly from State sponsored advanced persistent threats known for targeting Indian government agencies, military personnel, and critical infrastructure.D. Kavitha, DCP (Cybercrimes) said the groups sympathetic with the enemy could use sophisticated tactics such as phishing emails, fake login pages, and malicious attachments to gain unauthorized access to sensitive information. The police had noticed a surge in malicious content spreading rapidly through WhatsApp, e-mail, and social media platforms with respect to the Indo-Pak conflict. The content includes deceptive videos, images, '.exe/.apk' files and phishing links disguised as news or updates related to the ongoing Indo-Pak conflict. "The threat actors are exploiting heightened public interest and tension around the situation to target unsuspecting individuals with malware, fake news, and cyber scams. These cyber criminals are circulating malicious content under the pretext of exclusive updates, conflict-related visuals, or leaked footage, with many of these materials carrying malware, spyware, or links

to phishing websites," said Kavitha. The content can be in the form of links or even photographs sent from unknown numbers or forwarded in WhatsApp, Telegram or any other social media groups. WhatsApp/emails/other social media platforms are being used as disguising malware as videos or images titled 'Dance of the Hillary', 'Army_Job_Application_Form.pdf' and executable file 'tasksche.exe' Embedding phishing links in messages that appear to come from trusted sources or groups to steal personal data through phishing websites designed to look like legitimate news or government sources. Spreading APK (Android Package) files labeled as apps or tools (e.g., "live war updates app"), which once installed, steal data, access device files, or lock phones with ransomware and demands payment. Once these malicious links/ image/ .exe/ .apk files are downloaded, a malware is installed in the device which can result in compromising the device, hacking of bank accounts or social media accounts etc. Advisory for WhatsApp and Social Media: Never open unknown video or image files, even if forwarded by someone you trust• Never forward such messages / files to anyone or to any group• Avoid installing APK files sent via messaging apps. Only install apps from Google Play Store or official app stores• Do not click on forwarded links claiming to show conflict updates or sensitive footage• Exit, report and delete suspicious WhatsApp groups sharing inflammatory or unverified content. Enhanced security setup in WhatsApp:• In WhatsApp settings -> Storage and data -> disable Media Auto Download for all such as Photos, Audio, Videos and Documents• Enable 2 Step Verification in WhatsApp Account setting to avoid account hack• Report any malicious messages or group activity directly to WhatsApp or report in cybercrime.gov.in• Do not open emails from unknown senders, especially those with urgent subject lines related to Indo-Pak conflict• Avoid downloading attachments or clicking on links in unsolicited emails

Govt picks 6 depts to implement pilot phase of 'unified data hub' project

GNS News Agency,May 15

The Delhi government has selected six key departments to implement the pilot phase of its ambitious Unified Data Hub (UDH) project, which will consolidate data from various departments in a single space to ensure only eligible people avail of the benefits of its welfare schemes.

The IT department, which is executing this project, is planning to set up a Project Monitoring Unit (PMU) to facilitate the creation of the data hub. For this, it has selected these six departments — Food, Civil Supplies & Consumer Affairs; Women & Child Development; Social Welfare; Revenue; Labour; and Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) for the pilot phase. The IT department has directed these departments to nominate a nodal officer on priority for this project. "It is requested to nominate a nodal officer (specifically from admin) and a technical team lead of the respective departments on priority so that the PMU may start its functionality in accordance with the creation of UDH," the department said in a recent order. The core objective of UDH is to create "golden records" of beneficiaries — single, verified, and unified data profiles of citizens — by resolving data duplication and inconsistencies across existing departmental systems.

"The IT Department is in the process of creating and implementing the UDH as a 'single source of truth' for the Delhi government. The UDH may play a vital role in proactive



tive governance viz. to improve data accessibility and availability, enhance data quality and consistency, accelerate data insights and decision-making, and increase operational efficiency and cost savings," said the department. Further, the department had already floated tenders for creating and implementing the platform, where personal and household details of Delhi residents will be integrated, and unique identification numbers will be given to all Delhi residents. Details that will be collected include personal and household data of citizens from all departments: ration details from the Food and Civil Supplies Department; registered household details from Delhi Jal Board, Power Department, Trade and Taxes Department; birth and death details, caste and religion information from the MCD; and others. It will also get

BMC to inaugurate Gokhale Bridge after over two years



GNS News Agency,May 15

After a wait of over two years, the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) is finally set to inaugurate Gopal Krishna Gokhale Bridge on Sunday evening and will open it for the public in what will ease vehicular congestion, the launch of the crucial link will facilitate smooth east to west traffic in Andheri while also aiding vehicular movement between Western Express highway and areas such as Juhu. Along with the main carriageway of the Gokhale bridge, the partially unopened connector linking it to C D Barfiwala flyover is also set to be inaugurated.

Among those who will attend the inauguration ceremony—set to begin at 5 pm on Sunday—are Ashish Shelar, cabinet minister of Information Technology and Cultural Affairs and Mumbai suburbs' guardian minister, Mangal Prabhat Lodha, minister of Skill, Employment, Entrepreneurship and Innovation, Shiv Sena MP Ravindra Waikar, Andheri West MLA Ameet Satam, Andheri East MLA Murji Patel among others. Municipal commissioner Bhushan Gagrani and Additional Municipal Commissioner (projects) Abhijit Bangar will also be present during the launch. Following this, the bridge will be opened for traffic flow. The opening of the bridge marks the culmination of the works proposed in the second phase of the project, which was initially proposed to be completed by the end of December 2024. Currently, only the eastbound arm of the bridge is operational.

On February 27 last year, one lane (west to east arm) was opened for vehicular traffic with the other lane proposed to be completed in the second phase. However, soon after, the structure ran into controversy and left citizens irked as the bridge was not aligned with the arms of its adjoining CD Barfiwala flyover. While the BMC maintained that the bridge had been erected at an elevation of six metres owing to the instructions of the railways — since the bridge passes over the railway track — resulting in the misalignment, VJTJ and IIT were subsequently roped in, who concurred that the two bridges can be linked by raising two spans. After this, the civic body launched works on the alignment with the connector between the bridges, and it was partially opened to traffic on July 4. However, more than a year since the first

West Bengal to open immigrant cell to address complaints of overseas workers, students



GNS News Agency,May 15

The West Bengal Government is set to open an immigrant cell to help migrant labourers working abroad, based on the advisory of the External Affairs Ministry and the Union Home Ministry to all states, officials said. According to the state administration, the primary job of the cell is to look into the complaints of labourers getting deceived by employers or agents. It will monitor agencies that recruit youths for overseas jobs, verify their authenticity and registration, and make periodic visits to the districts where the agents work. Besides, the cell will also look into the complaints of migrant students getting cheated. According to a source, a

senior IPS officer would lead the cell that will comprise police personnel. A senior government official said, "In the last one and a half decades, the number of migrant labourers has increased in the state. In many cases, the labourers who go abroad are being cheated on the pretext of high-salaried jobs. But on reaching the workplace, they are given a daily-wage job. They can complain at the window of the immigrant cell in the country. But that investigation is time-consuming as they have to handle a huge number of cases. So, the Central Government has asked the state government to open such cells to easily investigate such complaints". He further said the cell will start functioning once the IPS officer is finalised. "Not only migrant labourers but a sizeable number of students are also going abroad for higher studies. These students are also getting cheated. This cell also investigates such crime," he added. He further added that this cell will serve as a liaison between the central and state governments. The Central Government can forward a complaint of fraud to the state immigrant cell for investigation, which will further inform the district concerned, and then the district will provide the necessary infrastructure and manpower to nab such criminals. He also said that it would be easier to monitor the illegal work of agencies if the state has a cell of its own. "Earlier, the state could not interfere in these agencies' works. Now they can easily intervene and if necessary, they can also take action," he added.

980 trees felled in Greater Noida: In affidavit before NGT, UP official says company 'denied responsibility'

GNS News Agency,May 15

Nearly three months after the National Green Tribunal (NGT) observed that the illegal felling of 980 trees in Greater Noida was not taken seriously by the Uttar Pradesh authorities and also asked the principal chief conservator of forests (CCF) to appear virtually before it on May 13, he filed a detailed affidavit before the green body on Saturday.

In his affidavit, Sunil Chaudhary, CCF, Uttar Pradesh, said that on June 10, 2024, information was received regarding illegal tree felling within the compound of M/s Shakuntalam Land Craft Pvt. Ltd, Greater Noida Authority, which was formerly leased to Daewoo Company, Surajpur by the Uttar Pradesh State Industrial Development Corporation Limited. "The Range Forest Officer, Dadri, Gautam Buddh Nagar was appointed as Enquiry Officer via a letter dated June 26 in this matter," he said in the affidavit. Following this, he added, "the offenders were identified" and a number of notices were issued to them, including Shakuntalam Land Craft, "between June 2024 to March 2025". "But Shakuntalam in its written response on February 19 denied any responsibility for illegal felling of trees," Chaudhary's affidavit states.



Noida-based environmental activist Vikrant Tongad said that the CCF has also expressed strong displeasure with the forest department in Noida over delays and lapses in handling the case. This development came after the green body under the bench of NGT Chairperson Justice Prakash Shrivastava, while hearing a plea in this matter on February 9, observed that there was no record indicating what action was been taken by the forest department to trace the timber cut from the more than 900 other trees, nor to identify the individuals responsible for their illegal felling.

The bench, also comprising judicial member Justice Arun Kumar Tyagi and expert member Afroz Ahmad, had said, "There appears to be a lapse on the part of the authorities in this matter. Based on the manner in which the counsel for the state (of UP) is responding to the tribunal's queries, we gathered the issue related to the felling of 980 trees, which is a significant number, has not been taken seriously by the state authorities," the bench said. All the reports before it revealed "unsatisfactory efforts" in the matter, the tribunal said. "Hence, we required the principal chief conservator of forest to look into the matter personally and appear virtually before the tribunal on the next date of hearing (May 13) to apprise us about the legal status of cutting of trees and the action that has been taken," it added.

UPA govt failed to give befitting reply to terrorists, says Union minister Muralidhar Mohol



GNS News Agency,May 15

Union minister and Pune city MP Murlidhar Mohol has sparked a political controversy with a statement that the Congress-led UPA government failed to give a befitting reply to terrorist attacks during its rule. In contrast, the Narendra Modi-led NDA government has strongly taken on the terrorists, he said. The Congress and NCP (SP) have hit out at Mohol for politicising the ongoing standoff with Pakistan. Mohol took to social media to highlight the action of the Union government against terrorists while comparing it with the actions taken during the Congress rule. "Whenever there is strong government in the country... During the tenure of the Prime Minister Narendra Modi-led NDA government, whenever there have been terrorist attacks, India has given a befitting reply to the terrorists. But it did not happen during the Congress government," said Mohol. Using a table, he alleged that the Congress did not take any action against the Mumbai bomb blasts in March 1993, Delhi blasts in October 2005 and Mumbai terrorist attack of 26/11. The NDA government carried out a surgical strike after the terrorist attack in Uri in September 2016, an air strike in February 2019 after the Pulwama attack and now Operation Sindoor after the Pahalgam attack, he said.

NCP (SP) legislator Rohit Pawar responded, "Today, the entire country, including both ruling and opposition, all political parties, are with the union government and armed forces as this is not a political issue but a matter of self-respect and security of the country." "You are a responsible minister, so it is not proper to send such posts, at least now. Political discussions can be done later as this is not the time. Now, it is time to teach a lesson to the enemy of the country. So let us keep politics aside and as an Indian be united in support of the Armed forces and the union government," he said. City Congress chief Arvind Shinde said there are attempts to spread lies about decisions taken during Congress rule. "Our country is presently fighting against terrorist sponsoring Pakistan. Our Armed Forces are fighting strongly. Our leaders Malikarjun Kharge and Rahul Gandhi have given a message to us that the priority is that union government and all opposition parties including Congress and the entire country display our unity to Pakistan and the world. So, we are not going to criticise those in power. Our priority is for the national interest and the unity of the country. It is our culture to keep party politics aside when the country is going through tough time,"

he said. If the minister is firm on his stand, the Congress is ready for open debate with him on what the Congress did for the security of the country by taking on internal and external forces who worked against the country, along with its decision to set up various defence organisations and training centres in the country, he said.

'Felt like a bomb had gone off': Residents recall night of horror as intercepted drones, missile-like objects fall over Jalandhar

GNS News Agency,May 15

Panic spread through parts of Jalandhar late Friday night and early Saturday morning after a series of aerial explosions were heard. Residents reported spotting strange objects, believed to be drones and missile-like devices, falling from the sky after being neutralised. Interceptors were reportedly deployed to take down several of these objects mid-air, resulting in large explosions. Debris landed in multiple villages, causing damage and raising fear among local residents. Darshan Singh, a resident of Nahlan village in Jalandhar, was sitting on his tubewell around 8.45 am Saturday when he heard one such explosion. "A very sharp object suddenly came from the sky and fell with great force. Before I could react, a huge soil storm, which went up to 50-60 feet high, erupted from the ground and a loud bang was heard seconds before this speedy fall. It was terrifying," Darshan recalled, adding that a 2-foot deep pit could even be at the spot where the object fell in the field. Within minutes, dozens of residents rushed out of their homes and gathered near the site. Scattered metallic fragments and twisted debris lay across the fields. They informed the police immediately. Sub-Inspector Balbir Singh, SHO of Lambra police station, confirmed the incident. "We have collected debris from the spot. The Army and forensic teams are now taking them along for further investigation. We urge the public to stay indoors and not interfere with the recovery work," he said. Deputy Commissioner Dr Himanshu Aggarwal said Jalandhar was placed on red alert Friday night after multiple aerial threats were detected. "Several objects/drones were seen and intercepted in the air by armed forces. Residents must remain indoors and report any suspicious debris. Please do not touch any unfamiliar objects," he advised. In the Kangniwal village, Jasbir Kaur was jolted awake by a loud explosion just outside her home. "The sound was deafening. When I stepped out, I saw debris scattered all over. My car was damaged, and sharp-edged fragments hit our house walls—it looked like someone had fired bullets," she said. A migrant worker, Vishnu, who was sleeping outside, sustained a serious shoulder injury after a metal shard pierced him. He was rushed to the hospital for treatment.

Iran, U.S. to resume nuclear talks amid clashing red lines



GNS News Agency, May 15

Top Iranian and U.S. negotiators will resume talks on Sunday (May 11, 2025) to address disputes over Tehran's nuclear programme, in a push for progress as Washington hardens its stance ahead of U.S. President Donald Trump's Middle East visit. Though Tehran and Washington both have said they prefer diplomacy to resolve the decades-long dispute, they remain deeply divided on several red lines that negotiators will have to circumvent to reach a new nuclear deal and avert future military action. Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araqchi and Mr. Trump's Middle East envoy Steve Witkoff will hold the fourth round of talks in Muscat through Omani mediators, despite Washington taking a tough stance in public that Iranian officials said would not help the negotiations.

Mr. Witkoff told Breitbart News on Thursday that Washington's red line is: "No enrichment. That means dismantlement, no weaponization," requiring the complete dismantling of Iran's nuclear facilities in Natanz, Fordow, and Isfahan. "If they are not productive on Sunday, then they won't continue, and we'll have to take a different route," Mr.

Witkoff said in the interview. Mr. Trump, who has threatened military action against Iran if diplomacy fails, will travel to Saudi Arabia, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates on May 13-16. Reacting to Mr. Witkoff's comments, Mr. Araqchi said on Saturday that Iran would not compromise on its nuclear rights. "Iran continues negotiations in good faith ... if the aim of these talks is to limit Iran's nuclear rights, I state clearly that Iran will not back down from any of its rights," Mr. Araqchi said. Tehran is willing to negotiate some curbs on its nuclear work in return for the lifting of sanctions, according to Iranian officials, but ending its enrichment programme or surrendering its enriched uranium stockpile are among "Iran's red lines that could not be compromised" in the talks.

A senior Iranian official close to the negotiating team said that U.S. demands for "zero enrichment and dismantling Iran's nuclear sites would not help in progressing the negotiations." "What the U.S. says publicly differs from what is said in negotiations," the official said on condition of anonymity. He said matters would become clearer when talks take place on Sunday, which was initially planned for May 3 in Rome but were postponed due to what Oman described as "logistical reasons". Moreover, Iran has flatly ruled out negotiating its ballistic missile programme and the clerical establishment demands watertight guarantees Trump would not again ditch a nuclear pact. Mr. Trump, who has restored a "maximum pressure" campaign on Tehran since February, exited Tehran's 2015 nuclear pact with six world powers in 2018 during his first term and reimposed crippling sanctions on Iran. Iran, which has long said its nuclear programme is peaceful, has breached the 2015 pact's nuclear curbs since 2019 including "dramatically" accelerating its enrichment of uranium to up to 60% purity, close to the roughly 90% level that is weapons-grade, according to the U.N. nuclear watchdog.

A grief that refuses to fade

GNS News Agency, May 15, The morning after the Pahalgam massacre, we remembered the laughter that vanished mid-air. Children looked for faces that will not return, mothers dreamt of voices that the wind had stolen. And still, the men who plot wars draw their maps in silence, remaining unshaken by the wailing. For me this is not just grief, but the death of meaning. Surely, they died for no reason. And we live with no reason.

It is not just the dead who suffer. The living too ache with fractured memories and empty hands. Mothers fold clothes that will never be worn, and fathers set an extra plate that they must soon take away. They thought we would forget but we remember. We remember the small shoes left at the door, the songs half-sung, the meals half-eaten. We remember the laughter that vanished mid-air, the goodbyes that never thought they were the last. Our loss is not merely of life, but of time, of continuity, while our political leaders speak in cold numbers, distorting the truth with euphemisms. Killing the innocent with no logic is an interruption of the very pulse of existence, the death of meaning.

In the midst of such a tragedy, Yeats' haunting words of growing disintegration of our world come to my mind: "Things fall apart; the centre cannot hold;/ Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world." This collapse is not some abstract vision — it is reality. It is the blood-soaked streets, the empty stares of those left behind, the hearts shattered in an instant. Violence now churns beneath the surface of every life, spreading like a cancer. The silence of the dead becomes the haunting truth amid loss and pain.

From the marketplaces of Gaza to the green fields of Pahalgam, from once-vibrant towns now turned to rubble, to villages hollowed out by conflict, the toll of human life rises — silent and appalling, and so deeply expressed by Isaac Rosenberg in his poem Dead Man's Dump: "And the dead were no more than/ Empty vessels, and their voices/ Were but a wild cry in the night." The dust of violence chokes whole generations and erodes human dignity, just as the world is poisoned by the wreckage of conflict and political greed. Violence today is no longer an eruption; it is a grim undercurrent, steady and relentless. The violence we see today shatters both the living and the dead, tearing down not just bodies, but the very structure of meaning. The mythical sustenance that once tied us to hope, faith, and community is gone: a line from T.S. Eliot's Wasteland says it all — "A heap of broken images, where the sun beats" — defining a landscape of aridity and devastation, of despair, drought, and the belief that nothing can ever be whole again. "These are the fragments that I shore against my ruins," asserts Eliot at the end of his Wasteland harking back to the undying monuments of civilisation, the great masterpieces of literature and art that sustain human life.



What is really heart-rending is the suffering of the children inheriting not only the trauma of loss but the trauma of abandonment being thrust into a world where safety is a lie and justice a ghost, where small hands reach for missing hands, and find only air. There is no myth left to guide them, no story to make sense of this brutality, no toys or books or favourite drawers in their writing tables they once found refuge in. They grow up in a world without meaning, in a world filled only with echoes of war. More than anything, it is Amrita Pritam's anguished cry that echoes in my emptiness, as she laments the violence that eats away at the fabric of human existence: "Aji Aakhaan Waris Shah Nu" — Today I call out to Waris Shah,/ Rise from your grave,/ Speak from your pages,/ And witness the pain of Punjab once more." Her words mourn not just a region, but the loss of the sacred, the death of a culture, and the disappearance of the stories that once held meaning. Without them, we are lost in a desert of memory and grief.

Yet, amid all this, there flickers a defiant, aching hope — a refusal to let the dead be erased. While they made widows and orphans, we make songs and prayers. While they made graveyards, we make gardens out of tears. Our hope is not a naive surrender to fate, but a rebellion against the absence of meaning. Even in the face of overwhelming grief, those who remain choose to rebuild and remember. Hope is all that we have. In W.H. Auden's elegy In memory of W. B. Yeats, he captures this hope amid the disillusionment of the modern world after the loss of a great poet: "He became his admirers./ Now he is dead./ Now the ghost of his words still haunts us." The death of the poet in Auden's world is not just the death of a man; it is the death of a voice that helped make sense of the chaos, the voice that tried to weave myth back into the dust of history. But that voice is gone, and we are left to fend for ourselves in the darkness where art and poetry live on, asserting and reinforcing the ever-living spirit of man, his undying songs that stitch their words into every step he takes. We are the ones who remain and in our broken hearts, the dead still live.

Construction of second part of new integrated terminal at Chennai airport further delayed to June 2026



Around 25% of construction work has only been completed till now in the second part of the terminal building; excavation and building the basement with hard rock like conditions make it challenging for the contractor to expedite work

GNS News Agency, May 15

As the construction work has been delayed, it may take longer to complete the second part of the new integrated terminal building (NITB) at Chennai airport that will handle international flight operations. Officials of Airports Authority of India (AAI) said the work on NITB will be completed by June 2026 and it will be available for air passengers by August 2026. As of now, 25% of the work has been

finished in the second part of NITB.

Six years back, AAI allocated ₹2,467 crore and kicked off the construction of Phase-II modernisation project. AAI envisaged a posh terminal with new facilities for international air passengers and the expansive building would let the airport handle up to 35 million passengers per year. NITB's construction was divided into two parts. After the first part of NITB was ready, Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated it two years back and it functions as an international terminal. The second part of NITB too will be deployed for international flight operations and AAI fixed December 2025 as the deadline for completion of construction. But the second part of NITB is plagued by delays and it has been revised to June 2026. Post inauguration, a rigorous inspection has to be done and the terminal will be ready for air passengers only by August next year, officials said. Officials said they have been battling numerous difficulties after the construction work commenced nearly six years ago. When the pandemic hit the country, for nearly two years, the work faced a major setback. "But we got out of it, expedited the work and got the first part of the NITB commissioned at the earliest," an official said. Excavation and building the basement with hard rock like conditions made it challenging and the contractor delayed the work over cost escalation issues. "We have been putting our best efforts into this project and we will finish it for inauguration by June 2026," he added. Air passengers said they have been continuously witnessing some kind of construction work or the other at the airport for years now. R. Sivakumar, a frequent flyer, said: "It doesn't feel nice to fly in and out of an airport which constantly has some construction or the other work going on. While delays can happen with infrastructure projects, there should be some accountability and the authorities have to find a way to wrap it up soon," he added.

Detaining prisoner without trial amounts to pre-trial punishment; bail is rule, says HC



GNS News Agency, May 15

The Bombay High Court has emphasised that the principle of bail is the rule, and refusal is an exception, saying detaining a prisoner for a long period without trial amounts to "pre-trial punishment". A Bench of Justice Milind Jadhav on May 9 also took note of overcrowded jails in the State, and said the courts need to strike a balance. The Bench made the observations while granting bail to one Vikas Patil, arrested for allegedly killing his brother in 2018. Justice Jadhav noted that trials are nowadays taking perpetuity to conclude, and prisons were simultaneously overcrowded in some segments. The Bench said it regularly deals with cases where undertial prisoners have been in custody for a long period, and is equally aware of the conditions of the prisons. Justice Jadhav referred to a December 2024 report from the superintendent of the Arthur Road Jail, which stated that the facility was overcrowded beyond its sanctioned capacity by more than six times. It noted that every barrack sanctioned to house only 50 inmates, as of date,

has anywhere between 220 to 250 inmates.

"Such an incongruity leads us to answer the proposition: How can courts find a balance between the two polarities?" Justice Jadhav remarked. The court said these are cases concerning the liberty of undertial prisoners who have been incarcerated for long periods, impacting their constitutional right to speedy justice and personal liberty. The principle rule is bail is the rule, and refusal is the exception, it said. Justice Jadhav referred to an article written by two undertial prisoners, "Proof of Guilt", which raised the question of the long incarceration of persons awaiting trial. He said while mere long incarceration cannot be an absolute proposition for bail, it was an important issue that needed consideration along with the right to a speedy trial. The paradox in the question raised in the article as to how long is too long a period of incarceration until the right to a speedy trial is defeated is relevant prima facie, and there cannot be one definite answer, the court remarked. Detaining an undertial prisoner for a long period only served to legitimise the award of "surrogate punishment" without trial, which amounts to pre-trial punishment, the court said. The Bench also called for a change in the mindset and approach of the prosecution and referred to how prosecutors vehemently oppose bail pleas even in cases of long incarceration pending trial under the mistaken impression that the crime was serious, and hence, bail should not be granted. "The overarching postulate of criminal jurisprudence that an accused is presumed to be innocent until proven guilty cannot be brushed aside lightly, however stringent the law may be," Justice Jadhav said. The court noted that in the present case, the accused has been in jail for over six years, and there is no distinct possibility of the trial to start or conclude in the near foreseeable future.

How did human music originate?

GNS News Agency, May 15

The origins of human music are obscure because of the many contexts in which it could have arisen and for a variety of purposes. Archaeologists have found musical instruments among the remains of Egyptian and Indus civilisation sites as well as in similar settlements around the world since the dawn of prehistory. Some theories also suggest human music co-originated with human language, although the evidence is iffy.

This said, scientists have been exploring music among humans' closest living relatives, the chimpanzees. Researchers reported on May 9 that Western and Eastern chimpanzees both have spontaneous drumming behaviour. They also said some individuals could produce drumming sequences with very stable inter-beat intervals, closely matching rhythms found in human music. West African chimpanzees were found to be able to keep up longer drumming sequences by using two limbs at a time — alternating hands or feet — suggesting a greater degree of motor control than previously believed. The researchers also said these drumming sessions aren't intended to communicate and instead may be a playtime activity. Scientists have stud-



ied animal vocalisations more than rhythm and percussion among animals. Per the researchers, the drumming behaviour they have observed suggests that precursors to human musical rhythm didn't emerge 'from scratch' but rather evolved from traits present in the common ancestor of humans and chimpanzees both. Differences in drumming abilities between Eastern and Western chimpanzees also suggest a potential cultural or genetic basis for rhythmic expression, the researchers added.

Who is General Asim Munir, Pakistan's army chief?

GNS News Agency, May 15

On April 17, while speaking at a gathering of expatriates in Islamabad, Gen. Asim Munir, Pakistan's army chief, said "we are different from Hindus in every possible aspect of life", invoking the two-nation theory. "No matter where you live, remember - your roots lie in a high civilisation, noble ideology, and proud identity." He added that Kashmir "will be our jugular vein, we will not forget it, we will not leave our Kashmiri brothers in their historical struggle". Five days later, armed terrorists gunned down 26 Indians, mostly civilian tourists, in Kashmir's Pahalgam. The Resistance Front, which India believes is a front of Pakistan-based terrorist group Lashkar-e-Taiba, immediately claimed responsibility (it later denied any role in the killing). On May 7, India launched Operation Sindoor, an air strike at terror sites inside Pakistan. Pakistan responded with more fire, escalating the showdown, leading to both sides launching missile attacks. Is this what Gen. Munir wanted?

Not long before becoming the most powerful man in Pakistan, Lieutenant-General Asim Munir was the shortest-serving head of the Inter-Service Intelligence (ISI), the spy agency. He was appointed the ISI head in October 2018 by the Army chief, Gen. Qamar Javed Bajwa. But eight months later, he was replaced with Lt. Gen. Faiz Hamid on the insistence of then-Prime Minister Imran Khan. The cricketer-turned-politician, who came to power a few months earlier, was still enjoying warm ties with the military establishment. While there was no official word on why the ISI chief was fired, an alleged audio clip of Aleem Khan, a former leader of Mr. Khan's Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) party, surfaced earlier in 2022 in which he accused the former Prime Minister of sacking Lt. Gen. Munir for "exposing corruption" of his wife, Bushra Bibi.

The tables would soon turn. Mr. Khan, who fell out with the military, was ousted from power in April 2022 through a no-confidence vote. As he was trying to make a comeback through political mobilisation across the country, Lt. Gen. Munir was appointed the Chief of the Army Staff (COAS). It was hardly a secret that Mr. Khan's PTI was steadfastly opposed to Lt. Gen. Munir's appointment. But Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and his brother and former Prime Minister, Nawaz Sharif, had their way in picking the successor of Gen. Bajwa, who retired on November 29, 2022, after six years at the top. "We hope that the new leadership of the armed forces of Pakistan will play its constitutional role... and stay out of the politics of domestic affairs..." Mr. Khan's party said in a statement about Lt. Gen. Munir's appointment, without congratulating the new COAS. Mr. Khan has been in jail since May 2023. And his PTI party, which was banned from contesting the February 2024 election, is in disarray. A coalition of former rivals, the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz and Pakistan People's Party of the Bhuttos, is in power, under Shehbaz Sharif's premiership, with the direct blessings of Gen. Munir. Asim Munir entered the service through the Officers Training School programme in Mangla, where he won the prestigious Sword of Honour, an honorary sword given to best performing cadets. He started his military career as a Second Lieutenant in 1986 when the military dictator Gen. Zia-ul-Haq was ruling Pakistan. As a Brigadier, he commanded the Pakistani troops in the Northern Areas, which includes Pakistan-occupied Kashmir, under Gen. Bajwa. After Gen. Bajwa became the Army chief in November 2016, Lt. Gen. Munir rose through the ranks quickly. He was appointed the Military Intelligence Director-General in 2017 and became a (three-star) Lieutenant-General in September 2018. In the same year, Gen.



Bajwa promoted him as the ISI Director-General, but his fallout with Mr. Khan cost him the job. However, Lt. Gen. Munir survived Mr. Khan's ire. He was posted as Gujranwala Corps Commander for two years and then moved to the General Headquarters in Rawalpindi as a Quartermaster General, in charge of supplies.

Pakistani media termed him a "devout", "clear-headed" soldier committed to protecting the interests of the military and the state. There were instances of Lt. Gen. Munir acting swiftly to shield the military and the ISI from public criticism. In July 2018, Islamabad High Court judge Shaukat Aziz Siddiqui criticised the ISI, saying the agency was manipulating judicial proceedings to get favourable decisions. Justice Siddiqui was sacked in October that year by President Arif Alvi on a recommendation from the Supreme Judicial Council for misconduct, a few days after Lt. Gen. Munir became the ISI chief. Political analyst and author Shuja Nawaz writes in his book, The Battle for Pakistan, that the Supreme Court's decision was an example of Lt. Gen. Munir's "overreach". Mr. Nawaz writes that Lt. Gen. Munir has the "reputation of a hardliner" and "a tough officer rooted in Islamic tradition". He is also called a "Hafiz-e-Quran", who memorised the holy book during his posting in Saudi Arabia as a Lieutenant-Colonel. By the time Gen. Munir took over as the army chief, Pakistan-India ties had already hit a low. Lt. Gen. Munir was the ISI chief when the Pulwama attack took place in February 2019 in which 40 Indian personnel were killed. India retaliated by launching an air strike in Balakot, in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Under Gen. Bajwa, Pakistan oversaw the Taliban's return to Afghanistan, which seemed to have given a sense of victory to the establishment—a sense that did not last long.

At home, the military, which has always remained the power behind the throne, faced a credibility crisis after Mr. Khan, whom Pakistani journalist Abbas Nasir calls a "cornered tiger", was jailed and his party was taken apart. As relations with the Afghan Taliban turned sour with the Pakistani Taliban stepping up attacks in the tribal regions, the Pakistani military and Government started cracking down on Afghan refugees in the country.

Tariff talks begin between U.S., Chinese officials in Geneva as world looks for signs of hope



GNS News Agency,May 15

The U.S. Treasury Secretary and America’s top trade negotiator began talks with high-ranking Chinese officials in Switzerland on Saturday (May 10, 2025) aiming to de-escalate a dispute that threatens to cut off trade between the world’s two biggest economies and damage the global economy.The Xinhua News Agency says Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent and U.S. Trade Representative Jamieson have begun meetings in Geneva with a Chinese delegation led by Vice Premier He Lifeng.Diplomats from both sides also confirmed that the talks have begun but spoke anonymously and the exact location of the talks wasn’t made public.

Prospects for a major breakthrough appear dim. But there is hope that the two countries will scale back the massive taxes — tariffs — they’ve slapped on each other’s goods, a move that would relieve world financial markets and companies on both sides of the Pacific Ocean that depend on U.S.-China trade.U.S. President Donald Trump last month raised U.S. tariffs on China to a combined 145%, and China retaliated by hitting American imports with a 125% levy. Tariffs that high essentially amount to the countries’ boycotting each other’s products, disrupting trade that last year topped \$660 billion.

Even before the talks began, Mr. Trump suggested Friday (May 9, 2025) that the U.S. could lower its tariffs on China, saying in a Truth Social post that “80% Tariff seems right! Up to Scott.?Sun Yun, director of the China program at the Stimson Center, noted it will be the first time He and Mr. Bessent have talked. And she doubts the Geneva meeting will produce any substantive results.“The best scenario is for the two sides to agree to de-escalate on the ... tariffs at the same time,” she said, adding even a small reduction would send a positive signal. “It cannot just be words.”Since returning to the White House in January, Mr. Trump has aggressively used tariffs as his favorite economic weapon. He has, for example, imposed a 10% tax on imports from almost every country in the world.But the fight with China has been the most intense. His tariffs on China include a

20% charge meant to pressure Beijing into doing more to stop the flow of the synthetic opioid fentanyl into the United States. The remaining 125% involve a dispute that dates back to Mr. Trump’s first term and comes atop tariffs he levied on China back then, which means the total tariffs on some Chinese goods can exceed the 145%.During Mr. Trump’s first term, the U.S. alleged that China uses unfair tactics to give itself an edge in advanced technologies such as quantum computing and driverless cars. These include forcing U.S. and other foreign companies to hand over trade secrets in exchange for access to the Chinese market; using government money to subsidize domestic tech firms; and outright theft of sensitive technologies.Those issues were never fully resolved. After nearly two years of negotiation, the United States and China reached a so-called Phase One agreement in January 2020. The U.S. agreed then not to go ahead with even higher tariffs on China, and Beijing agreed to buy more American products. The tough issues — such as China’s subsidies — were left for future negotiations.But China didn’t come through with the promised purchases, partly because COVID-19 disrupted global commerce just after the Phase One truce was announced.

The fight over China’s tech policy now resumes.Mr. Trump is also agitated by America’s massive trade deficit with China, which came to \$263 billion last year.In Switzerland, Mr. Bessent and Greer also plan to meet with Swiss President Karin Keller-Sutter.Mr. Trump last month suspended plans to slap hefty 31% tariffs on Swiss goods — more than the 20% levies he plastered on exports from European Union. For now, he’s reduced those taxes to 10% but could raise them again.The government in Bern is taking a cautious approach. But it has warned of the impact on crucial Swiss industries like watches, coffee capsules, cheese and chocolate.“An increase in trade tensions is not in Switzerland’s interests. Countermeasures against U.S. tariff increases would entail costs for the Swiss economy, in particular by making imports from the USA more expensive,” the government said last week, adding that the executive branch “is therefore not planning to impose any countermeasures at the present time.”The government said Swiss exports to the United States on Saturday (May 10, 2025) were subject to an additional 10% tariff, and another 21% beginning Wednesday (May 7, 2025).The United States is Switzerland’s second-biggest trading partner after the EU — a 27-member-country bloc that nearly surrounds the wealthy Alpine country of more than 9 million. U.S.-Swiss trade in goods and services has quadrupled over the last two decades, the government said.The Swiss government said Switzerland abolished all industrial tariffs on January 1 last year, meaning that 99% of all goods from the United States can be imported into Switzerland duty-free.

No provision for ‘no’ vote: Why India abstained from IMF vote to grant Pakistan \$2.4 bn funding

GNS News Agency,May 15

The Executive Board of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) on Thursday (May 8, 2025) night voted to approve \$2.4 billion of funding to Pakistan across two programmes. India abstained from the vote, citing Pakistan’s “poor track record”, the possibility that such funding could be used for state-sponsored terrorism and the fact that the IMF is bound by “procedural and technical formalities”.The voting rules of the Executive Board are such that countries cannot vote against a decision to provide loans to a country; they can only abstain. That is, a ‘no’ vote is not allowed.

Of the \$2.4 billion, \$1 billion is part of a larger \$7 billion Extended Fund Facility (EFF) extended to Pakistan in September 2025. The additional \$1.4 billion is under a Resilience and Sustainability Facility (RSF), and marks the 25th time Pakistan has received a loan from the IMF since 1948.According to government sources, while India laid its grievances before the Executive Board, it was “hamstrung” by the fact that there is no provision in the voting system for a “no” vote. “You can either vote in favour of granting a loan, or you can abstain,” the official told The Hindu. “In such a scenario, India abstained, and the Board took note of that. But given the rigid structures and rules of the IMF, the Executive Board had to go ahead and approve the loan, despite our reservations and the ongoing conflict.”Since there can be no negative votes, the vote by the Executive Board is unanimous.

Further, the voting system incorporates an imbalance. That is, each country does not have an equal vote. For example, the vote share of the India, Bangladesh, Bhutan and



Sri Lanka grouping is only 3.05%, whereas the US itself has a 16.49% share, Japan 6.14%, and China 6.08%. Germany, France, and the UK each also have higher vote shares than the grouping India is in. The IMF, in a statement, noted that Pakistan’s policy efforts under the EFF have so far delivered “significant progress in stabilising the economy” and that the economy’s fiscal performance has been “strong”, allowing it to remain on track to meeting the GDP target of 2.1% by the end of this year. “The RSF will support the authorities’ efforts to reduce vulnerabilities to natural disasters and to build economic and climate resilience,” the statement added.India had on Friday evening issued a statement outlining its reservations about additional IMF funding to Pakistan. “As an active and responsible member country, India raised concerns over the efficacy of IMF programs in case of Pakistan given its poor track record, and also on the possibility of misuse of debt financing funds for state sponsored cross border terrorism,” the Ministry of Finance (MoF) said.

China 'strongly' urges India, Pakistan to exercise calm, restraint



GNS News Agency,May 15

China on Saturday (May 10, 2025) “strongly” urged India and Pakistan to exercise calm and restraint and return to the track of peaceful settlement. China is closely following the ongoing situation between India and Pakistan and is deeply concerned about the escalation, a statement by the Chinese Foreign Ministry here. “We strongly urge both sides to act in the larger interest of peace and stability, exercise calm and restraint, return to the track of political settlement through peaceful means, and refrain from any action that could further escalate tensions,” the statement issued by the spokesperson of the Ministry said.

“This will be important for the fundamental interest of both India and Pakistan, and for a stable and peaceful region. This is also what the international community hopes to see. China is willing to continue to play a constructive role to this end,” it said.Tensions between India and Pakistan increased after the Indian armed forces on Wednesday conducted precision strikes targeting terror launchpads in Pakistan and Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK) in re-

CBI arrests Income Tax Commissioner, 4 others in Rs 70 lakh bribery case



GNS News Agency,May 15

New Delhi: The CBI has arrested Commissioner Income Tax (Exemptions), Hyderabad, Jeevan Lal Lavidia and four others in an alleged bribery case of Rs 70 lakh, officials said

Will the Dravidian model rule work for DMK in 2026?



GNS News Agency,May 15

As an effective campaign tool, there is hardly anything better than promising ‘social welfare’. Over five decades and more, from the time Mrs Indira Gandhi announced ‘Garibi Hatao’ as one of her policies to alleviate the misery of the masses in the turbulent 1970s, political parties in India have effortlessly sailed on this bandwagon to hit the bull’s eye most of the times at the hustings.

The DMK government, which as expected, announced its completion of four years of Dravidian model rule last week in a grand way, highlighted its work in this regard. Three notable schemes — financial assistance scheme to women, free bus rides for the fair sex and breakfast schemes for government-aided schools are already being spoken about as game changers for the oldest regional party in south India.Tamil Nadu, which has firmly been a pocket borough of both DMK and AIADMK for close to six decades is a standout example of ‘intensely local’ mode of governance in this phase. It has dealt with the Centre on its own terms, not always successful, but has riled the Delhi establishment many a time with its insular and Tamil-first approach on many issues.

On the face of it, with the next Assembly elections due in May 2026, the party does not seem to have a real

competitor to challenge it as it aims for a repeat performance. History may not be on its side as DMK has never returned to power despite ruling from Fort St George for the first time since 1967 as the State faced 16 elections in this period. Interestingly, Jayalalitha bucked the trend as AIADMK stormed to power, to enable her stay on as the CM till her demise in 2016.Stalin, having served for long under his mercurial and successful Dravidian politician father, M Karunanidhi got his due in 2021 after effectively dethroning the wobbling rival, the AIADMK. Having resorted to the standard campaign which regional party heads have adopted, he had kept the limelight on his party and political performance by challenging Delhi and taking on the NDA on contentious issues like NEET abolition and recently, the NEP.

While this has given him better visibility in the anti-BJP bloc, which is now in a battered shape, it has alerted the alliance partners who findthemselves to be in a better position to bargain and bag more seats for themselves from either of the two formations. While the caste element is at the core of any such arrangements as described above, the AIADMK, which would be forced to enter into a tight ropewalk as far as its big ally BJP is concerned may end up being a comforting factor for its opponents. The saffron party has been quick to make the appropriate noises and also take decisive action by removing the popular state chief, Annamalai to keep the alliance on track. Analysts are quick to point out despite the Tamil media grudgingly acknowledging it, the BJP has grown from what it was to touch a decent 11 per cent vote share in the Lok Sabha polls and has kept the youth interested.DMK is still being critically assessed for its patchy track record on law and order, corruption charges against in the upper echelons of bureaucracy and a few ministers who have been jailed and a worrisome industrial relations scenario with the Samsung strike posing a few uncomfortable questions. Unemployment too is an issue which has bothered the state youth and the government is on the defensive in this case.

15 U.S. States sue over Trump’s move to fast-track oil and gas projects via ‘energy emergency’ order

GNS News Agency,May 15

A coalition of 15 States in the U.S. is suing over President Donald Trump’s efforts to fast-track energy-related projects, saying the administration is bypassing environmental protection laws and threatening endangered species, critical habitat and cultural resources.Mr. Trump issued an executive order declaring a “national energy emergency” on the first day of his presidency. The order urges oil and gas expansion through federal use of eminent domain and the Defence Production Act, which allows the government to use private land and resources to produce goods deemed to be a national necessity.Those kinds of steps are supposed to be reserved for actual emergencies, such as projects needed in the aftermath of disasters like hurricanes, flooding or major oil spills, the attorneys general wrote in the lawsuit filed in Washington State But now, Washington State Attorney General Nick Brown and the other plaintiffs said, agencies like the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the Department of Interior bypass required reviews under federal laws like the Clean Water Act and the Endangered Species Act.

“The President of the United States has the authority to determine what is a national emergency, not state attorneys or the courts,” White House spokeswoman Taylor Rogers wrote in an email. “President Trump recognises that unleashing American energy is crucial to both our economic and national security.”The attorneys general said reliable and affordable electricity is of critical importance to the nation, but noted that U.S. energy production is already at an all-time high.“The Executive Order is unlawful, and its com-



mands that federal agencies disregard the law and in many cases their own regulations to fast-track extensive categories of activities will result in damage to waters, wetlands, critical habitat, historic and cultural resources, endangered species, and the people and wildlife that rely on these precious resources,” they wrote in the lawsuit.“The shortcuts inherent in rushing through emergency processes fundamentally undermine the rights of States,” the attorneys general said, noting that the federal Clean Water Act grants states the right to protect water quality within their own borders.They want a federal judge to declare the executive order unlawful and bar the agencies from pursuing emergency permitting for non-emergency projects.Brown and California Attorney General Rob Bonta are leading the lawsuit, and the attorneys general of Arizona, Connecticut, Illinois, Massachusetts, Maine, Maryland, Michigan, Minnesota, New Jersey, Oregon, Rhode Island, Vermont, and Wisconsin have signed on.

Columbia suspends over 65 students following pro-Palestinian protest in library

GNS News Agency,May 15

Columbia University has suspended dozens of students and barred alumni and others who participated in a pro-Palestinian demonstration inside the school’s main library earlier this week, a school spokesperson said The Ivy League institution in Manhattan placed more than 65 students on interim suspension and barred 33 others, including those from affiliated institutions such as Barnard College, from setting foot on campus.

Interim suspension generally means that a student cannot come to campus, attend classes or participate in other university activities, according to Columbia’s website. The university declined to say how long the disciplinary measures would be in place, saying only that the decisions are pending further investigation.An undisclosed number of alums who also participated in the protest are also now prevented from entering school grounds, according to Columbia.Roughly 80 people were arrested in connection with the Wednesday (May 7, 2025) evening demonstration at the university’s Butler Library. Most face trespassing charges, though some may also face disorderly conduct, police have said.The mask-clad protesters pushed their way past campus security officers, raced into the building and hung Palestinian flags and other banners on bookshelves. Some protesters also scrawled phrases on library furniture



and picture frames, including “Columbia will burn.”New York City police in helmets and other protection broke up the demonstration at the request of university officials, who denounced the protests as an “outrageous” disruption for students studying and preparing for final exams.U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio has said his office will be reviewing the visa status of those who participated in the library takeover for possible deportation.The Trump administration has already pulled federal funding and detained international students at Columbia and other prestigious American universities over their handling of student protests against the war in Gaza.

Maharashtra Cyber cell takes down 5,000 social media posts with misinformation about India-Pak conflict

Mumbai: Maharashtra Cyber cell has removed 5,000 posts from social media platforms containing fake news and misinformation about the military conflict between India and Pakistan, an official said on Saturday.According to officials, fake news about the army’s movements, strategic operations, or retaliatory measures from neighbouring countries was found on social media. The cybercrime detection agency has also issued an advisory on the circulation of fake news and misinformation related to the military conflict, the official said.

He said such unverified and misleading content poses a serious risk to national security and may contribute to the escalation of the conflict. Taking serious cognisance of such fake news and misinformation, the agency issued notices to take down and remove such false narratives from social

media and communication platforms, he said.The official said the agency has removed around 5,000 social media posts containing fake news and misinformation about the military conflict.He said the department remains fully committed to maintaining a secure and trustworthy information environment and will continue to coordinate with platform operators and enforcement agencies to curb the spread of misinformation.Spreading false information, knowingly or unknowingly, is a punishable offence under the law, the official said.Maharashtra Cyber, in a statement, strongly advised citizens to exercise restraint and discernment while consuming and sharing information, particularly about matters of national importance.The agency appealed to people to act responsibly, verify facts from authorised sources, and report any suspicious or misleading content.

Why birds are just like us



What is a bird? Textbook definitions would say ‘warm-blooded vertebrates that have feathers, toothless, beaked jaws and lay hard-shelled eggs’. But there is much more to them — their lives have enough drama, adventure, danger and romance to put a movie script to shame. And when you start looking at them closely, you realise there is a lot for you as a human to relate to. One of the simplest joys of watching birds stems from the fact that they’re as unique and distinct as us. Let me start with food fads. Some birds such as the Oriental Honey Buzzard, well-adapted to prey on bee larvae, have a sweet tooth. Others such as the Hoopoe love some leisurely ‘me-time’, with sun-bathing an indispensable part of their routine. And many such as the Bar-headed Geese and Brahminy Shelducks — some of the highest flyers in the world, who can soar over Himalayan peaks — adhere strictly to a high-fibre diet of grass, putting your go-to fitness influencer to shame. Daredevils assemble

Speaking of fitness, birds such as the Shaheen Falcon, the fastest bird in a dive, are born athletes. When it spots a target (often a luckless pigeon), it takes position and transforms into a missile, launching into its famed 390-kmph dive. Such is the impact of the dive that a mere touch of the talon is enough to take the life of the prey. Birds are just as varied when it comes to perceptions of risk. The familiar Black Drongo is a daredevil that loves playing with fire — quite literally — using bushfires to its advantage by preying on insects that are disturbed by it. Ibisbills, however, prefer to play safe, pretending to be rocks along river rapids. Bird parenting styles could fill a book (and their love lives are made for the movies, but more on that later). Hornbills make for overly devoted parents, with the mother sequestering herself in a tree hole when nesting, and the male working overtime to feed his mate and the growing chicks. Cuckoos, on the other hand, would make for embarrassing guests to have on a parenting podcast. Pied Cuckoos are considered harbingers of rain in India. The monsoon is also the time when the Jungle Babbler, the preferred host for this brood parasite, breeds. The cuckoo lays her egg in the babbler’s cup-shaped nest, and bids goodbye to any parental worries. Rock Pigeons bring the same lazy carelessness to their nests — shabby clusters of twigs put together half-heartedly — which look unworthy of even being called nests. Tailorbirds, in contrast, are skilled embroiderers meticulously stitching leaves together to build their famed nests. Nature’s Romeos and Don Juans

Speaking of feathered love, Sarus Cranes, the avian embodiment of cheesy romance and unwavering marital fidelity, are known to mate for life. Snipes and Phalaropes lead more bohemian lives, where females take multiple mates and leave the clutch in the males’ care, hopping over to her next Bumble date. Pheasants like Monals and Tragopans come dressed in exquisite regalia and put on elaborate courtship displays of gleaming ornaments to woo females. But Nightjars sport drab plumages and blend perfectly with their surroundings to evade attention, just like

me at family weddings.

Not all birds fly undercover though. Malabar Whistling Thrushes are musical prodigies, and are not shy of flaunting their skill. You know you are in the Western Ghats when the melodious whistle of the thrush reverberates through the hills. Such is its human quality that it led ornithologist Salim Ali to nickname the bird ‘whistling schoolboy’. Art, in the avian world, goes beyond music. Artisans among birds, such as the Baya Weaver, can put even the most diligent traditional media artists to shame, making over 500 trips to complete making their pendulous nests. Others, including remorseless thieves such as the Skuas, who happily steal a tern’s hard-earned lunch, evoke the image of wannabe artists on social media using generative AI to make ‘art’. Other pursuits smack of left brain savants. Bearded Vultures are maths and physics wiz kids — their manoeuvre of carrying bones from a carcass and dropping them from the right height and angulation over rocks to crack them open and feast on the marrow, takes up to seven years to master.

Do birds have hobbies and passions? Some live the gourmet life, and use precision cutlery for the diet of their choice. Case in point: the Asian Openbill’s carefully designed bill gap, suited exclusively for sliding the bodies of snails off their shells. Other close cousins of the same stork, the Adjutants, will eat absolutely anything that they can catch, and even scavenge readily. If you have a penchant for killing houseplants with unintended neglect, flowerpeckers, India’s smallest birds, are who you need to turn to for advice. These nano-sized gardeners plant mistletoes all around our forests, and have devised novel and clever ways to do so. As the bird pecks at the mistletoe flower for nectar, the petals pop open scattering pollen all over the bird’s face, which it dutifully deposits on the next flower it visits. It also eats ripe miseltoe fruit, and when ingested, these pass through the gut rapidly, prompting the bird to wipe its rear end awkwardly against the bark to detach the seed enclosed in sticky sap. Both these events happen to be part of nature’s grand horticultural plan — planting the mistletoe seed directly on the host tree.

Social behaviours are just as varied. Racket-tailed Drongos that mimic other birds and initiate the formation of mixed species feeding flocks, love a good party. Pittas prefer solitude. While some like the Indian Scimitar Babbler’s can chat incessantly, others like the Yellow-crowned Woodpecker are great listeners, and can often be seen placing their ears against trees to listen for ants inside the bark, before they start hammering it. Birds such as the leaf warblers seem to have a hyperactivity problem, constantly and restlessly flitting about from leaf to leaf, often to the annoyance of a birdwatcher trying to get a good look, because they’re also a nightmare to identify correctly! Herons have probably taught samurais the virtues of patience — they can standstill for hours before striking potential prey. Birds come with an astonishing variety of features and traits spread across families and genera, making even the most closely related species distinctly unique from one another, thanks to minor evolutionary tweaks. The Brahminy and the Black Kites are close cousins on the evolutionary tree. But a simple tweak in design — the fork in its tail — has made the latter a master of exploiting scavenging opportunities even in densely populated urban settings, while the Brahminy Kite lags. That’s thanks to the sheer range of stunts and manoeuvres this feature supports. In an age where gadgets command our constant attention, and when our attention spans, and how we are entertained and informed, are commanded by technocratic corporations, the act of sitting by a lake and observing a reed bird for as long as you wish, feels like a silent rebellion to me. It is this rebellion that I invite you all to participate in with me.

Scientists create first ‘pangenome’ of Asian rice

Scientists have assembled a first of its kind ‘pangenome’, a kind of reference genome, by stitching together key parts of genomes from 144 varieties of wild and cultivated varieties of rice from Asia. Much like the Human Genome Project in 2003 mapped genomes from a range of individuals, expressing the genetic diversity of the human species, the rice pangenome allows researchers to develop new rice cultivars and introduce new traits for disease-tolerance as well as resilience against climate shocks. Rice is staple for nearly two-thirds of the globe. It is the primary crop grown in India over the monsoon months of June-September. In 2024-25, India produced a record 220 million tonnes of rice over 51,000 ha with an average yield of 4.2 tonnes/ha. Several studies over the years have warned that rising temperatures due to climate change would not only affect yields but also increase arsenic uptake among several rice varieties. India’s average temperature has increased by 0.7° C since 1901. 2024 was the hottest year on record, with the average minimum temperature 0.9° C above the long-term average.

Earlier this month, the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) announced the development of two varieties of genome-edited rice, Samba Mahsuri and MTU 1010, that reportedly promise higher yields and better drought resistance. These however are yet to be released into farmer fields. To develop the pangenome, the scientists — nearly all associated with the Chinese Academy of Sciences — report undertaking a “deep analysis of complex gene flows” both within cultivars (domesticated) and between cultivars and wild rice, highlighting the evolutionary and domestication pathways of various rice types. This study reinforced support for the hypothesis that all Asian cultivated rice had an evolutionary origin from a wild variety called Or-Illa, the ancestor of japonica.

Asian cultivated rice (*Oryza sativa* L.) was domesticated from its wild progenitor *O. rufipogon*, and is one of the most important food crops in the world. Or-Illa is a variant of *O. rufipogon*. While reference genomes of a species generally confine themselves to identifying the characteristic genes that make up a species, a ‘pangenome’ has the common genes as well as maps out the unique genes found in the individual rice varieties. It presents a more complete understanding of the genetic variation present in rice. Primarily using ‘PacBio high-fidelity’ (HiFi) sequencing technology and computational methods, their analysis revealed 3.87 billion base pairs of novel genetic sequences absent from the single acknowledged reference genome, *O. sativa ssp japonica*. They identified 69,531 genes collectively spanning the pangenome, with 28,907 core genes and 13,728 wild-rice-specific genes. Population genetics studies have earlier shown that ancient japonica rice was first domesticated from the *O. rufipogon* group Illa (Or-Illa) population in China, and that indica rice was subsequently domesticated when ancient japonica spread southward and westward in Asia and crossed with the local *O. rufipogon* group I (Or-I) population. Another key finding of the study was that of the 69,531 genes identified, about 20% were



specific to wild rice. These genetic resources can improve understanding of rice environmental adaptation, phenotypic plasticity and regeneration potential. “By bridging the gap between wild and cultivated rice genetics, our study opens new avenues and provides useful wild rice resources for developing superior and more productive rice varieties,” the authors note. “These improved varieties could incorporate valuable traits from wild rice species, potentially enhancing their resilience to rapid environmental changes.”

Surge in cyber attacks, Maharashtra cyber department warns to stay vigilant

Amid the rising tensions along the India-Pakistan border, Maharashtra State Cyber Department on Saturday (May 10, 2025), instructed citizens to “stay vigilant” while interacting with digital content or accessing documents from unverified sources, as there has been a surge in cyber attacks after India launched ‘Operation Sindoor’.

Maharashtra Cyber Police has warned people about malware-infected files targeting individual user devices. “These files are sent as government-related files so that the probability of engaging with the document is high, and once opened, can lead to data theft, system surveillance, or broader network compromise,” stated the Additional Director General of Police office.

Given the scenario, the authority has advised people to be cautious of clicking on unsolicited links or opening attachments from unverified sources. Users must refrain from downloading documents labelled as government files or opening them without confirming the authenticity of the source.

Other instructions are to use updated antivirus software, regular system scans, secure login practices, and two-factor authentication.

The Wire says website unblocked after portal removed article



The Wire news portal said that unblocking orders were issued for its website shortly after it reached out to the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting about the censorship of its website, it said in a statement on Saturday (May 10, 2025). As a precondition for removing the site, the site said that the government urged it to take down an article it had put out based on reporting by the U.S. publication CNN. While the site has taken the article down, it noted that the original CNN story remained available, and said it would challenge the decision. The website’s blocking had drawn condemnation from multiple journalistic bodies, including the Press Club of India, DIGIPUB Foundation, and the Editors’ Guild of India.

“I am constrained to note that under the IT Act, the procedure your ministry should have followed was to first issue notice about the news story in question, then give

Can India repeat Operation Trident of 1971?

During the India-Pakistan war in December 1971, the Indian Navy had unleashed its fury and firepower on the neighbouring country’s harbour in Karachi. The operations conducted in two phases were titled Operation Trident (December 4 to 5) and Operation Python. The Indian Navy had deployed its Vidyut-class missile boats such as INS Nirghat and INS Veer from the Okha port, and completely destroyed at least four Pakistan Naval ships, one merchant ship carrying ammunition, and the fuel and ammunition depot in Karachi. That was a decisive moment, as India had Pakistan by its jugular vein, which pushed its economy into a shambles. Now, with Pakistan resorting to attacks after India launched Operation Sindoor post the Pahalgam terror attack, will India be able to repeat the 1971 heroics.

Senior defence experts say that it is the ultimate, and it appears to be in the offing. Comparing the 1971 operations with the present situation, a senior defence analyst says, “Then we had the technology, thought it was vintage, on our side. We had P-15 Termit cruise missiles, also known as Styx missiles. On the other hand, Pakistan did not have any missile and it was a new warfare for it. Though the missiles were vintage and were products of World War II, they wrecked havoc.” The Indian Navy is a blue water force today with two aircraft carriers (INS Vikrant and INS Vikramaditya) and nuclear submarines that can launch nuclear tipped cruise and conventional missiles, silently and unnoticed from the depths of the ocean, complementing and completing the nuclear triad. “Numerically, India is way



ahead with its assets that includes at least two operational nuclear submarines and two aircraft carriers,” the experts say. Both the countries today have ship-based missiles and are equipped with state-of-the-art radars. “But what can be the decisive punch is that India possesses a few well-stocked hi-tech weapons like the ship-based anti-ship missiles (Brahmos, Exocet and Harpoon), ship-based ballistic missiles such as Dhanush and Lora, and submarine-based Sagarika and K-4 and K-5 series, and a host of surface-to-air missiles such as Barak and air-to-air strike weapons such as Astra-MK series and Rampage,” the experts observe. “We need to attack and choke Pakistan in Karachi, economically and logistically. We have the aircraft carriers for gaining Sea Control and the submarines for Sea Denial,” they say.

Listen, don’t leap: Charles Assisi writes on coping with opposing worldviews

GNS News Agency, May 15

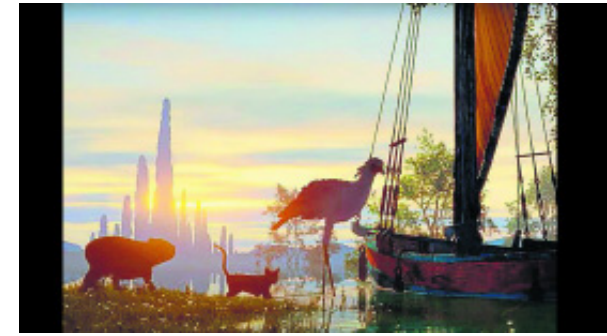
I have a friend who everyone thinks is unflappable. You know the type. Always calm. Always positive. Will help fix your marriage with three bullet points. Lately, this friend and I have been working together on a highly stressful project that involves multiple stakeholders, conflicting interests, and the usual mess that comes with trying to get anything done in this world. It’s got me all worked up. My wife worries. His wife worries too. Except, when she wants to know what’s going on, she checks in with me.

Every so often, I’ll get a call from her. “He listens to you,” she says. “Be his ally. Please make sure he’s okay.” I assumed this was because he remained unflappable at home, and she wanted to know what was really going on. Last week, I realised I’d read it all wrong. At a mutual friend’s birthday dinner, she walked up to me and asked how I was holding up. I told her I’d lost my temper once or twice, at the office. And I remained amazed by how calm her husband always seemed. “It’s all a façade,” she said. “He comes home and turns into someone else. Gets snappy. Withdrawn. Explodes over small things.” I didn’t know what to say. At first, I was surprised. Then I realised I shouldn’t be.

If I’m being honest, I know exactly what this is like. I’ve been this person. I even wrote about it, two weeks ago: How most of us carry around more than one version of ourselves. How there’s the version that shows up in meetings, knows how to sound agreeable, and smiles on cue. The version that turns up at family gatherings and knows which jokes to laugh at. And the version that surfaces at home, tired, unfiltered and impatient. It’s not deliberate. It just becomes a habit. A survival tactic. All day, one moderates and adapts; feints and pretends. Says “Interesting point” even when what one really wants to do is shout: “Are you a complete idiot?”. Says “Let’s circle back” when what we really mean is, “That’s the worst idea I’ve heard all week.”

The performance doesn’t come cheap. It is draining, and confusing. Eventually, one starts to forget which version is the real you. One way to return to one’s true self, I wrote then, is to slow down, use silences and pauses. If I don’t know how I feel about something, I stop pretending to have an erudite opinion. If I disagree, I let the silence hang, I wrote then. It struck me, in the wake of this party, that perhaps this wasn’t the cure-all I thought it was. Was I not taking the easy (even cowardly) way out? Wasn’t everyone struggling? Was it not a bit selfish to simply back out of the discourse?

Could I not do this better? I decided to start by really listening, rather than tuning out. The more I paid attention, the more I realised this isn’t just a personal trick. It’s been studied, over decades. Researchers such as Elizabeth Krumrei Mancuso have found that people with “intellectual humility”, those who are able to sit with opposing views without collapsing into defensiveness, are more self-aware, better at problem-solving, more creative. Through history, people with intellectual humility have quietly, non-violently driven real change. There was, for instance, Daryl Davis, subject of the 2016 documentary *Accidental Courtesy*:



Daryl Davis, *Race & America*. The Black musician befriended members of the Ku Klux Klan, not to argue, but to try to understand. Over time, more than 200 of the people he reached out to left the Klan. Many said they couldn’t hold on to their hate, once they had met their supposed enemy, and had conversations with him over time.

If he can sit down with the Klan, I think we can find ways to share a room with someone whose attitudes or opinions we despise. I now think of this as mental yoga. Something in the brain stretches — not to break, but to breathe — when one shares time and space with someone of a different worldview. This is how real growth occurs; how change happens. It struck me then that maybe this is the real productivity hack too. Because isn’t most of our bandwidth spent managing friction? Dodging it? Soothing it? Spinning it?

What if we stopped and simply let a disagreement breathe? Listened, and led with questions, instead of leaping to offer a counterpoint? Back to my friend, I still think he’s a good man. But I now know he’s tired, from holding it all together. For all my talk about clarity, I’ve been hiding behind his performance too. He takes the flak, and I get to stand behind him and reflect. It’s hard to admit it, but maybe I haven’t been a “silent ally”. Maybe I’ve just been silent. I intend to change this: take a fresh turn at evolution. Embrace the uncomfortable. That’s where growth begins. When you’re uncomfortable, and still stay open, that’s the stretch.

Elderly man dies of sunstroke in Mancherial

Mancherial: An elderly man died of sunstroke while he was visiting the Mandal Parishad Development Office to reenter his name on the food security card in Kotapalli mandal centre on Friday. Nallagunta Mallaiiah (60) from Supaka village collapsed when he was in the office to enter his name on the card, which was deleted due to some errors. He was shifted to a hospital in Chennai town. Doctors declared him dead. They stated that the cause of death could be sunstroke. His family members said that Mallaiiah was depressed after his name was omitted from the card a few months back.

Why the global counter-terrorism order fails India

“I was told to kill as many Hindus as possible. We were told that Muslims in J&K are not allowed to pray,” confessed lanky Mohammad Abdullah, his jawline shadowed by the sparse, hesitant beard of his teenage years. Abdullah was involved in the killing of 28 slum dwellers, including many children, in Qasim Nagar on the evening of July 13, 2002, on the outskirts of Jammu city. In a powerful act of resistance, Kaka, a Gujar Muslim and resident of the nearby Raikha forests, risked his life to subdue the armed militant on August 2 with a cot, and tied him with a rope when the militant sought shelter in his home, as the police searched the nearby forests for the hiding terrorists. Kaka alerted the police and ensured the perpetrator was handed over to the authorities. The words of Mohammad Abdullah were no different from those of Ajmal Kasab, one of the terrorists who was nabbed by a daredevil act of Mumbai police assistant sub-inspector Tukaram Omble during the Mumbai terror attack of 2008. Armed only with a lathi (bamboo stick), Omble charged at the hijacked vehicle and was shot five times after he opened the passenger door where Kasab was seated. In Mumbai, the dead also included 26 foreign nationals from 14 different countries. These are among the few cases in which terrorists who carried out carnage were arrested and can be cited as clinching evidence of Pakistani nationals’ involvement in some of the attacks that gained international attention.

The recent strikes under Operation Sindoor, carried out by India in Pakistan and Pakistan-occupied Jammu and Kashmir, some of which are well-known in the public domain, mark a new chapter in India’s fight against terrorism. Apart from demonstrating capabilities to strike, it is also an illustration of the intent. At the same time, we can safely conclude that the danger of terrorism is far from over. Having studied the subject of terrorism consistently from within the society, not from conference tables, but from the ground up, including at the UNHQ in New York, I remain struck by the recurring patterns: the repetition in discourse, the familiar reactions and the predictable strategies, both domestically and internationally. In the hinterland, the question dominating everyone’s mind is why an incident with eyewitnesses has failed to galvanise the international community

In Goa, a stampede and screams before sunrise

On May 2, Sonia Nandadurgi’s son, Sagar Shivkumar Nandadurgi, 31, a devotee of Goddess Lairai, boarded a bus with six friends from Piligao village to Shirgao village, 13 kilometres away. Here, in north Goa’s Bicholim taluka, is the Shree Lairai Devi temple, where every year in April or May, people flock for rituals that culminate in the lighting of a bonfire from which coals are raked and devotees called dhonds walk over. Waving to his mother and uncles, he promised to be home the next morning after walking on agnidivya (embers). The next morning, at 6 a.m., Sagar’s three uncles learnt from their neighbours that he and five others had died in a stampede at the temple.

Sagar’s funeral rites were performed on May 3. Since then, politicians and State administration officials have been streaming into the two-room house, offering their condolences. On May 4, the Governor of Goa, P.S. Sreedharan Pillai, visited the family. Sagar’s uncle and neighbour, Sainath Kavlekar, 45, says until May 9, the family had not received the postmortem report. Sixty-year-old Sonia’s home is surrounded by jackfruit, cashew, coconut, and mango trees. There is a tulsi planted in a mound of red earth at the entrance. The house used to be kuccha; Sagar had recently plastered it with cement, she says. Family members who live in the area say he wanted to paint the house and also replace the tin-sheet roof with a pucca one. At home, surrounding an anachronistic TV set on a wooden table are the many awards that Sagar had won in school, college, and at work for his performance. His spectacles, office bag, and medals all hang from walls and doors. Sagar had worked for Tirumala Bank’s loan recovery department, the stable job helping him and his mother build a better financial life. Sonia had lost her husband when Sagar was just a toddler. She had brought Sagar up by doing odd jobs over the years. She refuses to eat or drink water. “Why did you (the Goddess) take my son, my only son, my whole life,” she asks in Konkani, sobbing. “What is the purpose of my life without him?”

On the intervening night of May 2 and 3, an estimated one lakh people or more — as per temple authorities and the administration — had gathered between 11 p.m. and 1 a.m. to offer prayers and walk on embers at the temple. There is only one concrete, steep road going towards the temple, broad enough only for a lorry to pass.

Rupesh Rajput, 35, a dhond from Bicholim town, recounts the chaotic scenes that unfolded that day. “I suffered a minor injury. I am lucky to be alive,” he says. “At about 2 (in the morning) what I saw was distressing. A group of dhonds were playing with the beth (canes dhonds carry, also used in the rituals within the temple). They pushed people in front of them. There was a rope that divided the dhonds from the regular devotees. Within minutes, at least seven queues had been formed, and the dividing rope was gone,” he says. That precipitated the chaos that led to the stampede, he says.

Sagar was rushed to the community health centre in Bicholim, where he was declared ‘brought dead’, says Kavlekar. “His friends told us that he was pushed by other dhonds and fell on the pavement. He was crushed by the crowd. He was such a gentle and kind man,” he says. Soon after the incident, 74 people were admitted in the Goa Medical College and Hospital (GMCH) in Bambolim, the Asilo Hospital in Mapusa, and in community health centres at Sankhali and Bicholim. Nine injured people remain admitted in GMCH, of which four are on ventilator support.

Dr. Rajesh T. Patil, the medical superintendent at GMCH, says many suffered severe multiple fractures in the ribs. “Two patients have severe head injuries with cerebral hypoxia (when the brain is starved of oxygen). This is a serious complication that occurs after a chest injury,” he says. GMCH has been conducting mental health sessions for families and survivors, he adds. On May 3, Goa Chief Minister Pramod Sawant announced the transfer of five senior officials in the administration. He also announced an ex-gratia compensation of ₹10 lakh to each family of the deceased and ₹1 lakh each to those who had suffered serious injuries. Sainath says no one from the administration has reached out to them about the compensation. During the temple festival, there is a build-up of stalls selling everything from flowers to toys, at Wadacha Wada hamlet in Shirgao, where the stampede took place, about a kilometre from the temple. Now, there are just a few stalls selling puja essentials, but the smell of jasmine lingers in the air. A cloth merchant says his stall was vandalised by the crowd, but he is thankful to have survived the stampede. “I was holding on to a bamboo pole that I had put up to make the stall. In no time, all the four bamboo supports were brought on the ground. The clothes for sale were run over,” he says,

in India’s favour. There is a deep sense of revulsion over the fact that most major powers have merely called for restraint and urged both India and Pakistan to cooperate in identifying the perpetrators. India’s diplomatic efforts to confront terrorism at the U.N. have yielded partial victories but systemic inertia. While some explanations are self-evident, there are also deeper, multidimensional reasons worth examining to understand why India’s narrative fails to resonate in the international — or rather Western — capitals, despite consistent reinforcement of the same theme in national discourse. Western understanding holds significant weight because it shapes multilateral frameworks and trade preferences that are vital lifelines for Pakistan’s economy.

First, from strictly the security lens, there is little ambiguity that infiltration from across the border continues unabated, actively enabled by Pakistan’s military establishment. The infrastructure of terror, training camps, launch pads, and logistical networks, operates with the tacit, and often explicit, support of official agencies across the border. Anyone who has tracked the international border and Line of Control since 1990 is aware of the distinct patterns of infiltration. The tunnels along the International border (IB) that enable the entry of the terrorists from Sialkot district to J&K cannot be dug without the support of the official agencies from across the border. In this connection, the current attack is especially alarming because warning signs were there on the ground. In the weeks preceding it, ground intelligence pointed to a spike in infiltration attempts, particularly through the Samba-Kathua sector in the south, and the Rajouri-Poonch-Baramulla axis along the IB and Line of Control. These areas, due to their topography and socio-cultural overlap with Pakistani Punjab and Pakistan-occupied Jammu and Kashmir, provide both cover and convenient access for infiltrators. Locals had repeatedly raised concerns with both ruling and opposition parties, but their warnings were ignored. It’s akin to someone hurling combustible material at a house day after day, and we notice only when the blaze erupts. The danger was always present, accumulating in plain sight, but the response, both domestic and international, is triggered only when the fire breaks out. We recognise the fire, but continue to ignore the



refusing to be named. He adds that there was no police presence at the spot. Despite the stampede the previous night, devotees continue to throng the temple the following days, but temple authorities have turned off the music. The accident spot is relatively quiet. Footwear, heaps of beths, jasmine, purses, wallets, and pieces of torn clothes remained on the sides of the street.

Residents in the hilly area, whose porches were taken over by the crowd, say they were terrified to wake up to sounds of ambulances and screaming. Ravina Madgaonkar (48), who lives with her husband and two children, says that every year, people come to their porch to wait or just lie down to rest. This year there were far more people, and the corners of their compound walls are broken. “My 22-year-old son has been a dhond for the past seven years. He managed to return home, but he had a tough time getting into the house as people were sitting right outside our closed dors,” says Madgaonkar. The grief of a husband and uncle

Aditya Ankush Kauthankar (16) had accompanied his aunt Tanuja Shyamsundar Kirtankar (51) and his cousin Ritika (15), all of them dhonds. Seeing his aunt and cousin unable to get up, he rushed to help them, but was himself crushed in the chaos, says Ritika, who survived. He and his aunt were brought dead to the Mapusa district hospital. “It was sheer luck that someone dragged Ritika out and put her into an ambulance,” says her father, Shyamsundar Kauthankar (60), who lost his wife. Ritika suffered injuries in her leg and wears a temporary brace. The family lives less than 10 kilometres from here, and Shyamsundar is a construction worker. “I am worried about how I will take her to school to write her class 9 paper. The school has not agreed to give her any relief,” says Shyamsundar. He was informed about the incident by his older daughter, who was waiting near the homkhand, the pile of wood that was to be torched. Ritika always imitated her mother, who had been a dhond since she was a child, says Shyamsundar, who has always feared crowds. “If Aditya and Tanuja were taken in an ambulance instead of a police van, they may have survived. How did the State authorities allow stalls on both sides of such a narrow road, that too on a slope? Until last year, the police used to release dhonds and devotees in batches of 15 to 25 at a time. This year, there was no management,” he says. Aditya’s mother is a domestic help and father a taxi driver. Aditya had just passed his class 10 board examinations, and his sister is in class 8. The family is in shock and cannot speak. “He was so excited to study in class 11 that he had kept his newly stitched uniform, socks and shoes ready for the new term,” says Shyamsundar. Arun Desai, assistant sub-inspector, Bicholim police station, says the crowd has only grown each year, and it has become a mammoth task for the police to handle. “Devotees from Goa and neighbouring Maharashtra and Karnataka started coming from early in the morning on May 2. By the night, the crowd was too much for the police to handle.” The Lairai Devi annual jatra (pilgrimage), also known as the Shirgao jatra is centuries old, says Dinanath Gaonkar (69), president and priest of the temple committee. At the 2,700-square-metre premises, devotees submit their wishes to Lairai, who is one of eight siblings who made Goa their home, as per legend. Lairai’s sister Mirai was adopted by the Portuguese, who christened her Milagres (milagre is Portuguese for miracle). Oil for the temple festival comes from the church of that name in Mapusa, says Gaonkar. “Imagine all the dhonds must complete the fire walk between 2 and 6 in the morning,” he says. The Mahajans (hereditary male descendants of the temple’s founders) believe that the Goddess Lairai then walks to the chavata, a space about 200 metres from the homkund, where she rests. After this ritual, at 3.30 p.m., prasadam, consisting of patkali (ixora) and kodu (bottle gourd) flowers, is served. “Lairai Devi is our protector of water and forest resources, which we once had in abundance,” says Gaonkar. People collecting ashes from the embers on which the dhonds walk outside the Lairai Devi temple in Shirgao, Goa.



arsonist’s intent. Our knowledge ecosystem around terrorism remains narrow and incident-driven. Beyond investing in creating modern technology to detect and capture infiltration, proactive diplomatic action highlights these facts as they are unfolding. When signs of infiltration emerge, we must immediately alert the world capitals to the risks and consequences. Prior to the Baisaran attack, a series of civilian killings in the hilly terrain of Kathua signalled a consistent inflow of terrorists. The killings took place in areas that serve as a route for terrorists making their way to the Doda-Kishtwar hills that border Anantnag district in which Baisaran falls. While there are other granular factors contributing to the increased infiltration in recent years, those issues lie outside the scope of this piece. In a nutshell, by providing the topographical context, the relevant interlocutors from

A new normal in India-Pakistan ties

On September 22, 1965, during a speech at the UN Security Council, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, who was then part of the Ayub Khan administration, declared that Pakistan “will wage a war for 1,000 years” against India. Years later, Gen. Zia-ul-Haq, who captured power in a 1977 coup by toppling Prime Minister Bhutto (who was later executed), turned Bhutto’s ‘1,000 years of war’ into a ‘Bleed India through a Thousand Cuts’ doctrine — use low-intensity and sub-conventional warfare with militancy and infiltration to continue to bleed India. Pakistan suffered a humiliating defeat in the 1971 war, which saw the creation of Bangladesh. The Pakistani military, having failed in conventional warfare, turned to this indirect approach. The doctrine gained traction after the Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan. Pakistan, with support from the U.S. and Saudi Arabia, had successfully applied the ‘Thousand Cuts’ tactic in Afghanistan against the country’s communist regime and its Soviet backers. Bled out by the Pakistan and U.S.-backed mujahideen’s thousand cuts, the mighty Soviet troops withdrew from Afghanistan in 1989. The same year marked the beginning of a surge in militancy in the Kashmir valley. By the early 2000s, terror was exported to other parts of the country. India’s Parliament was attacked in December 2001; and in 2008, Mumbai, the country’s commercial hub, suffered a major terrorist assault. By then, Jaish-e-Mohammed and Lashkar-e-Taiba, two anti-India terrorist outfits with close links to Pakistan’s security establishment, had built sprawling networks in Pakistan. The Pahalgam massacre of April 22, 2025, in which 26 people, mostly civilian tourists, were brutally gunned down by terrorists, was the latest sign that the ‘Thousand Cuts’ doctrine remains alive in Rawalpindi’s strategic thinking. The attack came days after Pakistan’s military chief Gen. Asim Munir said “Kashmir is our jugular vein”. The Resistance Front, which India believes is a front of Lashkar-e-Taiba, initially claimed responsibility for the attack, but later denied any role.

Until 2016, India’s strategy for dealing with terrorist attacks linked to Pakistan largely relied on three measures: diplomatic efforts to isolate Pakistan internationally, economic penalties related to terror financing, and pressure on Islamabad to crack down on terror networks. This approach saw limited success as Pakistan was briefly put on the ‘grey list’ of the Financial Action Task Force (FATF), an intergovernmental body established to combat money laundering and terror financing, and was compelled to take some face-saving actions against terrorist entities. But India stopped short of taking direct military retaliation, because it did not want an all-out war between the two nuclear powers. India’s diplomatic and economic responses did not stop attacks by Pakistan-based terrorists. Islamabad-Rawalpindi continued to wage the Thousand-Cuts campaign with low cost and high immunity. Both would change soon.

Doctrinal change India adopted a doctrinal shift in its response strategy following the Jaish-e-Mohammed attack at the Indian Army Brigade headquarters in Uri in Jammu and Kashmir on September 18, 2016, which killed 19 soldiers. Ten days later, the Indian commandos conducted a cross-border operation targeting terror launchpads and safe houses in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir, according to the military. This marked a significant departure from India’s earlier posture. In addition to the diplomatic and economic measures, India would also take direct military steps targeting terror infrastructure across the Line of Control in response to attacks.

This strategic shift did not immediately establish a strong deterrent. The Uri response did not prevent the deadly suicide bombing in Pulwama in February 2019. Similarly, the Balakot airstrike that followed Pulwama did not deter

the international community should be timely made aware of the challenges facing India’s counter-infiltration grid. The Baisaran attack shows clear signs of involvement by non-Kashmiri-speaking terrorists unfamiliar with the social fabric of Jammu and Kashmir. Evidence suggests that the assailants who interacted with the victims and their families were not locals. For example, a local Kashmiri-speaking pony operator, wearing a Kashmiri pheran, interviewed on television, recounted that the attackers asked him about his religious identity. A native Kashmiri or even a non-Kashmiri from the region is well-versed in linguistic, cultural, and visual cues, and he would not need to ask such a question, as they will clearly know the ethnic or religious details of Pony operators in the area, who are either Kashmiri Muslims or Gujar Muslims.



the attack on civilians in Pahalgam. Nevertheless, what is important is that by launching military operations inside Pakistan in response to terror attacks, New Delhi has effectively established a new normal in India-Pakistan relations. Until recently, Pakistan’s nuclear deterrent had constrained India from pursuing conventional military responses to terror attacks. India also came under high international pressure to de-escalate every time tensions flared because of the same nuclear angle. This allowed Pakistan’s Generals to persist with the ‘Thousand-Cuts’ doctrine with minimal cost. But that dynamic has begun to shift. With each flare-up, India has stepped up its response in both scope and scale. If the 2016 surgical strike was limited to Pakistan-occupied Kashmir, the 2019 Balakot strike was extended to Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. And this time, India struck nine locations, including Bahawalpur and Muridke in Punjab, Pakistan’s heartland, marking its largest aerial operation on Pakistani soil since 1971. Risks of new normal

India’s evolving strategy carries significant risks. In 2019, following the Balakot strike, Pakistan scrambled its fighter jets, triggering an aerial dogfight in which an Indian aircraft was downed and its pilot captured (he was soon returned home, which helped de-escalate the crisis). After Operation Sindoor, as India’s military response to the Pahalgam massacre is called, Pakistan chose to escalate by targeting what India’s Ministry of Defence said “military stations at Jammu, Pathankot & Udhampur” with drones and missiles, which were “swiftly neutralised”. India launched its counterattacks “in the same domain and same intensity as Pakistan”, according to the Ministry. Pakistani media reported that India fired at least 77 drones in two days. In essence, the killing of 26 Indians in Pahalgam by terrorists has brought India and Pakistan dangerously close to the brink of an all-out war. Even if the current tensions subside, India-Pakistan relations have been fundamentally altered. India has established a new normal, one where it directly targets terrorist infrastructure within Pakistan in response to attacks. In turn, Islamabad-Rawalpindi’s retaliatory responses are aimed at raising the costs of this strategy for New Delhi (and thereby protecting its Thousand Cuts campaign). This is a long game that will test the strategic endurance of both nations. The emerging status quo is undoubtedly riskier. Pakistan could provoke India in the future with more terror attacks. Future Indian governments will likely come under greater domestic pressure to take direct military actions each time. But the message from New Delhi is clear: the era of waging sub-conventional warfare against India under the protective cover of deterrence is over. India seems ready to play by the new rules it has set since 2016, even if doing so risks full-scale escalation. But can Pakistan — already grappling with Islamist militancy in its tribal regions, a separatist insurgency in Balochistan, a broken polity at home with the country’s most popular politician being in jail, and an economy sustained by an IMF bailout — afford to fight “a thousand years of war” against India?

NCC camp inspires youth

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The camp had activities to motivate the cadets towards the Armed Forces. Topics covered a wide range of map reading, basics on prismatic compass, obstacle training, tent pitching, and soft skills of elocution, debate, and group discussion were covered. The camp also had been a platform for the Agniveer aspirants by giving them practice on the selection process through a mock test. The cadets were also shortlisted for the Thal Sainik camp through drill and other selection procedures. The cadets also had a cultural show on the eighth day covering themes based on patriotism and nationalism. The culmination of the camp was the visit by the Warangal Group commander, Col. Sachin Nimbalkar, Veer Chakra. He motivated the cadets and appreciated their efforts in the camp. He wanted cadets to concentrate on their academics as well as the NCC training. Academic excellence is the main point that decides a



student’s career. The camp commandant Col. Senthil Ramadurai and Deputy Camp Commandant, Lt Col Ravi Sungare, appreciated the involvement of the cadets in all areas and hoped they would implement the learnings into their lifestyles too. The camp was well organised by the camp commandant, deputy Camp commandant.

Three men in a lab (to say nothing of an element)



German chemist Robert Bunsen was born on March 30, 1811 in Göttingen. His father taught modern languages at the University of Göttingen and Bunsen too went on to earn his doctorate there. Before he returned to this place as a lecturer, he travelled across Europe for three years. He also taught at the Universities of Marburg and Breslau, but it was as a professor at Heidelberg, where he taught from 1852 until his death in 1899, that he is best associated with. Bunsen never married, instead choosing to live for his students and his laboratory, setting up an excellent lab and remaining popular with his pupils throughout. Bunsen was first drawn towards organic chemistry and he was able to produce what remains one of the most effective antidotes for arsenic poisoning – iron oxide hydrate. Bunsen, however, lost one of his eyes when working with cacodyl cyanide, an arsenic compound, forcing him to move to other disciplines. In case you feel familiar with the name Bunsen, that’s because you might have encountered the Bunsen burner in your chemistry labs. Along with his laboratory assistant Peter Desaga, he built the device that now bears his name in 1855. Part of chemistry labs across the world, Bunsen burners enabled its inventor to study emission spectra from heated elements. He put it to great effect and showcased the power of spectroscopy as a tool for scientific research. Born on March 12, 1824 – nearly 13 years after Bunsen – in Königsberg, Prussia (now Kaliningrad, Russia), Gustav Robert Kirchhoff is a German chemist, mathematician, and physicist. He married the daughter of his mathematics professor and the couple moved to Berlin soon after their wedding.

It was at the University of Breslau, where he’d become a professor at the young age of 26, that Kirchhoff first encountered Bunsen. The duo would go on to do great things together, but Kirchhoff has plenty of claims to fame on his own. Both Kirchhoff’s laws of electrical circuits and Kirchhoff’s laws of thermodynamics are, unsurprisingly, named after him in his honour. He made fundamental contributions in helping understand the emission of black-body radiation by heated objects, electrical circuits, and spectroscopy. The term “black body,” in fact, was coined by Kirchhoff in 1860, the same year he discovered caesium with Bunsen. He also used emission spectra to study the sky and identified 30 elements in the sun. In 1854, Bunsen convinced Kirchhoff to move to Heidelberg in order to facilitate their collaboration further. They were working on research to try and prove that all pure elements have a distinct spectrum that they emit. While work in this field was already on for nearly a century, if not more, such studies lacked the systemic approach and careful examination that this duo wanted to bring to the table. Partnering for this work in 1859, Bunsen suggested using filters to block colours like the yellow of sodium compounds. He believed that such an arrangement would facilitate the detection of less intense colours that are also emitted by other elements. Kirchhoff,

meanwhile, wanted to adapt a method that a couple of others – English mathematician and astronomer John Frederick William Herschel, and English scientist, inventor, and photography pioneer William Henry Fox Talbot – had employed a few decades earlier. He wanted to improve Bunsen’s technique by adapting the Herschel/Talbot method wherein light was passed through a prism. Bunsen and Kirchhoff effectively came up with their version of the spectroscope.

In 1860, the duo analysed the spectral lines of spring water from Dürkheim. Known to be rich in lithium compounds, Bunsen noticed something different in the spectra. Apart from the expected spectral lines from sodium, lithium, and potassium, Bunsen also identified a new sky-blue doublet that he hadn’t seen before. He named the new element caesium, naming it after the Latin word for “sky blue.” The duo made their discovery public by announcing it on May 10, 1860. Having managed to get just 2 mg of caesium chloride from 10 litres of spa water, Bunsen commissioned a nearby chemical factory to evaporate 12,000 gallons of spring water in order to isolate caesium and study its properties. Even though he failed to obtain pure caesium, he was able to establish the relative atomic mass of the element as 128.4 (we know that 132.9 is the value now). Bunsen and Kirchhoff went on to observe the presence of another alkali metal in spa water by observing dark red in the spectral lines. They named this element rubidium, again from the Latin for “dark red.” While the duo were successful in isolating rubidium, they couldn’t replicate the success in the case of caesium. Setterberg isolates caesium. The credit for first isolating caesium goes to Swedish chemist Carl Theodor Setterberg. Born in 1853 in Skaraborg, Sweden, Setterberg set about living a lifetime as an industrial chemist. When doing research for his PhD, August Kekulé – his supervisor and professor of chemistry at the University of Bonn – tasked him with isolating caesium. Following the extraction of lithium from lepidolite, an ore of the mica group, there’s a lot of waste material that remains. Setterberg decided to use this as his starting point for isolating caesium. The waste ore was converted into a mixture of potash alum, along with those of rubidium and caesium. With the help of fractional crystallisation, Setterberg was sure he could separate the alum salts. This is exactly what happened as Setterberg started off with around 350 kg of the waste ore, before finishing with 10 kg of a caesium compound. This was more than Bunsen ever had, allowing Setterberg to try different techniques to isolate caesium.

After a failed experiment when he tried the carbon reduction method that Bunsen had successfully used to obtain rubidium, Setterberg switched to electrolysis. Setterberg found that cyanide-based mixtures of caesium salts were ideal for his purpose as he successfully isolated the element in 1882. He went on to describe some of its properties in the same year, giving its melting point and density. Setterberg’s contribution, however, is often missed out when talking about the discovery of caesium. The world of science can feel strange to many onlookers to the extent of seeming incongruous on occasions. The discovery of caesium is a case in point. Wherein Setterberg’s isolation is often relegated to a footnote in the discovery story, the opposite rings true in the case of fluorine. Even though Swedish chemist Carl Wilhelm Scheele made significant contributions to the understanding of fluorine in the 18th Century, it is French chemist Henri Moissan, who first isolated the element over 100 years later in 1886, who is always immediately associated with it.

How will India’s military response be assessed under international law?

India and Pakistan on Saturday (May 10, 2025) agreed to halt “all firing and military action” after several days of heightened tensions between the two nuclear-armed neighbours. The announcement comes in the aftermath of precision strikes conducted by the Indian armed forces against terrorist infrastructure in Pakistan and Pakistan-Occupied Kashmir, in response to the Pahalgam massacre, which claimed the lives of 26 civilians.

While India’s Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri described the strikes as “measured and non-escalatory,” Pakistan denounced them as a “blatant act of war” and alleged civilian casualties. With hostilities now suspended, how will India’s military response be assessed under international law?

Can India invoke the right to self-defence?

Article 51 of the United Nations (U.N.) Charter carves out a narrow exception to the general prohibition on the use of force outlined in Article 2(4), which bars member states from threatening or using force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any state. It allows the use of force solely in the exercise of self-defence following an armed attack. While the Charter does not define what constitutes an armed attack, the International Court of Justice (ICJ), in *Nicaragua v. U.S.* (1986), interpreted it as “the most grave form of the use of force,” indicating that not all attacks meet this threshold. Although the Foreign Secretary’s statement did not explicitly invoke Article 51, his description of the missile strikes as a “response” to the Pahalgam terror attack appears to be a reliance on this principle. However, this right is not unfettered. Article 51 imposes a procedural obligation on member states to “immediately” report to the U.N. Security Council (UNSC) any military measures taken in self-defence. The UNSC then assumes the authority to undertake any action necessary to “maintain or restore international peace and security”. In apparent adherence to this requirement, on May 8, 2025, the Foreign Secretary briefed envoys of 13 out of the 15 UNSC member states on India’s missile strikes. Pakistan’s envoy was not invited, and Sierra Leone remained unrepresented owing to the absence of an envoy in New Delhi.

Can the right be exercised against non-state actors?

The U.N. Charter governs only the conduct of states and, by extension, state-sponsored uses of force. Non-state entities such as terrorist organisations and insurgents operate outside this legal framework, complicating the Charter’s inherently state-centric design. Following the 9/11 attacks, the growing role of such actors in armed conflict prompted some states, most notably the United States, to argue that the right of self-defence under Article 51 extends to military action against non-state actors like al-Qaeda and the Islamic State (IS). However, the ICJ has adopted a more restrictive interpretation. In cases such as *Nicaragua*, *Democratic Republic of the Congo v. Uganda* (2005), and its 2004 Advisory Opinion on the Legal Consequences of the Construction of a Wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, it has held that an armed attack under Article 51 includes acts by non-state actors only if they are carried out “by or on behalf of a state.” Accordingly, attribution to a state remains

a necessary condition for invoking the right of self-defence under international law. “It is evident from the Foreign Secretary’s statement that India has not contextualised the missile strikes within the international law framework. However, by asserting that ‘Pakistan-trained terrorists’ were responsible for the Pahalgam attack and describing it as part of ‘Pakistan’s long-standing record of cross-border terrorism,’ India seems to have directly attributed the attack to Pakistan,” Prabhash Ranjan, professor at Jindal Global Law School, told The Hindu.

What is the ‘unwilling or unable’ doctrine?

An emerging doctrine in international law permits the use of force in self-defence against non-state actors operating from the territory of another state, when that state is deemed “unwilling or unable” to neutralise the threat. The United States has been a leading proponent of this doctrine, invoking it to justify the 2011 military operation that killed al-Qaeda leader Osama bin Laden in Pakistan, and the 2014 airstrikes against the IS in Syria, from where the network was orchestrating other terrorist attacks. However, states such as China, Mexico, and Russia have condemned such military operations for undermining the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the host state as well as the U.N.’s collective security apparatus. However, India’s stance on the doctrine remains ambiguous. At a UNSC Arria Formula meeting in February 2021, India affirmed that the right of self-defence extends to attacks by non-state actors and noted that such groups often exploit the sovereignty of host states as a “smokescreen”. It then outlined three conditions for invoking such a right: i. The non-state actor has repeatedly undertaken armed attacks against the state. ii. The host state is unwilling to address the threat posed by the non-state actor. iii. The host state is actively supporting and sponsoring the attack by the non-state actor. However, legal scholars have pointed out that it is unclear whether these conditions must be met cumulatively or can be applied independently. If read conjunctively, India appears to require state attribution, rendering its support for the doctrine uncertain. Dr. Ranjan noted that the Foreign Secretary’s remarks that Pakistan had taken “no demonstrable step” to act against terrorist infrastructure in the fortnight following the Pahalgam attack and that the country has long served as a “haven for terrorists” indicate a reliance on the “unwilling or unable” doctrine. “This doctrine does not require state attribution for attacks by non-state actors, thereby lowering the threshold for invoking self-defence,” he explained. “However, this principle is contested and lacks the consistent state practice and opinio juris necessary to crystallise into a rule of customary international law.” Is proportionality essential in military responses? Military operations conducted in the exercise of self-defence must comply with the customary international law principles of necessity and proportionality. It is generally accepted that a host state’s unwillingness or inability to neutralise non-state actors engaged in cross-border attacks fulfils the necessity requirement. However, the Leiden Policy Recommendations on Counter-Terrorism and International Law (2010) emphasise that the use of force against the host state’s armed forces or facilities is permissible only in “exceptional circumstances”.

The wedding season



The grand spectacle of the Indian wedding season is here. Just when you thought you could peacefully transition from Holi and Sankranti to summer, the floodgates open — lavish invitations arrive in golden envelopes, WhatsApp groups start buzzing with blurry PDFs, and distant relatives you haven’t spoken to in years suddenly want you to be a part of their special day. The wedding invitation is less of an invite and more of a legal contract — one that emotionally binds you into spending a day pretending to be overjoyed for people you have only heard the name of. If you try to avoid it, prepare for guilt-tripping tactics. “They came to your brother’s wedding; how will it look if we don’t go?” Your arguments about scheduling conflicts will be dismissed with a single line — “The company won’t shut down, if you skip the office for one day.”

Once you accept your fate, the next problem presents itself: the gift. Gifting at Indian weddings is a high-stakes game of re-gifting diplomacy. A dinner set? Too basic. Home appliances? What will you get for less than 1,000 rupees. Gold? Too expensive. Silver? Still out of budget. An envelope with cash? Dangerous — 501 will feel too less but 1,100 would be too much, and you’ll resent your own generosity. In the rare case you put actual thought into a present, know this — it will be rewrapped and forwarded to another wedding. Somewhere out there, a single pressure cooker has been exchanged between seven families. And let’s not forget those cup-saucer sets — they get passed around like Deepavali or birthday gifts, forever cycling through family and friends. Then comes the injustice of wedding attire. Women are required to look like royalty. The sari must be

elaborate, the lehenga must look designer, and the jewellery must clearly announce that they belong to the elite. The hair will be curled, pinned, and sprayed into submission, because natural hair is not festive enough. Meanwhile, men will throw a blazer over jeans and call it a day. No stress, no suffering. Any uncle over 40 will show up in the same brown suit he has worn since 2003 in every function, and nobody will bat an eyelid.

After enduring hours of dressing up, the actual battlefield awaits — the buffet. No matter how extravagant the wedding is, the real action is always at the food counter. The chaat stall resembles a stock market trading floor, with aggressive guests securing their pani puris like seasoned investors. The tikkas disappear at an alarming rate, and the dessert section? Forget it. By the time you reach the end of the line, all that’s left are the bowls of fruit salad — because someone thought health-conscious guests would exist. Of course, no wedding is complete without the manipulation that brought you here in the first place. “At least come for the food,” they had said. Now, you find yourself attending a three-hour elaborate puja. The bride and groom, exhausted from days of ceremonies, barely recognize half the guests. Meanwhile, the wedding photographer lurks nearby, demanding “Sir, one candid?” You awkwardly pose, only to end up looking like a deer caught in the headlights. The cameraman zooms in on every flower, chandelier, and random uncle, as if they hold the key to the universe.

You are invited to the forced family group photo where no one knows where to look. Everyone’s expected to smile like they’ve just won the lottery. The uncles gather in a corner discussing property prices, the aunties exchange unsolicited fitness advice, and somewhere, a nosy relative is looking for an innocent, poor chap to ask the dreaded question: “So, when is your wedding?” Meanwhile, you overhear snippets of conversation: “The food wasn’t that good, and Sharmaji’s son had a better wedding.” Well, just half an hour ago, didn’t we see you shoving a child to get another helping of mutton burra. By the time you escape the function, you think it’s over. But just as you begin to relax, another invitation arrives. And then another. Because in India, wedding season isn’t just a season — it’s a never-ending marathon that tests your patience, your wardrobe, and your budget.

The terror trio of Pakistan | Hizb-ul-Mujahideen, LeT and JeM



Flanked by top Pakistani military officials, Abdur Rauf, a local cleric and a U.S.-designated terrorist, led prayers for those killed on May 7 by Indian attacks, inside Lashkar-e-Taiba’s (LeT) headquarters in Muridke, Punjab. Wrapped in Pakistan’s ‘Star and Crescent’ flag, the slain were awarded ‘state honours’, and wreaths were reportedly laid by Pakistani Army Chief Gen. Asim Munir and Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz on their remains. The Indian government confirmed that five high-profile terrorists were killed during ‘Operation Sindoor’. India said it hit nine terror camps of Jaish-e-Mohammad (JeM), LeT and Hizb-ul-Mujahideen in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK) and Pakistan. Hafiz Muhammad Jameel and Mohammad Yusuf Azhar, two brothers-in-law of JeM founder Maulana Masood Azhar, LeT commanders Mudassar Khadian, Khalid and JeM’s Mohammad Hassan Khan were among the dead.

For more than three decades, these three outfits have been responsible for attacks across India, including the 2001 Parliament attack, the 2008 Mumbai attack and the recent (April 22) Pahalgam massacre. Here’s a look at each of these outfits, which are backed by Pakistan’s security establishment. Founded in 1989, Hizb-ul-Mujahideen started operating in PoK’s Muzaffarabad with the aim of integrating Jammu and Kashmir with Pakistan. As a militant wing of Pakistan’s Islamist organisation Jamaat-e-Islami (Jel), Hizb was set up at the behest of the Inter Services Intelligence (ISI), the Pakistani spy agency. The group has a cadre strength of over 1,500, and its chief is Mohammed Yusuf Shah, also known as Syed Salahuddin. It operates in five divisions, targeting Srinagar, Kupwara, Bandipora, Baramulla, Anantnag, Pulwama, Doda, Rajouri, Poonch and Udhampur. While its headquarters are in PoK, Hizbul has units in both Islamabad and Rawalpindi to communicate with the military and the government.

Born at the peak of insurgency in Kashmir, Hizb saw an internal tussle over ideology, leading to a split with Salahuddin heading one faction and Hilal Ahmed Mir the other. In 1993, India’s counter-terrorist attacks peaked, wiping out several top leaders, including Mir. Through the years, Hizb has clashed with Jammu Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF) — another ISI-funded group, which advocates for Kashmir’s independence. In July 2000, Salahuddin made a conditional offer of ceasefire to India, in a press conference in Islamabad, leading to a meeting between the group’s chief commander Abdul Majeed Dar and a high-level Indian official team at Srinagar. However, facing pressure from other terrorist outfits in Pakistan, Salahuddin retracted his offer within days after the meeting. Dar, who played a significant role in the indoctrination, recruitment, launching and training of cadres, was killed in 2003 by unknown gunmen in Sopore. The attack was reportedly carried out by a splinter group of Hizb, after he had fallen out of favour with Salahuddin. Through the years, the group has been responsible for numerous attacks on elected leaders in J&K, grenade attacks on J&K police stations, bomb attacks on military personnel and the Delhi High Court blast of 2011. Top leaders such as Ahsan Dar, Ashraf Dar, Maqbool Alla, Burhan Wani, Riyaz Naikoo, Sabzar Bhat have been killed by Indian security forces. It was designated a terrorist organisation by the U.S. in 2017.

Called the ‘Army of the pure’, Lashkar-e-Taiba was founded in Afghanistan’s Kunwar province in 1990. Its active presence was first established in 1993 when its cadres infiltrated across the LoC. Funded by Pakistan’s Islamist organisation Markaz-ad-Dawa-wal-Irshad, LeT challenges India’s sovereignty over Kashmir, and believes in uniting all Muslim majority regions in Asia and imposing Islamic rule in India. Its chief, Hafiz Muhammad Saeed, set up its headquarters in Muridke and is currently imprisoned in Pakistan’s Central Lahore Jail for ‘terror financing’. Apart from Muridke, LeT has bases in Muzaffarabad, Lahore, Peshawar, Islamabad, Rawalpindi, Karachi, Multan, Quetta, Gujranwala, Sialkot, and operates several Islamic institutions, schools, clinics and seminaries across Pakistan. With India, the U.S. and Israel as its prime targets, LeT has recruited cadres from Pakistan, Afghanistan, Sudan, Bahrain, Türkiye and Libya. It has an active presence in in Jammu and Kashmir, Chechnya and other parts of Central Asia, with over 700 cadres in J&K itself. Networking with several other terror outfits like al-Qaeda, LeT has been responsible for some of India’s deadliest terror attacks such as the Mumbai train attacks (2006), 26/11 attack (2008), Akshardham temple attack (2002), serial blasts in Varanasi, Bengaluru, New Delhi, Kolkata, Hyderabad and Mumbai and several suicide attacks on security bases. Post-1999, LeT implemented the ‘Fiyadeen’ attacks in which small units stormed security forces’ bases. There were instances of LeT members, disguised as security personnel, rounding up non-Muslim civilians in J&K and killing them. Under pressure from the Financial Action Task Force (FATF), the Pakistan government ‘arrested’ Hafiz Saeed in 2019, and he was sentenced to 11 years of imprisonment for ‘terror financing’. LeT has been outlawed in India and designated as a terrorist organisation by the U.S. In 2002, under international pressure, the Pakistani government banned the group.

One of its bases, Markaz Taiba in Muridke, which trained terrorists like Ajmal Kasab and David Headley for the 2008 Mumbai attacks, was hit by India during Operation Sindoor. Jaish-e-Mohammad The hijacking of Indian Airlines flight IC 814 in Kandahar by Harkat-ul-Mujahideen (HuM) in 1999 facilitated the release of HuM’s secretary general Maulana Masood Azhar. Upon his release, he launched Jaish-e-Mohammad (JeM) at a stadium in Bahawalpur in March 2000, after being designated as a global terrorist by the U.S. JeM’s objectives include withdrawal of Indian security forces from J&K and the “liberation” of Kashmir. It also wishes to take control of Amritsar, New Delhi and Babri Masjid in Ayodhya — where now a Ram temple stands. With funding from the ISI and foreign countries, JeM has been responsible for terror attacks in India such as the 2001 Parliament attack, 2016 Pathankot airbase attack, and the 2019 Pulwama attack. Active across J&K districts, JeM chief Masood Azhar was arrested after the 2001 Parliament attack but released on orders of a three-member Review Board of Lahore High Court in 2002. Since then, Pakistan has maintained it does not know his whereabouts, but Azhar has reportedly remained in Bahawalpur, as indicated by a speech given in December 2024. On May 7, Indian strikes destroyed Markaz Subhanallah.

Bharat Forge, Mahindra among private defence suppliers instructed to step up production of munition, carriers



The government is learnt to have reached out to multiple private companies that are into defence equipment production, including Bharat Forge and Mahindra & Mahindra’s defence division. This is linked to specific instructions being issued to private vendors for upscaling supplies of certain ammunition, including for anti-drone and smart ammunition, alongside equipment such as armored vehicles that can be integrated with different weaponry — loitering munitions and guided missiles. Instructions have been issued to these private players to step up output of some items, including designated ammunition, over and above what is already being produced by the ordnance factories. Sources in the industry said these suppliers are likely to be summoned for a follow-up meeting shortly.

Bharat Forge has a large defence manufacturing facility in Jejuri, near Pune, dedicated to the assembly and integration of guns, vehicles, small and medium arms, and systems. The company had, earlier this year, signed a landmark contract with the Ministry of Defence for supplying 184 indigenously developed Advanced Towed Artillery Gun Systems (ATAGS). The 155/52 mm calibre ATAGS was

jointly developed with the Defence Research and Development Organisation.

The indigenously developed ATAGS can fire projectiles up to 48 km and operates on an all-electric drives that makes it maintenance-free in comparison to regular hydraulic drives. it can move at a speed of 18 kmph, unlike towed guns, which typically move at around 8 kmph. Additionally, the ATAGS has a firing rate of six shells, compared to three for towed guns. Existing ammunition can be successfully fired from the ATAGS without requiring special modifications. Mahindra, too, had obtained a licence from the government to produce small arms and associated ammunition, along with its specialisation in making armoured carriers and non-armoured mobility solutions for the Indian Army. The company also produces the Marksman, a military vehicle designed for urban warfare, and the Rakshak, an armored military utility vehicle.

The Indian Army had earlier issued a request for information seeking vendors to manufacture 23mm anti-drone ammunition under the “Make in India” initiative, which is being overseen by the Directorate General of Army Air Defence. The country’s defence production has grown sharply since the launch of the “Make in India” initiative, reaching a record Rs 1.27 lakh crore in FY24. Currently, about 65 per cent of defence equipment is now manufactured domestically, as compared to a 65-70 per cent import dependency around a decade ago. The private sector including companies such as Bharat Forge, Mahindra and the Tata Group are playing an increasingly important role, contributing 21 per cent to total defence production in FY24, alongside fostering innovation and efficiency. India’s defence industrial base, apart from the 16 PSUs, now includes over 430 licensed companies, and approximately 16,000 MSMEs.

Pakistan gets IMF tranche but economy too stretched to sustain long standoff

The Board of the International Monetary Fund Friday cleared \$2.3 billion in funding for cash-strapped Pakistan, even as New Delhi abstained from the vote after having firmly opposed the move stating providing funds to a country that supports cross border terrorism carries reputational risks and undermines international norms. The lifeline notwithstanding, high debt and perilously low foreign exchange reserves significantly add to the fragility of the Pakistan economy, which is grappling with an almost perennial balance of payment crisis and high inflation in recent years.

Its external debt jumped to over \$130 billion in 2024, with more than a fifth of this estimated to be owned by its key ally China. Its forex reserves are pegged at a little over \$15 billion, capable of paying for just about three months of imports. The forex reserves remain low relative to funding needs, with over \$22 billion of public external debt, including nearly \$13 billion in bilateral deposits, maturing in FY25, as per a Fitch report in February.

the Ministry of External Affairs said it would ask the IMF board members to look “deep within” and take facts into account before generously bailing out Pakistan. In such a dire situation, a money-guzzling conflict with India should be the last thing on a beleaguered Islamabad’s mind, as it would have to essentially fund any long-drawn-out conflict with borrowed money. And while a prolonged military conflict with Pakistan is bound to impact India to some extent, the world’s New Delhi is far more equipped to handle the economic impact. These crucial points have been underscored by experts and analysts more than once.

In fact, just two days before Operation Sindoor, Moody’s Ratings cautioned that “sustained escalation in tensions with India would likely weigh on Pakistan’s growth and hamper the government’s ongoing fiscal consolidation, setting back Pakistan’s progress in achieving macroeconomic stability”. The global ratings agency said that a persistent increase in tensions with India could also impair Pakistan’s access to external financing and pressure the country’s forex reserves, which remain “well below what is required to meet its external debt payment needs for the next few years”.

With elevated debt levels and low reserve buffers, Islamabad had earlier managed to get a bailout package from the IMF in September 2024 with the approval of a \$7-billion loan, following which its economy has shown some early signs of a recovery from the brink of a collapse. As per the latest South Asia Development Update released in April by the IMF, Pakistan’s economy has been recovering from a combination of natural disasters, external pressures, and inflation. While inflation has slowed more quickly than expected along with strong imports of capital goods and high consumer confidence suggesting a pickup in private sector growth, the incoming data on economic activity have been weaker than expected, the IMF said. Economic growth of Pakistan is projected to rise to 3.1 per cent in the financial year 2025-26 from 2.7 per cent in the financial year 2024-25, 2.5 per cent in 2023-24 and a contraction of 0.2 per cent in 2022-23. The ongoing 37-month long Extended Fund Facility programme of the IMF consists of six reviews over the span of the bailout. The other multilateral bank, the World Bank, also expects Pakistan’s economic activity to grow 3.2 per cent in FY26 and 3.5 per cent in FY27. It also flagged that Pakistan’s growth will likely remain constrained by tight macroeconomic policies focused on rebuilding fis-



cal and external buffers and mitigating risks to economic imbalances. Potential macroeconomic policy slippages — driven by pressures to ease policies — along with geopolitical shocks to commodity prices, tightening global financial conditions, or rising protectionism could undermine the “hard-won macroeconomic stability”, the IMF had pointed out in its statement in March this year after the first staff-level review of the loan facility extended to Pakistan. Funding from other multilateral institutions like the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank is also crucial for Pakistan’s economic revival and securing it would be a challenge as India steps up its ante by seeking support from all MDBs. When the bailout package was secured by Pakistan last year, the IMF in its report in October had assessed the overall risk of sovereign stress for the country as “high”, saying that it reflected “a high level of vulnerability from elevated debt and gross financing needs and low reserve buffers”.

“Notwithstanding the new government’s intent to deepen reforms under a new Fund-supported program, political uncertainty remains significant, and pressures for easing policies and providing tax concessions and subsidies are strong. A resurgence in political or social tensions could weigh on policy and reform implementation. Policy slippages, including particularly on needed revenue measures, together with lower external financing, could undermine the narrow path to debt sustainability, given the high level of gross financing needs, and place pressure on the exchange rate and on banks to finance the government,” the IMF report had said. As for the impact on India, Moody’s said: “Comparatively, the macroeconomic conditions in India would be stable, bolstered by moderating but still high levels of growth amid strong public investment and healthy private consumption. In a scenario of sustained escalation in localized tensions, we do not expect major disruptions to India’s economic activity because it has minimal economic relations with Pakistan”. The ratings agency, however, added that higher defence spending in such an eventuality would potentially weigh on New Delhi’s fiscal strength and slow its fiscal consolidation. Experts and multilateral institutions have repeatedly flagged major structural problems and other risks plaguing the country’s economy that have largely remained unaddressed. These include high fiscal and current account deficits, political instability, low agriculture and industrial productivity, protectionist trade policies, heavy government interference in business, a large and inefficient public sector, a financially unsustainable and import-dependent energy sector, weak exports, and a small taxpayer base, among others. Natural calamities like widespread floods have also exacerbated Pakistan’s economic woes in recent years.

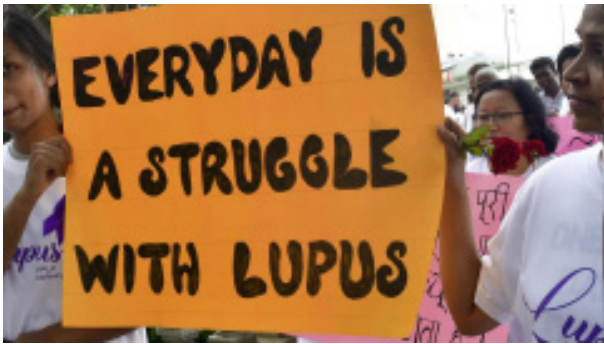
quarter-on-quarter and over five times year-on-year to Rs 212 crore, and strong efficiency and execution drove a margin expansion to 2.9 per cent of GOV, up from 0.5 per cent a year ago.

Swiggy Instamart average order value increased 13.3 per cent to Rs 527 during the quarter. Instamart added 316 new dark stores — an increase of 45 per cent sequentially — its highest-ever during a quarter. Investments into customer acquisition amidst high competitive intensity saw monthly transacting users (MTUs) surge 40 per cent quarter-on-quarter to 9.8 million, the company said. Swiggy MD & Group CEO Sriharsha Majety said, “Quick-commerce is in a phase of rapid expansion and heightened competitive intensity, for which we have ramped up investments aimed at market expansion (Megapods), reach (1,000+ stores across 124 cities) and differentiation (Maxxsaver).

Swiggy’s March quarter net loss nearly doubles to Rs 1,081 cr

New Delhi: Food delivery and quick commerce platform Swiggy on Friday reported widening of consolidated net loss during the March quarter to Rs 1,081.18 crore due to significant investments in quick commerce. The company reported a net loss of Rs 554.77 crore on a consolidated basis in the year-ago period. Swiggy’s revenue from operations rose to Rs 4,410 crore during the January-March period, as against Rs 3,045.5 crore a year earlier, a regulatory filing showed. However, its total expenses shot up to Rs 5,609.6 crore during the quarter under review, as against Rs 3,668 crore in the corresponding period of the previous year. In a statement, Swiggy said the gross order value (GOV) of its food delivery business continues to grow in line with guidance at a healthy 17.6 per cent year-on-year, to Rs 7,347 crore. Adjusted earnings before interest, taxes, depreciation, and amortisation (EBITDA) grew 15.4 per cent

All you need to know about: Lupus



While the general prevalence of systemic lupus erythematosus (SLE) in India is reported as 3.2 per 100,000 population, specific data on various types of lupus within India are limited. Studies on SLE in India have primarily focused on the overall disease prevalence and its clinical features. According to studies, lupus care in India faces challenges related to access, cost and awareness. Specifically, limited access to specialised rheumatologists, financial burdens, and inadequate insurance coverage contribute to difficulties in diagnosis and management. Furthermore, stigmas associated with chronic illnesses and lack of awareness among healthcare providers and the public can lead to delays in seeking medical help.

What is lupus?

Lupus is a long-term, progressive autoimmune disease in which the immune system mistakenly attacks healthy tissue throughout the body. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), lupus can affect any part of the body, including the skin, joints, kidneys, lungs, heart, and brain. The World Health Organization (WHO) notes that lupus involves chronic stimulation of the immune system, and its exact cause remains unknown. The Lancet describes lupus as a multisystemic autoimmune disease marked by the presence of autoantibodies against nuclear antigens, immune complex deposition, and chronic inflammation -- primarily affecting classic target organs like the skin, joints, and kidneys. Lupus has several forms, with Systemic Lupus Erythematosus (SLE) being the most common and serious type. Other forms include Cutaneous Lupus Erythematosus (CLE), which primarily affects the skin. Within CLE, there are further subtypes like Discoid Lupus Erythematosus (DLE), which is characterised by circular lesions, and Subacute Cutaneous Lupus Erythematosus (SCLE), which often presents with rashes and joint pain. Drug-induced lupus can occur as a side effect of certain medications, while neonatal lupus affects newborns.

What are the signs and symptoms ?

It is a highly variable disease. This means that the symptoms, their severity, and the way the disease progresses can differ significantly from person to person -- with some experiencing mild symptoms and others facing life-threatening complications. The most common symptom, as reported by the CDC, is extreme fatigue, which can sig-

How did India’s national health programmes contribute to increased longevity?

India has registered a rise on the Human Development Index (HDI), ranking 130 out of 193 countries as per the 2025 Human Development Report (HDR) released earlier this week by the United Nations Development Programme. The country ranked 133 in 2022. India’s HDI value increases from 0.676 in 2022 to 0.685 in 2023, placing the country in the medium human development category. The recent report added that India’s life expectancy is the highest since the inception of the index, signalling a strong recovery from the pandemic and its impact on life expectancy. Life expectancy rose from 58.6 years in 1990 to 72 years in 2023, the highest recorded since the index began.

Why has life expectancy improved?

According to the report this can be attributed to a number of factors including the country’s overall push for investment and inclusive development. Angela Lusigi, resident representative, UNDP India said that rising life expectancy could be attributed to India’s robust recovery from the pandemic and its investments and commitment to long-term human well-being. Credit is also being given to renewed focus on women-led development and quality education and healthcare for all. The report notes that national health programmes by successive governments such as the National Health Mission, Ayushman Bharat-Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana, Janani Suraksha Yojana, and Poshan Abhiyaan have also contributed significantly to this achievement. Besides this, children today are expected to stay in school for 13 years on average, up from 8.2 years in 1990. Initiatives like the Right to Education Act, Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan and the National Education Policy 2020 have enhanced outcomes. Giving insight on the economic front, the report notes that India’s Gross National Income per capita rose over four times, from \$2167.22 in 1990 to \$9046.76 in 2023 and this can be attributed to investments in programmes like MGNREGA, Jan Dhan Yojana, and digital inclusion that have contributed to poverty reduction. Importantly, 135 million Indians escaped multidimensional poverty between 2015-16 and 2019-21.

How has India’s maternal/infant mortality rate improved?

As per the Sample Registration System (SRS) Report 2021 released by the Registrar General of India (RGI), on May 7, 2025, India has continued to witness a significant improvement in key maternal and child health indicators. The latest data indicates that India has witnessed a steady downward trend in maternal and child mortality towards achievement of Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) 2030 targets with its progress outpacing global average. Data notes that maternal mortality ratio dropped significantly from 130 to 93 per lakh live births, infant mortality rate declined from 39 per 1000 live births in 2014 to 27 per 1000 live births in 2021; neonatal mortality rate has fallen from 26 per 1000 live births in 2014 to 19 per 1000 live births in 2021 and under-five mortality rate has dropped from 45 per 1000 live births in 2014 to 31 per 1000 live births in 2021. “These sustained improvements are a result of strategic interventions and sustained efforts where the government’s flagship health schemes are seamlessly integrated to guarantee quality healthcare services — completely free of cost, with zero tolerance for denial of care. Ayushman Bharat, the world’s largest health assurance initiative, provides an annual health coverage of up to 75 lakh per family, ensuring financial protection and access to essential services. Also, focused interventions ensure that every pregnant woman is entitled to free institutional delivery, including Caesarean sections, along with complementary transport, medication, diagnostics, and nutrition support in public health facilities are contributing factors,” said a senior Health Ministry official.

What are the challenges ahead?

The report notes that despite the progress made to

nificantly impact both physical and mental well-being. Other frequent symptoms include pain or swelling in the joints and muscles, fevers, hair loss, frequent mouth sores, and a characteristic butterfly-shaped rash across the cheeks and nose. Less common but important symptoms may involve chest pain during deep breathing, heightened sensitivity to sunlight, cognitive and mental health changes, damage to the eyes, and complications in vital organs such as the heart, lungs, and kidneys. The WHO emphasises that the variation in affected organs may reflect different underlying immune pathways, supported by distinct autoantibody profiles. These symptoms tend to occur in episodes, known as flares, which can be followed by periods of remission where symptoms temporarily subside.

Who is at risk?

Anyone can be at risk of being affected by lupus. However, certain populations are more vulnerable. The CDC and a report in Nature highlight that it primarily occurs among women between puberty and menopause and is more common among individuals of African American, Hispanic, Asian, and Indigenous descent. While it can occur at any age, it’s most often diagnosed between 15 and 45 years old. It affects approximately 3.4 million people worldwide, with 400,000 individuals being newly diagnosed each year. Though the exact cause remains unknown, WHO suggests that genetic predisposition combined with hormonal and environmental triggers likely contributes to disease development. Studies also indicate that the chance of developing SLE is believed to be associated with genetic factors, epigenetic factors, environmental triggers, and hormonal factors. Differences in clinical patterns among patients suggest that multiple disease mechanisms may be involved, making the condition highly individualised.

What are the treatment options?

Treatment for lupus aims to manage symptoms, prevent organ damage, and maintain low disease activity or achieve remission. The Lancet outlines current therapeutic approaches -- under personalised guidance from healthcare professionals --- starting with hydroxychloroquine as a baseline medication, often supplemented with corticosteroids and immunosuppressants depending on severity. In recent years, newer therapies like belimumab, anifrolumab, and voclosporin have been approved, particularly improving outcomes for patients with lupus nephritis -- a kidney disease caused by SLE. Alongside medications, non-pharmacological strategies are essential, including lifestyle interventions, sun protection, mental health support, and patient education to improve quality of life and treatment adherence. The WHO points out that despite medical advances, there is still no universally reliable marker for diagnosis or disease activity, and access to newer treatments remains unequal globally. The primary goals of treatment are to suppress immune overactivity, manage flares, and reduce long-term complications such as infections, osteoporosis, and cardiovascular disease caused both by the illness and its treatments.



ward ensuring a longer life span for Indians, challenges persist. Inequality reduces India’s HDI by 30.7%, one of the highest losses in the region. While health and education inequality have improved, income and gender disparities remain significant. The report also underscores a broader global slowdown in human development. The 2025 HDR reveals that the current pace of progress is the slowest since 1990 -- and India is no exception. “Had pre-2020 trends continued, the world would be on track to reach very high human development by 2030, aligning with Sustainable Development Goal timelines. Now, that milestone risks being delayed by decades,” notes the report.

Apple to scale iPhone production in India to \$40 billion by FY26 amid shift from China

New Delhi: Apple is expected to ramp up its iPhone production in India to nearly \$40 billion (about Rs 3,36,000 crore) by the end of FY26, as the tech giant continues to shift its global supply chain away from China amid growing geopolitical tensions and trade tariffs.

According to industry estimates, this move will enable Apple to meet 80 per cent of its iPhone demand in the US and cater fully to India’s growing domestic market. The development comes close on the heels of Apple CEO Tim Cook’s statement during the company’s Q2 2025 earnings call, where he revealed that the majority of iPhones sold in the US in the current April-June quarter would be made in India. “For June, we do expect the majority of iPhones sold in the US will have India as their country of origin,” Cook said, citing reciprocal tariffs imposed by the US government that are reshaping production strategies. This pivot is a strategic response to the tariffs that are tied to the country of origin of products. While China will continue to be the origin for most Apple products sold outside the US, India and Vietnam are emerging as key manufacturing hubs. For instance, almost all iPads, Macs, Apple Watches, and AirPods sold in the US will now come from Vietnam, Cook noted.

Italian Open: Alcaraz beats Lajovic, Sabalenka advances



GNS News Agency, May 15

Rome: Carlos Alcaraz returned from a brief injury lay-off with a 6-3 6-3 victory over Serbian qualifier Dusan Lajovic at the Italian Open here on Friday. The third-ranked Alcaraz

withdrew from the Madrid Open last month due to an upper right leg ailment that bothered him during the Barcelona Open final. He also had a left leg injury.

Against Lajovic, Alcaraz wore a long black brace that covered the upper portion of his right leg and stretched down to just below his knee. Alcaraz won the opening four games but dropped his serve when he served for the first set at 5-2. The Spaniard broke back in the next game to close it out, showing off his speed on the clay court at the Foro Italico when he ran down a drop shot and produced a backhand winner on one key point. Alcaraz, who won the Monte Carlo Masters in April, improved to 10-1 on clay this season. He'll next face either 31st-seeded Alex Michelsen or Laslo Djere. A four-time Grand Slam champion, Alcaraz is preparing to defend his title at the French Open, which starts May 25. The Rome tournament also marks the return of top-ranked Jannik Sinner from a three-month doping ban. Sinner and Alcaraz are on opposite sides of the draw.

‘We didn’t want any situation where fans panicked in the stadium’: IPL chairman Arun Dhumal

GNS News Agency, May 15

Arun dhumal IPL 2025 interview Arun Dhumal, IPL Chairman enjoying match 1 of the Indian Premier League season 17 (IPL 2024) between Chennai Super Kings and Royal Challengers Bangalore held at the MA Chidambaram Stadium, Chennai on the 22nd March 2024. IPL chairman Arun Dhumal is hopeful that foreign players, who have flown back home, will be back when the league resumes. However, he said a decision on restarting the IPL will be taken only after consulting the government. In a chat with The Indian Express, Dhumal spoke about the reason for stopping the game in Dharamsala mid-way and getting a special train for the cricketers to travel to Delhi.

Arun Dhumal: It was a challenge to take a call given the situation we were in. We had discussions with the district administration and state administration beforehand about the possibility of evacuating fans and how to go about it. But we were all hoping things would get better so that is why we started the game between Punjab Kings and Delhi Capitals. But there were reports coming in through social media, so we didn't want any situation where fans panicked in the stadium. It was prudent that we stop the game and get fans out of the stadium. As a precaution, we called off the game mid-way because there was so much misinformation flowing. There were 25,000 fans inside the stadium, plus cricketers from two teams and other stakeholders. There was a small break (during the game) and we had a discussion with the district commissioner, the deputy Commissioner, the senior authorities and people higher up. We spoke about the next step. I went and spoke to people in the team management of both teams and appreciated them about the situation. Then I went to the ground and requested all the fans to keep moving. Local administration were getting reports about incidents (air raid sirens) taking place.

Arun Dhumal: We were in regular touch with the team management. Everyone was speaking to their families back home. Even before the game we spoke to them (both the



teams), and we reassured them that their safety and security is paramount to us. They were ready to play the game. The game happened but with the situation at the border being tense, we thought it would not be appropriate (to continue the game) in case rumours spread and fans panicked. Arun Dhumal: It would have taken a long time for the cricketers to travel by road. So the train was the best and most comfortable option. We also had to look at the best option in terms of the departure station. The players also had a lot of luggage. Thanks to Indian Railways because they sent a special train.

Many foreign players have flown back home, what if they don't decide to come back?

Arun Dhumal: I am sure foreign players would want to come back and be part of the tournament. As the IPL was suspended for one week, everybody wanted to go back to their loved ones. We will review the situation and accordingly keep all the stakeholders informed, including our franchise owners.

There are reports that England is open to hosting IPL after border tension?

Arun Dhumal: I'm also hearing this. But we have not had any talks with them. I'm glad countries are willing to host this premier tournament.

Jannik Sinner returned to winning ways after doping ban

GNS News Agency, May 15

World number one Jannik Sinner returned to victorious ways in the second round of the Italian Open after a three-month doping ban. Earlier this year, Sinner agreed a settlement with the World Anti-Doping Agency in February and began an immediate three-month suspension after authorities accepted that the anabolic agent clostebol had entered his system via massages from his physiotherapist.

The three-times Grand Slam winner Sinner hasn't played since winning the Australian Open in January. "It's an amazing feeling," said the 23-year-old. "I waited quite long for this moment. I'm very happy to be back. It's very difficult to have the right feedback when you don't have any matches, and that's exactly what I need. Now I think the best practice is the match itself, so I'm very happy about that." Sinner said that there was natural rust but competing again brought him the joy that overrode any doubts about sharpness and rhythm. "I'm very happy about the win today. It was very difficult. (Navone) is such a great player, especially on this surface. I tried to move around the ball." At times it went very well, at times it could have been better, yes, but in any case, it doesn't matter about the result today. It has been a remarkable day for me, so I'm very



happy," Sinner said. Sinner was also surprised about how good his game felt after the layoff. Talking about his game, Sinner said, "I was surprised how things can (feel good) so quickly. I tried to give everything I have. I think that's the only thing I can do and that's the only thing I can control right now," Sinner said. The sensation felt quite good, to be honest. Of course, there were some ups and downs, that is normal, but (Navone) played some great tennis, especially when he broke me in the second set," he added further. After extending his tour-level winning streak to 22 matches, Sinner will next face lucky loser Jesper de Jong.

‘Virat Kohli’s intention to retire is right, timing wrong’: Navjot Sidhu



GNS News Agency, May 15

Navjot Sidhu said that Virat Kohli should re-consider the timing of his Test retirement. (BCCI) Navjot Sidhu said that Virat Kohli should re-consider the timing of his Test retirement. (BCCI) While Virat Kohli's intention to make way for the youngsters in Test cricket may be right, the timing ahead of a highly anticipated five-match tour to England is wrong, said former India opener Navjot Singh Sidhu.

The Indian Express on Saturday reported that Kohli made a bombshell request to retire from Test cricket ahead of the England tour, prompting the top officials of the BCCI to urge him to reconsider his decision ahead of the series that will mark the commencement of the next ICC World Test Championship cycle. Kohli's decision, if not amended, will be a massive blow in terms of batting experience and

leadership for a transitioning Test team, especially on the back of captain Rohit Sharma's retirement earlier this week.

In a video on social media, Sidhu expressed that Kohli reconsider the timing of his decision to step down from Tests, stressing that the 36-year-old's nous would be vital for India in England. "Virat Kohli's decision — that he wants to retire — has created a stir across the cricketing world. His intention is right, his motive is noble — that "the old order must change, yielding place to the new." But the timing and occasion are not appropriate, because the pride and prestige of India are on the line," Sidhu said. "We are heading into a tour that is the toughest litmus test even for other Test-playing nations.

Why do I say that Kohli can be our "knight in shining armour" in England? Because he has the experience, especially after Rohit Sharma's departure. You can't send an inexperienced side to England," Sidhu added.

Besides Sidhu, West Indies legend Brian Lara and Kohli's former India teammate Ambati Rayudu also took to social media to urge the India No. 4 to not give up just yet "Test cricket needs Virat!! He is going to be persuaded. He is NOT going to retire from Test cricket," Lara wrote in an Instagram post. "Virat Kohli please don't retire. The Indian team needs you more than ever. You have so much more in the tank. Test cricket will not be the same without you walking out to battle it out for Team India. Please reconsider," wrote Rayudu.

‘Test cricket needs Virat’: Brian Lara says Kohli will be persuaded to not retire before England tour



GNS News Agency, May 15

West Indies batting legend Brian Lara has come out to urge India veteran Virat Kohli not to give up on Test cricket just yet after the 36-year-old recently told the selectors that he wanted to retire from the longest format ahead of India's highly anticipated five-match tour to England. On Saturday, the Indian Express reported that Kohli wished to retire from Test cricket with immediate effect, but the BCCI's top brass had urged him to reconsider his decision.

Kohli's decision was revealed closely on the back of Test captain Rohit Sharma's retirement from the format after the national selectors told him that they were moving on from him after his poor returns in the Border-Gavaskar Trophy in Australia. Despite starting the series with a century in Perth in November 2024, Kohli also returned poor series overalls, tallying only 193 runs in nine innings at a 23.5 average. Of the eight innings where he was dismissed on tour,

seven of Kohli's dismissals were adjudged caught-behind. However, in a social media post, Lara urged that Kohli needed to be persuaded to stay on in the red-ball format. "Test cricket needs Virat!! He is going to be persuaded. He is NOT going to retire from Test cricket," Lara wrote in an Instagram post below a picture of him with Kohli. "@virat.kohli is going to average above 60 for the remainder of his Test career," he added, expressing faith in the 36-year-old's enduring class and motivation. Kohli has amassed 9,230 runs in 123 Tests at an average of 46.85 since his debut in 2011 against the West Indies. His average dipped in the last five years, aggregating only above 2000 runs in 37 games with three hundreds. Kohli had already retired from T20s after India won the T20 World Cup in West Indies last year. However, he was in supreme form during this IPL with 505 runs in 11 matches, including seven fifties, at a strike rate of 143.46.

Archery World Cup: Madhura Dhamangaonkar makes dream comeback after technique tweaks, bags three medals in Shanghai



GNS News Agency, May 15

Madhura Dhamangaonkar won three medals at the Archery World Cup Stage 2 in Shanghai on Saturday, the highlight being an individual gold to go with a silver in the women's team event and a bronze in the compound mixed team event alongside Abhishek Verma, to make it a remarkable return to international competition after three years. Madhura, 24, trailed USA's Carson Krahe 81-85 before eventually winning 139-138.

In Amravati, Shailendra Dhamangaonkar, Madhura's father was a proud man. Madhura's younger sister Shalaka is a professional swimmer. "When both my daughters were young, the reason I put them into sports was to make them excel and win medals for India and bring glory to the country. As Madhura won three medals in the World Cup in Shanghai, seeing the Indian flag rise high was a special feeling for us amid the conflict," Dhamangaonkar told Madhura enrolled at the Shree Hanuman Vyayam Prasark Mandal for archery coaching in 2011. She then trained with coach Ganesh Vishwakarma at a local school. Like most archers, Madhura started with a wooden bow and it was in 2012 that her father got her a new recurve bow.

"I knew archery can be an expensive sport, but then me and my wife Anjali have always done whatever we could for our daughters. I got Madhura her first recurve bow in 2012 and she trained in recurve till 2017. When she decided to shift to the compound, she herself told us to donate that bow to a needy person. I then arranged money from my relatives and friends to get her a new compound bow worth Rs 1,80,000," the proud father recalled.

Shifting to compound events would see Madhura start training under coach Pawan Tambat at the Gurukul academy in Amravati. The youngster would make her debut for the Indian team in the Asia Cup Stage 3 Ranking tournament in 2018 before she faced another hurdle. "In 2019, her two-year-old compound bow broke. The same year, her elder sister was also to get married. So I once again asked my relatives and friends for financial help and got her another bow," Dhamangaonkar said. Three years ago Madhura

made it to the Indian team for the Archery World Cup Stage 4, where she lost in the second round in individual and in the quarterfinal in women's team event where she paired up with Pragati and Shrishti Singh. In 2023, Madhura would shift to Satara to train under coach Pravin Sawant. She would practice along with compatriot and 2023 world champion Aditi Swami.

"When she came to train under me, she faced some issues in her technique. Her shoulder used to bend and I got her changed from Hoyt bow to PSE bow as it suited her body structure well. Her upper body line and back position were also adjusted according to the new bow and she would shoot with the poundage drawing weight of 52-53 Kg. There was a phase where she struggled with her form and I asked her to start from basics with the wooden bow. She showed no hesitation in that," coach Sawant recalled. In the final, Madhura took a four-point lead against Carson Krahe of USA with a perfect 30 after the first set before two 8s and a nine. The archers were tied at 55-55, then a low seven on her last shot coupled with a 10 and nine in the third set saw Madhura trailing Karahe by four points. A ten and an inner ten along with a nine saw her level with Karahe before the Indian shot a nine and two inner tens to win the match 139-138.

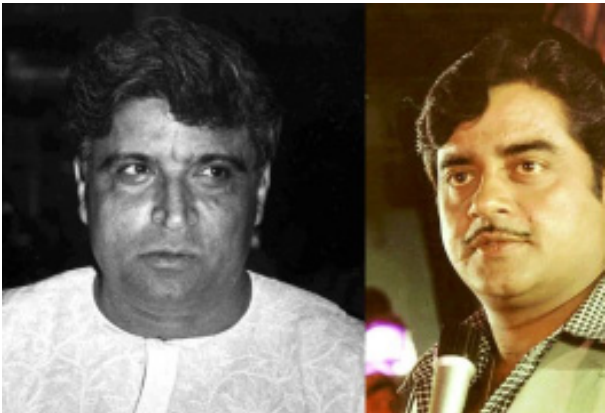
"Madhura knows how to use the balance in the air to counter her body weight and body posture. Today the conditions were very windy here. That was the reason for the fluctuation in scores. During the last set, I told her not to worry about the ten but just to focus on the yellow ring. While one makes adjustments like shooting towards left if the wind is towards right or vice versa, sometimes the pressure of hitting a ten sees an archer taking longer time. So the key for her was not to worry about ten in windy conditions," national coach and Dronacharya Awardee Jiwant Singh Teja said. Madhura also paired up with Abhishek to win the mixed team bronze with a 144-142 win over the Malaysian pair of Fatin Salleh and Mohammad Mazuki. While the trio of Madhura, Jyothi Surekha Vennam and Chikitha Taniparthi lost 222-234 against the trio of Andrew Becerrra, Adriana Castillo and Mariana Bernal of Turkey in the compound women's final, the men's compound team of Abhishek Verma, Rishabh Yadav and Ojas Deotale won the gold with a 232-228 win over the Mexican team of Rodrigo Gonzalez, Sebastian Garcia and Luis Lezama. Yadav also won his first individual World Cup bronze with a 145-145 (win via shoot-off) win over Kim Jongho of South Korea. With the compound mixed team being part of the LA Olympics, Teja sees the tough competition in team events as an advantage. "I can say all the team events or individual events see 5-6 archers of almost the same class. So winning medals in team events too prepares them mentally for the mixed team event where the format is the same. It has taken us a long time to be in the top three countries in compound and maintaining the consistency will be key ahead," coach Teja said.

From a dashing batter to making a mark in Telugu sports commentary, Suman aces it!

Well, for the dashing batter of yesteryears, Tirumulasetty Suman, it has been a pleasing transition from taking on the best of the bowlers on the field to making a critical analysis with the mike, donning the role of a tv commentator for Star Sports Telugu channel. Interestingly, the former Hyderabad opener, who played between 2003-2015, was not in the mood to entertain any calls for tv commentary for three years when he got the first call in 2017. "Honestly, I was reluctant and that too to be a Telugu commentator. But once, I took it up in 2020 and pushed straight away into the 'live show'. I got hooked on it," Suman says in a chat with 'Telangana Today'. For someone who has the rare distinction of being a member of IPL winning twice for two Hyderabad franchises (Deccan Chargers in 2009 and Sunrisers Hyderabad in 2010) and then played for Mumbai Indians for two seasons and one season for Pune Warriors

in 2013, Suman apparently knows what he speaks. "Yes, having played with the best and in challenging conditions, I feel I can do my job better," says Suman. "The biggest challenge is to control the emotions. For instance, when Rohit Sharma's India won the T-20 World Cup last year, I was with the mike, struggling to control my tears of joy," he recalled. "The other way is to strike a balance when your favourite cricketer does really well. For all viewers may not like him," he said with a big smile. "Honestly, there are no do's and don'ts for us. It is just about steering clear of any controversies, bias and always be neutral," Suman said. For the record, Suman scored 240 runs in the 2019 IPL for Deccan Chargers, which is more than what Virat Kohli scored in that season for RCB! "For me, the greatest moment was when I opened with Sachin Sir (Tendulkar), playing for Mumbai Indians,".

Javed Akhtar felt it was ‘impossible’ for Shatrughan Sinha to pay Rs 60 as rent, refused to live with him: ‘You will get me evicted as well’



Veteran screenwriter and lyricist Javed Akhtar, who arrived in Mumbai in the 1960s, faced his share of hardships before establishing himself in the Hindi film industry. From odd jobs to working as an assistant director, he eventually secured a writing position at Sippy Films in 1970 with a modest salary of Rs 175. But before this, he shared his struggles with contemporaries like actor Shatrughan Sinha and director Subhash Ghai, who were also struggling with him. In an interview with Mid-day, Javed recounted a humorous episode from those early days, when he lived in a small room and was approached by Shatrughan Sinha for accommodation.

He recalled, “Mere paas ek room aagaya tha... when I was doing well. Toh uska Rs 120 mahina kiraya tha... Rs 60 I used to give... and Rs 60, somebody else. Toh mere paas Shatrughan aaya, kehne laga ki tum mujhe rakh lo apne kamre mein. I said, ‘Pagaal ho tum? Tum mujhe bhi nikalwa

doge. Rs 60 mahina tum kahaan se laaoge? Har mahine tum Rs 60 de sakoge? Impossible.” (I had managed to get a room... when things were starting to look up. The rent was Rs 120 per month. Rs 60 I paid, and the other half was paid by someone else. Then, Shatrughan came to me saying, ‘Let me stay with you.’ I said, ‘Are you crazy? You’ll get me evicted too. Where will you get Rs 60 from each month? Will you really be able to pay it? Impossible.’)

Though Javed turned down the request, he noted how Sinha already displayed the confidence, style, and flair that would later define his screen persona. Still, the decision was firm. “Maine use nahi rakha... I told him main tumko nahi rakh sakta.” (I didn’t let him stay... I told him I can’t keep you as a roommate.) Despite the early struggles, both men went on to become stalwarts in their respective fields. Shatrughan has previously claimed that films like Sholay and Deewaar, written by Salim-Javed, were first offered to him. In a 2000 chat with Rediff, Shatrughan claimed, “Sholay, the role Amitabh played was first offered to me, but I didn’t do it. During those days, I was coming as the lead star, and I didn’t want to take a second lead character. The role passed on to Amitabh, and you know the rest. Or take Deewar — Salim-Javed wrote the role for me, initially, and it was lying with my producer for a long time. But then there was some difference of opinion between Salim Khan and the producer, and the film passed on to Yash Chopra. And Amitabh got the role.” With Amitabh and Shatrughan being professional rivals, and Salim-Javed writing most of Amitabh’s hits of the time, it was perceived that the writer duo supported Big B, and not Shatrughan. Salim-Javed and Shatrughan collaborated on films like Kaala Paththar, Shaan and Dostana, but they all starred multiple heroes.

Archana Puran Singh and Parmeet Sethi eloped at midnight because his father was against their marriage; disapproving pandit asked, ‘Ladki baalik hai?’

Archana Puran Singh and Parmeet Sethi have been married for three decades now, and they’ve happily settled into a new phase in their careers thanks to YouTube. The couple posts regular vlogs, which also feature their sons, Aryamann and Ayushmaan. While most of their content revolves around their love for food, they also offer glimpses into their private lives. More often than not, the vlogs feature plenty of banter between the couple, with both Archana and Parmeet joking about their dynamic relationship. In an appearance on The Kapil Sharma Show a few years ago, they revealed that they were forced to elope back in the day, because Parmeet’s father didn’t approve of the union.

When Kapil asked them to talk about the beginnings of their relationship, Parmeet said, “She compelled me to marry her. She created such circumstances...” Archana added, “He proposed to me, and we actually eloped.” Parmeet continued, “At 11 pm, we decided to get married. We left to find a pandit, and at 12 am, even the pandit was like, ‘Tum bhaage hue ho? Ladki baalik hai?’ I said, ‘Mere se zyada baalik hai’. He said this isn’t the right way, and that we should wait for an auspicious time in the morning. We gave him some money, and he came at 11 am the next morning, and we got married.”

A curious Kapil asked if there was pushback from the parents, and Archana said, “There was a lot of drama. Parmeet’s parents voiced their disapproval. They felt I was a little too old for him, and I was an actress. But, despite all



that, I’d like to mention that after we got married, they accepted me whole-heartedly. But they had no choice.” Parmeet said that they were perfect for each other, which is why they’ve lasted this long. “We complimented each other physically. Our mental tuning was also perfect, and that’s the reason we got married,” he said.

Archana said that it was a good thing that they tied the knot in a hurry, otherwise there might have been some hesitation. She said, “Many years after our marriage, I asked a pandit to match our horoscopes, and he was very concerned. He asked me if I was happy in my marriage, and I said yes. He told me that if he’d seen our horoscopes earlier, he’d have strongly advised us not to get married. We proved astrology wrong.” Archana and Parmeet’s latest YouTube vlogs follow them on a quest to find the best food in Mumbai.

Juhi Chawla had a secret wedding with Jay Mehta because she was afraid of losing her career, mother-in-law ‘allowed’ her to continue working



Actor Juhi Chawla tied the knot with businessman Jay Mehta in the mid-90s, but they kept it a secret initially. In an old interview, Juhi explained that this was common in those days, because actors felt that they would be less desirable to the public if they weren’t single. Juhi had also lost her mother around that time, and was convinced that she would have to stop working if the world came to know that she was married. In an interview with former journalist Rajeev Masand, Juhi recalled how

Jay serenaded her, and how supportive her mother-in-law was during that difficult time.

Asked why they kept their wedding a secret, she said, “Everyone did it those days. You didn’t have the internet and you didn’t have cameras on every phone, so you could do it that way. Also, I was just about established, and just (starting to do) well. And that’s when Jay was serenading me. I was afraid of losing my career, just when I’d got there. I wanted to carry on, and this seemed the midway. Then

my mum passed away, and I felt like I was going to lose everything I had.”

Recalling their courtship, Juhi continued, “We met when I was younger, before I had even started out in the industry. But that was briefly, and with friends. He had another set of friends, but south Mumbai is small. But then, I lost touch (with him) because I started working, and I was in Andheri, doing my thing. It was at a friend’s dinner in town that I saw him, and then we got talking again. From then on, everywhere I

turned, he turned up. Everywhere I looked, he was there with flowers and notes. Every day. On my birthday, I remember, there was a truckload of red roses. What can you do with a truckload of flowers? But there it was. After a year, he proposed.”

Juhi said that she was absolutely devastated when her mother died, and was sure that she would have to give up her career after marriage. She added, “When a door closes, a window opens. It was Jay, his parents, and his mom especially. There were times when I was really down and out, and she always said to me, ‘You’re like my daughter, don’t think of yourself as my daughter-in-law, do what makes you happy’. She allowed me to go out and work. I’d just got my bearings in (the industry) and everything was falling apart.” At an earlier event, Juhi had said that her wedding invites had to be revoked after she confided in her mother-in-law and told her that she wasn’t comfortable with a large wedding. She said at the Gujarat Chamber of Commerce & Industry, “I was shooting for some of the really big films of my career

Madhuri Dixit’s husband Dr Nene wasn’t interested in considering her as potential wife, had to be talked into meeting her: ‘The industry is crazy’



Madhuri Dixit’s husband, Dr Sriram Nene, has often spoken about not knowing who she was before they tied the knot in 1999. The truth is that Madhuri was arguably the biggest Bollywood actress of her generation, and she was the peak of her career at that point. But Dr Nene wasn’t interested in considering someone from the film industry as a potential wife, because he’d grown up in Los Angeles and had closely interacted with Hollywood folks. He didn’t have a high opinion of them, but after meeting Madhuri’s brother and liking him, he reconsidered.

Dr Nene recalled the story at a Google Fireside chat around a decade ago. He said, “My folks are from Mumbai. I spoke Marathi, but I didn’t know Hindi. We didn’t watch Hindi movies growing up. The other thing is, I was at UCLA,

and we took care of a lot of the Hollywood industry. And I’ll be very candid with you, the industry there is completely crazy. The types of people that you meet... The last thing I want to do is see someone from the film industry. But then, I met her brother. And he was phenomenal and very down-to-earth. He kind of fit our overall mindset. I agreed to meet her, and I probably might’ve googled her back then.”

Asked what his first reaction upon seeing Madhuri in person was, Dr Nene said, “I don’t know what to say. I didn’t know who she was. There’s a couple of points. I grew up in LA, I was surrounded by the industry. What you found is that they put their pants on one leg at a time, just like everyone else. The connect was that we didn’t treat each other differently, regardless of what our stature was, and what we did. The one thing I loved about her was that she’s down-to-earth, and very straightforward and focused. That’s not always the case in the filmy line. We’re the un-filmy people, in that we’re real, and we like to stay that way.” Madhuri interjected, “He didn’t know what he was getting into.”

Madhuri moved to the United States after marriage, and discovered that she could live like a regular person there. But she returned to the film industry in the mid-2000s. Dr Nene followed in 2011, and the couple has since been living in India. Asked what moving back was like, she said, “It was back to square one. I have to pick and choose where I can be and where I can go. But I do try. After living in Denver and being so independent, when you go back, everything is a little different... I wear my hat or my big gold glares and I feel like this is a proper disguise. But then, somebody will come and whisper in my ear, ‘Can I have an autograph’.”

Asin’s husband Rahul Sharma reveals how Micromax went from Rs 12,000 crore to bust in five years: ‘Bouncer after bouncer, clean-bowled by full-toss’

Former actor Asin’s husband, Rahul Sharma, co-founded one of the biggest players in the mobile phone arena, Micromax. But after a few years during which it dominated the Indian market and took on international brands, it was forced to perform a major pivot. Chinese brands emerged, and the supply chain turned towards them. In several interviews, Rahul has spoken about Micromax’s downfall, which was highly publicised because of how huge the company had become. It was during this period of growth that he married Asin, who backed away from the film industry immediately afterwards.

Appearing on Raj Shamani’s podcast this year, Rahul said that at its peak, Micromax was among the 10 biggest mobile phone companies in the world. It had successfully fended off competition from the likes of Nokia and Samsung in India, and was delivering a turnover of between Rs 12,000 crore and Rs 15,000 crore. But things began turning around shortly afterwards. “Bouncer pe bouncer pad raha tha, uss time full-toss pe bhi bowled ho rahe they,” he said.

He said, “What happened with Micromax didn’t happen only with Micromax; it was a global phenomenon. There was a lot of brands globally at the time, but people spoke about us because we were the biggest. The supply chain started shifting, and when the supply chain started shifting...” Rahul said that his company’s differentiator was innovation, and they weren’t allowed to innovate because Chinese manufacturers entered into exclusive deals with emerging Chinese brands. “Imagine if today, I want to make a triple-screen phone. I can’t, because I don’t have the components. Which means I no longer have the edge. We tried for two years, but after a point, we decided that there is no



point in burning more money... You can keep burning if there is success at the end of the tunnel, but when the opponent has an endless supply of resources, it makes no sense.” In an appearance on Nikhil Kamath’s podcast, Rahul said that they turned down funding of \$800 million from Alibaba in 2014, which, in hindsight, was possibly a mistake. “We thought that if we’d taken care of the Finnish and the Koreans at that time, we could take care of the Chinese too... That was a different game, because when the Chinese came, they came with so much gunpowder,” he said. Rahul has now pivoted to the manufacturing business, and is making more money now than he ever did before. “Today, our revenue is way bigger than what we used to do in our brand. Most people would probably not know. But we are doing way better than what we used to do earlier,” he told Nikhil Kamath.

PVR sues Maddock Films for Rs 60 crore after cancellation of Bhool Chuk Maaf’s theatrical release: report



After Maddock Films cancelled the theatrical release of Bhool Chuk Maaf on Thursday, and said that they would release the film directly on OTT, PVR has reportedly decided to sue them. Bhool Chuk Maaf stars Rajkummar Rao and Wamiqa Gabbi. The makers said that the “heightened security drills across the nation” were the reason behind their decision as they announced it just a day before the film’s scheduled theatrical release. PVR has reportedly sued Maddock Films for Rs 60 crore for “non-playability” of the film.

PVR CEO Kamal Gianchandani told News9Live that the abrupt decision has caused them substantial financial losses. Trade expert Komal Nahta took to his X account and a part of his tweet read, “According to PVR-Inox, Maddock suddenly cancelled the film’s release (on 9th May)

from cinemas on account of poor advance booking.”

Maddock Films issued a statement on May 8 explaining the reason behind their decision to move the film’s release to an OTT platform. “In light of recent events and the heightened security drills across the nation, we at Maddock Films and Amazon MGM Studios have decided to bring our family entertainer, Bhool Chuk Maaf, directly to your homes on May 16—only on Prime Video, worldwide. While we were eagerly looking forward to celebrating this film with you in theatres, the spirit of the nation comes first. Jai Hind,” they said. The film directed by Karan Sharma is produced by the man behind the Stree franchise, Dinesh Vijan. Apart from Rajkummar Rao and Wamiqa Gabbi, the film also stars Sanjay Mishra, Seema Pahwa, Zakir Hussain, Raghubir Yadav, and Ishiyak Khan, among others.