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Two boys killed by lightning while playing cricket in Toopran

Medak: Two teenage boys, who were playing cricket in a local ground, died after lightning struck them at Padalapally in Toopran municipality on Saturday.

Prasad (15) and Yaswanth (13), along with their friends and neighbours were playing cricket in a ground close to their homes when rains coupled with thunderstorms lashed the place. Prasad and Yaswanth and two other friends rushed for cover under a tree. After a few minutes, lightning struck them while the other friends standing under other trees were watching them helplessly. They did not realise what had happened for a moment.

TGIIC to set up industrial park in 1000 acres in Siddipet's Mulugu

Siddipet: Telangana Industrial and Infrastructure Corporation Limited (TGIIC) Executive Director Nikhil Chakravarthy said the State government was preparing to set up an industrial park in over 1,000 acres of land in Mulugu mandal.

Chakravarthy visited the land identified by the revenue department in Mulug, Peerlapally, Kothur, Wargal and Tunki Bollaram villages in the mandal on Saturday. The ED enquired about the progress of land acquisition and hurdles in acquiring the remaining land. He asked officials to fast-track the acquisition of lands. Siddipet Additional Collector MD Hameed, TGIIC Zonal Manager Anuradha, DGMs Nagaraju and Ramadev were present.

CJI Gavai begins with a bang

GNS News Agency, May 17

May 14 of 2025 will go down in the annals of Indian judicial history as a red-letter day for various historic reasons. No sooner was he administered the oath of office by President Droupadi Murmu on Wednesday and he became the 52nd Chief Justice of India (CJI), Justice Bhushan Ramkrishna Gavai entered the record books as only the second Dalit CJI after Justice K G Balakrishnan, and the first Buddhist to occupy the exalted position. However, these statistics apart, Justice Gavai comes with an envious track-record that has earned him the reputation of being a 'fiercely independent' judge for the upright manner with which he handles cases. As the CJI and head of the Supreme Court collegium, he has to reckon with several key issues at a particularly critical time for the judiciary, whose dispute with the executive is mounting by the day and the public's trust in the judicial system is eroding. Meanwhile, for one, who plays by the rule book and is known as a hands-on judge, Justice Gavai commenced his innings as the CJI with a bang. In a demonstration that is indicative of what is to come in the next six months (CJI Gavai is due to retire on November 23), he delivered a ruling, his first judgement as the CJI, which has been the hallmark of his entire career as a judge that took off in 2005 when became a permanent judge and served it with aplomb before being elevated to the Supreme Court on May 24, 2019. He not only declared the Maharashtra government's 1998 decision to transfer forest land to private entities for non-forest use as illegal but also slammed what he termed as "a classic example of the nexus between politicians, bureaucrats and builders." In fact, he saw the involvement of the then Revenue minister. This no-holds-barred 'nexus' contention is not surprising as the legal fraternity is aware of his penchant to give a patient hearing to arguments before rendering an authoritative justice as per law. This was evidenced by the deft handling of the defa-



mation case against Rahul Gandhi or while ordering the release of Prabir Purkayastha, the political activist and founder of NewsClick, who spent 225 days in jail after his arrest by the Delhi Police under UAPA. Justice Gavai has many high-profile cases like the Maharashtra forest land transfer case up ahead. A chilling fact is that there were 82,445 pending cases in the apex court as of January. In the intervening four months, this figure must have increased. One will keenly watch how he handles the more critical and sensitive cases that need to be prioritised like the Places of Worship Act, criminalisation of marital rape and the Waqf Act, among several others, whose outcomes can redefine policy-making exercises. His "SC can't be aloof when the country is in danger" take, while organising a two-minute silence to express solidarity with the victims of the Pahalgam massacre, or while granting bail on the grounds that a long period of imprisonment without trial exemplifies his humane side. The CJI criticised the Supreme Court Bar Association for not organising a farewell get-together for Justice Bela M Trivedi, after she opted for an early retirement. By maintaining that "the Association ought not to have taken such a stand," he showed that it was morally binding to honour traditions per se. GJI Gavai commands respect because he symbolises integrity and fairness in their noblest forms.

Haryana-based travel blogger Jyoti Rani arrested on charges of spying for Pakistan

GNS News Agency, May 17

The Haryana Police on Saturday arrested travel blogger Jyoti Rani for allegedly spying for Pakistani intelligence agencies during Operation Sindoor. Rani, who has a YouTube channel called Travel with Jo with over 3,77,000 subscribers and an Instagram account with over 1,32,000 followers, was taken into custody after she was found sharing "sensitive information" with an official of the Pakistan High Commission in Delhi, the police said. Rani was arrested from the New Aggarwal Extension area in Hisar district and booked under Sections 3 and 5 of the Official Secrets Act and Section 152 of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (acts that endanger the sovereignty, unity, and integrity of India). She has been accused of spying for Pakistan and being in direct contact with handlers there to portray a positive image of that country through her content, the police said. In March and April, Rani had uploaded videos and reels of her trip to Pakistan. According to the police, she allegedly disclosed in her preliminary interrogation that she had "gone to Pakistan High Commission for getting a visitor visa in 2023". It was then that she allegedly came into contact with a Pakistan High Commission official in New Delhi named Ehsan-ur-Rahim alias Danish. She allegedly shared the official's phone number with the police and said that she remained in touch with him. Rani got her visa in 2023 and subsequently travelled to Pakistan twice, the police said. "On Danish's insistence, she met a man named Ali Ahwan in Pakistan who arranged her travel and stay there. She added that Ali got her in touch with



two Pakistani security and intelligence officials named Shakir and Rana Shahbaz. She also took Shakir's mobile phone number and saved it on her mobile phone as Jatt Randhawa to avoid any suspicion," a police official said. "She remained in touch with all three men through social media platforms and exchanged multiple phone calls and messages. She subsequently started sharing sensitive information about vital installations of India to these persons. She kept on meeting Danish," the official added. According to the police, Danish was declared persona non grata on May 13 by the Indian government after he was accused of spying. He was also asked to leave India immediately. Earlier this week, the Haryana Police had arrested a 24-year-old man from Panipat for allegedly sharing sensitive information with several individuals in Pakistan. The police identified the man as Nauman Elahi from Uttar Pradesh, who worked as a private security guard in a blanket-knitting factory in Panipat.

India will play lead role in shaping upcoming 6G technology regulations: Scindia



GNS News Agency, May 17

Gwalior: A telecommunication revolution is rapidly unfolding across the globe and India is at the forefront of this movement under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, said Union Minister Jyotiraditya Scindia on Saturday. The Union Minister of Communications also asserted that in the days to come, India will play a leading role in tailoring rules for 6G technology. "The rollout of 5G technology has taken place, and in just 22 months, the information revolution has reached 82 per cent of the population of 99 percent of districts in the country. India will take the lead in shaping the upcoming 6G technology regulations," Scindia asserted. He also said new services are being introduced in the postal system, adding that India Post is one of the largest logistics and distribution networks in the world, having 1.64 lakh (164,000) post offices and 2.5 lakh (250,000) postal workers. "In

2008, I designed the logo for the Department of Posts, with the slogan 'Postal Service is Public Service.' Every postal worker operates with this spirit. India will continue to lead the telecom revolution," said Scindia, who was Union Minister of State for communications in the first term of the Manmohan Singh-led UPA government. May 17 is observed as World Telecommunication and Information Society Day with the aim of raising global awareness of social changes brought about by the internet and new technologies and reducing the digital divide.

Telangana tops World Drug Control rankings, CM Revanth Reddy lauds police

GNS News Agency, May 17

In a recent post on the social media platform X, Chief Minister Revanth Reddy expressed his pride in Telangana's remarkable achievement of securing the top position globally in drug control, surpassing 138 countries. Reddy extended his congratulations to Hyderabad City Police Commissioner CV Anand and his team for this significant accomplishment. He stated that he is committed to supporting every police officer dedicated to the mission of creating a drug-free Telangana.

ST farmers in Telangana apprehensive over Congress Govt's Indira Soura Giri Jala Vikasam

GNS News Agency, May 17

Hyderabad: Considering the partial implementation of several existing schemes and failure to ground many others, there are apprehensions among Scheduled Tribe (ST) farmers over the effective implementation of the proposed Indira Soura Giri Jala Vikasam scheme. Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy, whose recent outbursts on the State's finances and fund crunch is also another worrying factor for the farmers, is expected to launch the Indira Soura Giri Jala Vikasam scheme on Monday. Under the scheme, the government aims for comprehensive development of Recognition of Forest Rights (RoFR) lands by providing solar pump sets (off-grid) based irrigation facilities to the ST farmers.

For this, the State government announced the scheme with a budget outlay of Rs. 12,600 crore with a unit cost of Rs. 6 lakh in a phased manner for five years beginning from the 2025-26 financial year. However, as the Congress government has failed to disburse assistance to many farmers under Rythu Bharosa and landless labourers under Atmeeya Bharosa, many ryots are apprehensive about the implementation of the new scheme. This apart, there have been complaints from elected public representatives over the forest department denying permission to dig borewells, operating tractors and imposing other restrictions. All these issues were raised by Congress MLAs themselves in the Assembly last December. Revenue Minister Ponguleti Srinivas Reddy admitted that such issues were prevailing in about 35 constituencies. The MLAs appealed to the State government to conduct a joint survey involving Revenue and Forest departments and demarcate the podu lands. However, the exercise has not been taken up so far. Meanwhile, apart from boundary issues, the forest department is worried about the possibilities of man-animal conflict. As ST farmers were depending on rains for cultivating lands, water availability was limited to a few seasons. Once solar pump sets were provided in the podu lands, sufficient water would be available even during summer season. This could



trigger more man-animal conflicts as wild animals try to quench their thirst in the fields, a senior official opined. In addition to this, availability of funds was another challenge for the implementation of the scheme. Under the RoFR Act, the State government provided title deeds to 2.30 lakh ST farmers covering nearly 6.69 lakh acres. Of these, 2.10 lakh farmers have been identified under the scheme covering six lakh acres for provision of solar pump set based irrigation facility on 100 per cent subsidy basis on saturation mode. Accordingly, the Tribal Welfare department has been entrusted with the task of implementing the scheme. In the current financial year, 10,000 farmers are likely to get benefited covering 27,184 acres with a cost of Rs. 600 crore. The assistance would be extended to farmers cultivating horticulture crops, especially fruit bearing saplings. The State government releases these funds through Scheduled Tribes Special Development Fund (STSDf). The government also intends to make use of the Rs. 1, 317 crore, which were unutilized under the SC/ ST Sub-Plan Law. The District administration would have to involve ground water, forest, revenue and horticulture to conduct site identification for panel installation, verification of pattas, geologists for pump sets capacity (5 hp or 7.5 hp) and all these details have to be uploaded online, said an official from ST welfare department. On the provision of pump sets, tenders would be floated to identify an agency.

Preparations in full swing for KTR's upcoming events in USA

GNS News Agency, May 17

Hyderabad: Preparations are in full swing for the upcoming events involving BRS working president KT Rama Rao in Dallas, USA, which will coincide with Telangana Formation Day and the BRS Silver Jubilee celebrations.

The Bharat Rashtira Samithi (BRS) USA wing is making elaborate arrangements to ensure a grand gathering of party workers, supporters and Telangana associations across the United States. Meetings are already being held in major cities to discuss publicity strategies, logistics, transportation, accommodation, and cultural programmes for the Dallas event. The BRS USA wing has organized successful preparatory meetings in Los Angeles, Atlanta, and Washington D.C., with enthusiastic participation from Telugu and Telangana associations. Senior BRS leader Balka Suman joined the discussions as a special guest. He interacted with local NRIs and party members. The planning process



is drawing support in a big way from BRS workers and NRIs, who are showing strong interest in the upcoming celebrations. Over the next ten days, additional meetings will take place in cities such as New Jersey, Bay Area, Chicago, Houston, Dallas, and New York. These meetings will finalize arrangements and further mobilize Telangana supporters.

Omar Abdullah's call to scrap Indus Water Treaty is 'dangerous and short-sighted', says PDP



GNS News Agency, May 17

The Opposition Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) on Saturday (May 17, 2025) targeted Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Omar Abdullah over his remarks on reviving the Tulbul navigation project, and said Mr. Abdullah's call to scrap the Indus Water Treaty was "dangerous and short-sighted". "Mr. Abdullah's remarks are not just ill-timed but deeply irresponsible. At a moment when peace is fragile and the ceasefire is barely holding, such provocations only serve to inflame tensions," the PDP said in a statement.

Mr. Abdullah's call to scrap the Indus Water Treaty was "dangerous", the PDP said. "It is a sensitive period for our nation, and leaders must act with maturity, not opportunism," the PDP said. The 2002 resolution on the Indus Water Treaty was moved in the then J&K Legislative Council by a National Conference MLC, and not by itself, the PDP said. "It (the resolution) passed solely because the NC held a majority in the Upper House [of the then J&K State Assembly]. The PDP has never wavered from its stand — our commitment has always been to peace, dialogue, and diplomacy. We believe Jammu & Kashmir must be a bridge of peace between the two countries, not a battleground,"

the PDP said. The PDP said the party's position was clear and it would "continue to demand fair compensation under the treaty to J&K, but the IWT (Indus Water Treaty) must not be used as a pretext for war rhetoric". "Introducing contentious issues like the Tulbul project or the abrogation of the IWT in today's volatile climate only pushes both countries closer to further confrontation. Those in J&K advocating such positions are undermining our region's stability, jeopardising the lives of our people living in the border States, who suffer most when conflict escalates and, most importantly, India's interests," the PDP said. The PDP said any attempt to stoke war would harm Kashmir more than anyone else. "We demand peace, justice, and a future where Jammu & Kashmir is no longer made to pay the price of military attacks, drone attacks, and cross-border shelling," the PDP said. The PDP's statement came a day after Mr. Abdullah proposed the revival of the Tulbul project near Wular lake in Kashmir. The project was stopped in 1987 after Pakistan opposed it, citing violation of the Indus Water Treaty.

PM Modi to launch revamped manuscripts mission on June 9

GNS News Agency, May 17

Prime Minister Narendra Modi will launch the revamped National Manuscripts Mission, which was announced in the Union Budget earlier this year, on June 9.

The 'Gyan Bharatam Mission', which is expected to cover more than one crore manuscripts, would be responsible for the survey, documentation and conservation of India's manuscript heritage lying with academic institutions, museums, libraries and private collectors.

Indian Chronicle

English Daily

Beijing back to old dirty game

China is back to playing its old tricks. Its latest move to rename parts of Arunachal Pradesh is a crude attempt to reiterate its claim on the State, which has been and will continue to remain an integral part of India. Beijing calls Arunachal Pradesh 'Zangnan' and keeps claiming it as the southern part of Tibet. This is a vain and preposterous move that is particularly provocative as it came in the middle of the India-Pakistan tensions over the horrific Pahalgam tragedy and the retaliatory 'Operation Sindoor'. It must be pointed out that China has fully backed Pakistan. Apparently, Beijing has done it not only to distract India but also to show solidarity with Islamabad. Also, the Chinese state-run media merrily chose to peddle the Pakistani propaganda regarding its military strikes on Indian targets. Beijing must realise that merely rechristening some places in the North-Eastern State will not make any difference to its status nor will it alter the ground reality. It has released a list of 30 'standardised' names of places in Arunachal Pradesh. This provocative action falls into a familiar pattern that China has adopted to demonstrate its territorial hegemony in the region and beyond. India has repeatedly rejected the assertions, with External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar saying that these were ludicrous to begin with and remain ludicrous today. Beijing's actions make it imperative for India to expeditiously ramp up infrastructure in Arunachal. In the last few years, China has been flexing its muscles by stepping up construction activity along the Himalayan frontier, sparking major security concerns in India. Construction of bases, including new dual-use airports, has also gathered pace ever since the Galwan Valley clash. It is also building islands in the South China Sea and contesting territorial claims of neighbours in the East China Sea. Last year, Jaishankar had asked a pointed question, "If today I change the name of your house, will it become mine?" Without answering it,

Maoists should surrender and live a peaceful life “

- 20 Maoists arrested"- Huge amount of weapons seized"Mulugu representative,



Mahipal, Indian Chronicle: District SP Shabarish has suggested that Maoists working in the Maoist party should surrender and live a peaceful life with their families. SP Shabarish revealed at a press conference on Saturday that 20 Maoists working in various cadres in the party have been arrested and a huge amount of weapons have been seized from them. The details given by the SP are as follows... As the Maoists have been conducting illegal activities in Karreguttas for some time now, the central forces of the CRPF and the Chhattisgarh Police recently conducted a large-scale search operation in Karreguttas. As part of the ongoing search operations on Karregutta, the CPI Maoists who had taken refuge there were breaking up into small groups and fleeing to various places, so the Mulugu district police have set up a strong system and taken all possible measures to prevent the entry of banned Maoists into the Mulugu district. In this context, six banned Maoists were arrested during vehicle checks at Palem project under Venkatapuram police station limits on Friday afternoon, another seven Maoists were arrested during a search operation in Murumuru forest area under Vajedu police station limits on Saturday morning, and seven banned Maoists were arrested during a patrol near Guttala Gangaram Gutthi Koya village under Kannai Gudem police station limits, making a total of 20 Maoist members, said Mulugu district SP Shabarish. He said that a large number of weapons were seized from them. Details of the arrested Maoists: Kattam Bheem, Sodi Ungi, Vanjam Muke, Hemala Sukki, Kunjam Unga, Madakam Mase, Punem Bheeme, Kattam Joga, Punem Bheeme, Nupa Gangi, Hemala Sunny, Uke Masa, Podium Lakka, Undam Somudu, Kunjam Lakka, Marigala Sumati, Madakam Kosi, Podium Jogi, Madavi Seema, Musaki Ranju, the SP said. Details of the weapons seized are 5.56mm INSAS rifles 3, 7.62mm SLR rifles 04, .303 rifle one, 8mm rifle 04, 12 bore weapon, cartridges 16, live grenades 2, Rs. 58,155 in cash, 04 walkie talkies with antennas, 06 radios, 02 rechargeable batteries, party literature books, and other paraphernalia were seized."

Inter supplementary exams should be conducted in a safe manner“



- District Collector Diwakara TS "Mulugu Representative, Mahipal, Indian Chronicle: District Collector Diwakara TS has ordered the concerned officials to conduct the inter supplementary exams in a safe manner. On Saturday, the District Collector held a coordination meeting on the conduct of the intermediate supplementary exams in his chamber along with Additional Collector Revenue Mahender G. Speaking on the occasion, the Collector suggested that drinking water facilities, electricity and medical facilities should be arranged in the examination centers without any hassle for the students. He said that the question papers should be opened under the supervision of CCTV cameras to ensure that no mistake is made. He suggested that flying squads, sitting squads, should be formed and monitored and appropriate measures should be taken so that all students write the exams in a peaceful environment.

“Light Will Return to Manthani Through Democratic Struggle” – Former MLA Putta Madhukar.““



Ps Ashokan"Indian Chronicle"Manthani May,16""Former Manthani MLA Putta Madhukar has declared that the time has come to restore democracy in the constituency and end the long-standing darkness. Launching the Democratic Struggle Movement on the occasion of his birthday in Rompikunta village, Kamanpur Mandal, on Thursday, he made a powerful call to action."The event

began with a blood donation camp, prayers at the temple, cake-cutting, and the unveiling of the logo of the democratic movement. Speaking to the people, Madhukar said, "This struggle begins from Rompikunta, and it will go on until democracy is reestablished in Manthani."He recalled that even in 2009, when he was relatively unknown, he secured over 52,000 votes as an MLA candidate. He began his journey in 2007 with the aim of ending the oppressive regime in the region. "Despite facing restrictions and hardships, many people walked with me. It was clear then – without understanding the pulse of the people, democracy cannot move forward," he said."Rompikunta, he noted, was once a mandal headquarters and is well-connected to Karimnagar, Peddapalli, and the national highway. "The village is home to educated and conscious citizens.

This is where political awareness must take root," he asserted."Madhukar questioned the public: "What has been done in 40 years after voting for a single family again and again? If even Rompikunta hasn't seen progress, how can we expect justice for poor SC, ST, BC, and upper-caste families living far away?" He urged people to think before voting. "Blind voting is dangerous. They come with cash, buy votes, win, and then forget the people," he alleged."Even after 16 months, he said, not even 16 paise worth of development has been done in Rompikunta. "Have they provided a single government job to any educated youth here?" he asked."He accused the ruling party of filing false cases against him and other leaders for questioning the unfulfilled promises made in their election manifesto. "They claim to uphold democracy but try to crush leaders like me who were elected by the people," he said."He revealed that cases and rowdy sheets were filed in multiple police stations—Mutharam, Ramagiri, Manthani, and Kamanpur—without valid reasons. "I challenge them to point out what wrongdoing I've done. During my tenure, not a single protester was jailed," he said."Madhukar alleged that postings in Godavarikhan i ACP office are now being given in exchange for bundles of cash, and police stations

District level review meeting of Panchayat Raj Department, Rural Development Departments.

"Mulugu, Mahipal, Indian Chronicle: District Collector Divakara TS held a district level review meeting on the development programs in the district at the Collector's Conference Hall in Mulugu district headquarters along with Additional Collector Sampath Rao and District Panchayat Officer Devaraju. Speaking on the occasion, Collector Divakara TS directed the officials to select the beneficiaries eligible for government welfare schemes under the Rajiv Yuva Vikasam Scheme through SC, ST, BC and Minority Corporations by obtaining consent from banks, and to examine the beneficiaries of Indiramma Illu at the field level and submit a comprehensive report. Similarly, sanitation should be improved in every Gram Panchayat in Mulugu district, and steps should be taken to ensure that there is no garbage accumulation anywhere and that the sewers are not dirty. He said that cleanliness should be maintained by spraying bleach regularly in the villages and awareness should be created among the villagers. He said that social cesspools should be dug in the limits of every village panchayat. He said that a report should be submitted about pensions to eligible widows at the field level in the village panchayats. He said that sanitation workers should have insurance in the village panchayats and health camps should be organized on the second of June. He said that appropriate measures should be taken to prevent drinking water problems in the village panchayats. He said that the number of laborers working under the employment guarantee scheme should be increased and more people should



be involved in the work. He said that the concerned officials should always monitor the work being done under this employment guarantee scheme. MPDOs, MPOs, secretaries, bankers and other concerned officials of the district participated in this meeting.

Nampally Court Exonerates Congress Leaders in Politically Motivated Kaleshwaram Protest Case.“



"PS Ashokan"Indian Chronicle"Manthani May,17""Hyderabad, Telangana:"In a resounding affirmation of judicial integrity, the Nampally Court has annulled the criminal charges wrongfully imposed on Congress leaders during the Kaleshwaram Project protests. These charges, rooted in events dating back to 2017, were widely condemned as politically driven and vindictive in nature."The incident in question occurred at an environmental public hearing held at Raghavapur Reddy Function Hall in Peddapalli district. During the hearing, Congress leaders stood alongside farmers and local citizens, demanding equitable compensation for those adversely affected by the massive infrastructure project. In response, the then-TRS-led state government allegedly orchestrated the registration of fabricated cases at Basanthnagar Police Station against 12 protestors."Following extensive legal proceedings, the Nampally Court dismissed the charges in their entirety, declaring the cases to be baseless and devoid of merit."Reacting to the verdict, Sri Duddilla Sridhar Babu, Minister for IT, Industries, and Legislative Affairs,

remarked:"This judgment is a decisive vindication of our democratic values and reaffirms the sanctity of the Indian judiciary. The former regime attempted to criminalize dissent and intimidate those who stood up for justice. Today, truth has prevailed."The Minister emphasized that the accused were targeted not for any wrongdoing, but for championing the cause of dispossessed farmers. He further asserted that Telangana is now governed by a regime that upholds democratic principles and constitutional accountability."Among those present at the court were Government Legal Advisor Harkala Venugopal, District Library Corporation Chairman Annayya Goud, TG-ERC Advisor Shashibhushan Kache, Single Window Chairman Kotha Srinivas, and Congress leaders including Tirupati Yadav, Choppadi Sadanandam, Inumula Satish, Uppatla Srinivas, Erla Komrayya, Polu Shiva, Seggam Rajesh, and Pothar Venu Kranti Kumar.

Allegations of Corruption “and Misuse of Funds in Gopalapur Gram Panchayat



"PS Ashoka"Indian Chronicle"Manthani May,17""Chandu Rajamallu, the former MPTC and ex-Sarpanch of Gopalapur village, lodged a formal complaint on 23rd December 2023, alleging large-scale irregularities, corruption, and misappropriation of Panchayat funds in the Gopalapur Gram Panchayat."Despite the seriousness of the complaint, the District Panchayat Officer (DPO), Peddapalli, failed to take timely action, causing nearly a year's delay. Eventually, a formal inquiry was scheduled through Notice No. DLP/MNT/23/2024, and a hearing was conducted on 3rd December 2024 (Tuesday) at 12:30 PM by the Divisional Panchayat Officer, Manthani."

Milch Cow Electrocuted in Nagepalli Village.“

"Ps Ashokan"Indian Chronicle"Manthani May,17""Manthani: A tragic incident occurred on Friday in Nagepalli village of Manthani mandal, where a milch cow was electrocuted. The cow, belonging to a local farmer named Bomma Srinivas, came into contact with an earth wire near the SS-29 transformer and died instantly due to the electric shock. The estimated value of the cow is around ₹70,000. The farmer has urged the electricity department to take responsibility and provide compensation for the loss.



“Where is Indiramma Atmeeya Bharosa?” — Budida Ganesh Slams Government Inaction



"PS Ashokan"Indian Chronicle"Manthani May,17""A sharp critique was leveled against the state government by Budida Ganesh, District Secretary of the Agricultural Workers' Union, during a meeting held at an MGNREGS (National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme) worksite in Potharam village on Friday. Addressing a gathering of daily-wage laborers, Ganesh questioned the prolonged delay in disbursing funds under the Indiramma Atmeeya Bharosa scheme."He recalled that the government had organized gram sabhas with much fanfare, promising ₹12,000 annually to landless and economically disadvantaged laborers. "Festive announcements were made, but in reality, not a single laborer in this village has received even a rupee. How long must the poor wait?" Ganesh asked, holding the administration accountable for its unfulfilled commitments."Highlighting further neglect, Ganesh noted that wage payments under the employment guarantee scheme have been stalled for months. "Even the meagre wages promised under MGNREGS are stuck in bureaucratic limbo. Workers are struggling to survive without timely compensation," he added."He urged all rural laborers to actively participate in a mandal-level protest scheduled for the 20th of this month, aiming to press the government for immediate resolution of wage delays and implementation of welfare schemes."Senior Mate Arla Sadanand, along with numerous laborers, participated in the meeting.

Nagara Sankirtana continued in grandeur“

— Organized under the auspices of Hanuman Bhakta Mandali"Mulugu Representative,



Mahipal, Indian Chronicle: Under the auspices of Hanuman Bhakta Mandali, the Nagara Sankirtana program was organized grandly on Saturday from the premises of Sri Ramalaya in Mulugu district center with the Swamis praising Hanuman Sankirtanas, reciting Chalisas, and singing spiritual devotional songs and dances. Earlier, an abhishekam was performed for Hanuman Swami in the temple. Members of Hanuman Bhakta Mandali and many Hindu relatives participated voluntarily with great interest in the Nagara Sankirtana program that was held for 4 hours from 7:35 am to 11:30 am. The Nagara Sankirtana program continued in the village by chanting "Shri Rama Jaya Rama Jaya Rama, Sri Hanuma Jai Hanuma Jaya Hanuma" through the streets of the village, and the streets were filled with devotional songs. Women welcomed the Nagara Sankirtan with Mangala Aarti and poured water. On this occasion, the Swamis performed special pujas so that all the people would be happy. Speaking, the members of the Hanuman Bhakta Mandali requested the donors who contributed in various ways to the Nagara Sankirtan to receive the blessings of the Lord and their families. The program was attended by Swamis Immadi Ramesh Ramesh Guru Swami, Peraboya Sridhar Guru Swami, Thumma Ramakrishna Guru Swami, Konupula Kumar Guru Swami, Avula Prashanth Reddy, Banala Rajkumar, Kondi Mahipal, Akula Raju, Bathula Surender, Nagaraju, Raju, Satish, Vemulapalli Raju, Tirupati, Rambabu, Ramesh Kodi, Ramachari Swami, Boiri Manohar, Ojala Kumar, along with Hanuman Maladharana Swamis, Ramalaya Committee members, devotees and Hindu relatives. Later, a food distribution program was organized for Hanuman Swami and his devotees in the Ram Temple premises.

Protests by artists, beyond political



GNS News Agency, May 17

Does art necessarily need to be overtly political to challenge the establishment? Can resistance be wielded by rejecting rigid ideologies or attempting to assert individuality?The exhibition "Intertwined: Revisitation of the Indian Art Narrative" at Progressive Art Gallery in Dubai attempts to ask these questions through the works of some of India's most significant artists. "Art's relevance lies not in the adherence to any ideology, but in its potential to dare, to question, and to unearth the unseen truths of its time," states curator Wendy Amanda Coutinho.On the walls in the gallery are works of India's most significant modernists, from founders of the formidable Progressive Artists' Group — MF Husain, SH Raza, FN Souza, KH Ara, HA Gade and SK Bakre to artists KG Subramanyan, VS Gaitonde, Jehangir Sabavala, Bhupen Khakhar and J Swaminathan. "The exhibition assembles an ensemble of artists whose legacies are intricately connected to the currents of protest — political and personal — that defied and defined their time. These interconnections reexamine the individual artistic

journeys that shaped collective movements and dialogues, spanning generations, challenging and questioning the status quo," notes Coutinho.Jehangir Sabavala, Mirage, 1966, Oil on canvas, 41 x 33 inches Jehangir Sabavala, Mirage, 1966, Oil on canvas, 41 x 33 inches

Primarily selected from the gallery collection, the display includes works that signify transitions in artistic practices. Among others is SH Raza's 1956 Le Village, painted in gestural brushstrokes to depict his early impressions of European village-scapes years after he moved to Paris in 1951, as well as his 1990 canvas Genesis, where his trademark bindu occupies the centre.If Jehangir Sabavala's 1966 Mirage has two shrouded figures seated in an arid desert, Ram Kumar is represented by an abstract landscape in an untitled 1992 canvas. J Swaminathan's 1971 oil on canvas comes from the period when he was embarking on a new pictorial language of conceptual landscapes. Sohan Quadri's meditative abstract comes from his dot series, and Sakti Burman has a playful canvas Musicians Playing for Krishna.Arпита Singh — whose first solo institutional exhibition outside India is currently on at the prestigious Serpentine North Gallery in London — is represented by a 1974 ink and watercolour on paper.Husain — the maverick for whom Dubai was also home for a brief period in his latter years — is represented, among others, by his trademark horses in Murano glass. "The artists featured in the exhibition have not only redefined creative boundaries but have also placed India on the global artistic map with their bold visions and timeless works. Through this exhibition, we celebrate their individuality and the profound impact they've had on art and culture, not only back home, but worldwide," notes Harshvardhan Singh, Director of Progressive Art Gallery — incidentally, named by Husain.

Ferozepur drone attack victim succumbs to injuries, husband battles for life at Ludhiana Hospital

GNS News Agency, May 17

Sukhwinder Kaur, a resident of Khai Feme Ki village, was injured at around 9.30 pm on May 8 when the drone fell on the house, and the area was under blackout. (AP photo)Sukhwinder Kaur, a resident of Khai Feme Ki village, was injured at around 9.30 pm on May 8 when the drone fell on the house, and the area was under blackout.

A 50-year-old resident of a border village in Punjab's Ferozepur district, who had sustained 100 per cent burn injuries in a suspected drone attack from across the Pakistan border on the evening of May 9, succumbed to her injuries in Ludhiana's Dayanand Medical College and Hospital (DMCH) early Tuesday.Sukhwinder Kaur, a resident of Khai Feme Ki village, was injured at around 9.30 pm on May 8 when the drone fell on the house, and the area was under blackout. The fuel tank of a car parked in the verandah caught fire, and caused burn injuries to the family members sitting at the spot."She died during the intervening night of Monday and Tuesday at DMCH. Her body will be brought to the village in the afternoon," said Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) leader Anumeet Heera Sodhi from Ferozepur."It is a matter of shame that the chief minister had no time to see the victims in the hospital. We are standing with the family,"



Sodhi added.Kaur's husband, 55-year-old Lakhwinder Singh, who suffered 72 per cent burn injuries, is still undergoing critical treatment at DMCH. Their son, Jaswant Singh alias Monu, 24, sustained a minor injury on his leg due to a sharp-edged object following the blast. He is being treated at Baghi Hospital in Ferozepur.The Ferozepur police said the car's light was on, due to which this incident might have happened.On May 9 evening, several drones were spotted in the Ferozepur cantonment and nearby areas amid the India-Pakistan tension following Operation Sindoor.

Poor sanitation: Amritsar municipal commissioner gets show-cause notice

GNS News Agency, May 17

The Punjab government on Monday issued a show-cause notice to the Amritsar Municipal Commissioner over complaints of poor sanitation across the city.IAS Tejveer Singh, additional chief secretary of the Department of Local Government, released the formal communication, directing urgent remedial action.

Referring to extensive complaints regarding garbage accumulation and unhygienic conditions in various areas of Amritsar for the past few months, the letter asked the Commissioner to provide an explanation and ensure immediate on-ground action by Tuesday."You are requested to ensure all areas of the city are cleaned, and proper sanitation is restored urgently," the letter read, adding a report must be submitted within 24 hours.In the letter, senior officials from the Amritsar Municipal Corporation, including health and sanitation departments, were directed to coordinate on-ground cleanliness operations and submit a compliance report immediately.On this, Punjab Local Government Minister Dr Ravjot Singh said: "I have received multiple complaints from citizens and the media regarding clean-



liness in Amritsar. This is non-negotiable. Taking the matter seriously, a show-cause notice has been issued to the Amritsar Municipal Commissioner, with a directive to respond within 24 hours."The city needs comprehensive cleaning to prevent ailments such as malaria and dengue, among others, the cabinet minister said, adding that the Chief Minister Bhagwant Singh Mann-led government is committed to providing robust and efficient administration to the people of Punjab, and implement this vision with strict adherence.

Chandigarh Police arrests BKI operative days after nabbing Passia aides



GNS News Agency, May 17

Following the arrest of two alleged aides of wanted gangster-turned-terrorist Harpreet Singh, alias Happy Passia, the Crime Branch of Chandigarh Police, in another breakthrough, has claimed to have arrested an operative of the terror group Babbar Khalsa International (BKI).According to the police, the accused, identified as Harwant Singh alias Harry, was involved in anti-national activities and firing cases on the directions of Manu Agwan and Passia in Punjab.Harwant Singh, a resident of Tehsil Ajnala District Amritsar, Punjab, is an active member of Passia-Harwinder Singh Rinda's BKI, the police said. He recruited Sumandeep Singh and Jobanjit Singh, alias Billa, for the Passia group, who have already been arrested in this case.

Harwant had to receive a consignment of weapons in Punjab on directions from Agwan, but the consignment was recovered by Punjab Police before they could get their hands on it.The weapons and ammunition were arranged by Harwant to commit the crime, the police said. For such tasks they received money from Agwan, Passia and Gopi

Nawasaria.They all are involved in anti-national activity with Rinda, police added.The police said on May 11, 2025, with the technical assistance, manual inputs, and after the identification of accused Billa, one of the close aides of Passia, arrested Harwant from Daria, Chandigarh.Faced with the accused's hostile actions, a team responded decisively, compelling him to surrender and ensuring the safety of all involved and recovered one pistol along with three live cartridges, police said.Accused Harwant was produced before a court to obtain his custody to know the chain of other associates. Further investigation is underway.

IPL to resume from May 17

GNS News Agency, May 17

Hyderabad: The Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) announced the resumption of the IPL 2025 from May 17 after extensive consultations with government and the security agencies, and with all the key stakeholders, the Board has decided to proceed with the remainder of the season.

Venues of the play-off matches will be announced at a later stage.A total of 17 matches will be played across six venues, starting May 17 and culminating in the final on June 3, 2025.The revised schedule includes two double-headers, which will be played on two Sundays.Interestingly, Hyderabad doesn't figure in the revised list for league matches' venues.The playoffs are scheduled as follows: Qualifier 1 — May 29;

F&CC proposes Rs 200-crore plan to save Mohali from monsoon flooding



GNS News Agency, May 17

In a major move to protect several flood-prone areas of Mohali such as Phase 3B2, Phase 4, Phase 5, Sector 70-71, Phase 7, and Phase 11 from rainwater damage during the monsoon, the Mohali Municipal Corporation has formulated a Rs 200-crore project.This initiative aims to provide a permanent drainage solution by channeling rainwater into the Patiala Ki Rao choe.The proposal is backed by a thorough survey and a technically sound drainage model.Speaking to The Indian Express, Mayor Amarjit Singh Jeeti Sidhu said, "Mohali Municipal Corporation does not have the required funds. A letter has been sent to the government requesting financial assistance. As soon as funds

are received, the project will be initiated to provide lasting relief to residents from monsoon-related losses."In a Finance and Contract Committee meeting held Monday, estimates worth Rs 12 crore for new works were approved and work orders worth Rs 13 crore were issued.These include vital civic projects related to sewerage, footpaths, and roads.Present at the meeting were Senior Deputy Mayor Amrik Singh Somal, Deputy Mayor Kuljit Singh Bedi, committee members Jasvir Singh Manku and Anuradha Anand, Chief Engineer Naresh Batta, and other senior officials.Highlighting key decisions, the mayor said, "To ensure proper rainwater drainage, the city has been divided into four zones for the desilting of clogged drainage pipes. The tendering process is underway, and large-scale cleaning will begin soon."He added, "In addition, in coordination with the Soil Conservation Department, tall reed grass along the N-choe (seasonal stream) passing through Mohali will be cleared starting next week."On urban mobility, he said, "Mohali's first cycle track has been a major success. Our goal is to connect all residential areas to marketplaces through dedicated cycle tracks. This will not only help reduce parking issues but also promote healthier lifestyles."Emphasising transparency and fairness, Sidhu said, "Development work is being carried out in every ward based on need — without any discrimination."He stressed that officials have been instructed to maintain the highest quality standards and regularly review pending projects.

How a city-based company is removing needles from injections

GNS News Agency, May 17

When vaccine hesitancy was at an uncomfortable high in 2021, a study in the UK found a possible reason — a quarter of adults across age, gender, ethnicity, and income admitted to being afraid of injections. For Sarvesh Mutha, Ankur Naik, Scott McFarland, and Mark Timm, who had been working in the healthcare space, needle phobia was an observed reality for years before they decided to address this pain point by setting up a company in Pune, IntegriMedical, in 2020.

"All of us had experienced the challenge of needle phobia, with ourselves, our children or within our families. Studies have shown that almost two in three children and 20 to 30 per cent of adults, globally, have a lot of needle phobia and, for that reason, they were even missing their vaccinations and treatments in a lot of cases," says Mutha, Managing Director, IntegriMedical.The more the founders started to think about it, the more worrying details came to the fore. Needle phobia wasn't just a matter of patient discomfort, but involved additional issues, such as needle stick injuries, which is emotionally traumatic for a caregiver or a healthcare professional, the threat of cross-contamination and logistical complexities of disposing of needles."There were so many issues that indicated a challenge in the systematic flow in the drug delivery system that we thought it would be a great idea to come up with a needle-free injection that can be safe and eliminate the fear of needle phobia," says Mutha.

It took four years of research and development before IntegriMedical developed a needle-free injection system (N-FIS), which "uses a high-pressure, spring-driven stainless-steel piston, dispensing medication uniformly in a consistent, predictable and spray-like pattern".Upon injecting, a jet stream is produced which penetrates the skin, delivering the drug to a specific depth without the need for a needle. This process occurs in under 1/10th of a second, making N-FIS both efficient and almost painless. Unlike traditional syringes, which can cause medication pooling, the N-FIS ensures efficient drug delivery, enabling broad dispersion and effective absorption. Key parameters, such as pressure and orifice size, are carefully calibrated to achieve accurate drug delivery at the desired depth and dosage, making it a safe and efficient alternative to traditional needle injections," says Mutha.The needle-free injection has received approvals not only in India but also in Europe. It launched a pilot, largely in India, in the paediatric space last year, and this month, the device is being introduced in the gynaecological space. More than 50,000 children have already been administered injections using IntegriMedical's innovation, and they are spreading into private clinics and corporate hospitals, among others.

Multiple sources predict that the needle-free injection market is growing worldwide. According to business consulting firm Delveinsight, the needle-free injection systems



market was valued at \$12.49 billion in 2023, growing at a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 14.16 per cent during the forecast period from 2024 to 2030 to reach \$27.65 billion by 2030."The needle-free injection market is poised for substantial growth, driven by a confluence of critical factors. The increasing incidence of chronic diseases such as diabetes, rheumatoid arthritis, and chronic pain necessitates frequent and often lifelong drug administration, making less invasive, more comfortable delivery methods highly desirable for improving patient adherence and quality of life," says Delveinsight.IntegriMedical operates on a B2B model, ie a direct-to-doctor approach. The business model focuses on doctors, clinics, hospitals, and vaccination centres, who, in turn, use N-FIS to treat patients. "This approach allows us to ensure that the end-user experience is guided by trusted medical professionals, leading to higher adoption rates and improved patient compliance," says Mutha.

He adds that adoption is increasing almost two to three times month over month. "More than 1,000 doctors have adopted the injection across Tier 1, Tier 2 and metro cities. "We are also making significant partnerships in Europe and are in talks with companies in South America as well," says Mutha.Last year, Pune-based Serum Institute of India, which is the largest vaccine maker in the world, bought a 20 per cent stake in IntegriMedical, giving the company an extra fillip. The company received another boost when Hungary's Heim Pál National Pediatric Institute, one of Europe's largest paediatric institutes, decided to use N-FIS to vaccinate all the haematology and oncology patients."By the end of this financial year or the next financial year, we see ourselves developing or growing in various aspects. One, we would certainly be more spread in the gynaecology as well as paediatric space. Right now, we are predominantly selling in India and Europe. We see ourselves already working on the regulatory approvals for the Middle East, Australia, Canada, Brazil, among others and moving into these countries," says Mutha.

Punjab unearths Rs 1,549-cr billing scam, Ludhiana leads with Rs 900 cr fake invoices

GNS News Agency, May 17

PunjabTaking a firm stance against opposition parties, Cheema criticised the Congress, the BJP, and the Akali Dal for their unfounded claims against the government's enforcement activities.Punjab Finance, Planning, Excise and Taxation Minister Harpal Singh Cheema announced on Monday that the investigative wings of the state's Taxation Department detected transactions worth Rs 1,549 crore involving bogus billing or paper transactions and successfully blocked fraudulent Input Tax Credit (ITC) claims amounting to Rs 108.79 crore in the current fiscal.Addressing a press conference at Punjab Bhawan here, Cheema provided details on the enforcement actions undertaken by the state Taxation Department. "The department blocked an ITC worth Rs 21 crore by exposing fake invoices of Rs 900 crore in gold transactions in Ludhiana. Additionally, ITC worth Rs 12 crore was blocked after detecting fraudulent invoices amounting to Rs 226 crore in coal transactions across Mohali, Kharar and Kotkapura. Further enforcement actions led to the blocking of ITC worth Rs 75.79 crore by uncovering bogus transactions totalling Rs 423 crore in Ludhiana and Mandi Gobindgarh. In another major seizure, authorities intercepted a vehicle travelling from Ranchi to Ludhiana carrying 2 kg of gold without an invoice, and the investigation into this case is currently ongoing," he divulged.Emphasising the significance of these enforcement actions, the minister highlighted the landmark statewide operation conducted on May 19."As part of the operation, 195 GST-registered firms, including 156 centrally registered firms and 39 state-registered firms, were physically verified, revealing fraudulent paper transactions amounting to Rs 423 crore and resulting in the blocking of ITC worth Rs 75.79 crore. A majority of the implicated firms were located in Ludhiana (100 firms) and Mandi Gobindgarh (72 firms)."Cheema said the department made notable ar-



rests, including a high-profile case where an individual was apprehended for masterminding a racket involving fake invoicing and fraudulent ITC claims worth Rs 29.50 crore. The firm in question had made inward supplies of Rs 163 crore in 2023-24 and 2024-25 from over 60 bogus and cancelled firms, he said.The minister owed this success in carrying out these enforcement drives to the 15 modules developed under an agreement with IIT, Hyderabad, along with crucial inputs from the 'Bill Liyao Inaam Pao' scheme.Cheema announced that seven more such modules would be activated soon. "So far, 4,880 consumers have collectively won Rs 2,89,15,295 by uploading their purchase bills on the 'Mera Bill' app. Meanwhile, discrepancies found in submitted bills under the GST Acts led to the imposition of penalties totalling Rs 9,07,06,102 and the successful recovery of Rs 7,20,92,230, he said.On GST collections, the minister said the AAP-led Punjab government collected Rs 62,733 crore in three years compared to Rs 63,042 crore collected by the Congress-led state government over five years.He said that while the AAP government fostered trade growth and implemented stringent checks against tax evaders, previous administrations focused solely on amassing wealth for themselves.

14 dead after consuming spurious liquor in Amritsar villages



GNS News Agency, May 17

Fourteen people have died after allegedly consuming spurious liquor in five villages in Punjab’s Amritsar district, officials said on Tuesday, adding that the deaths were reported from Monday night. “Fourteen deaths have been confirmed and six people are hospitalised,” Maninder Singh, Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP), Amritsar Rural, confirmed, adding that the deaths were reported in Therwal, Marri, Patalpuri, Talwandi, and Bhangali villages in Amritsar. All five villages fall under the Majithia Assembly constituency.

The police said that the alleged mastermind of the racket, Prabhjeet Singh, has been arrested along with four others. The police identified the co-accused as Prabhjeet’s brother Kulbir Singh alias Jaggu and Sahib Singh alias Sarai from Mardi Kalan, and Gurjant Singh and Ninder Kaur from Thirenwal. “We received information around 9.30 pm last night that people have started dying after consuming spurious liquor. We took action immediately and rounded up four

people. We arrested the main supplier Prabhjeet. We interrogated him and found out about the kingpin supplier, Sahib Singh. We have rounded him up as well,” SSP Singh said. Singh added that the police are investigating the companies that supplied the alleged spurious liquor. “We have been given strict instructions from the Punjab government that strict action must be taken against suppliers of spurious liquor. Raids are underway...manufacturers will be rounded up soon,” he said. “We are going door to door to find out more people who have consumed this to avoid further casualties and save people,” Singh added.

The police identified 12 of the deceased as Major Singh alias Modu, Parmjeet Singh alias Pamma, Sarabjeet Singh alias Shabba, Tasveer Singh alias Sikandar Singh, Joginder Singh alias Manna, Karnail Singh alias Mahant, Jeeta alias Seeti, Balbir Singh, Ramandeep Singh, and Romanjeet Singh alias Romi, Romi, and Gajju. Two First Information Reports (FIRs) have been registered in the matter under Section 105 (culpable homicide not amounting to murder) of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita and Section 61A of the Punjab Excise Act. One of the FIRs has been registered at Kathunangal police station, and Arun alias Kala has been arrested, the police said. Sakshi Sawhney, Deputy Commissioner, Amritsar, said they received reports about the “unfortunate tragedy” on Monday night. “We rushed our medical teams. They are still going door-to-door. Whether people have symptoms or not, we are taking them to the hospital. The government is extending all help possible. We are ensuring that the death toll does not increase. We have arrested the suppliers, and further investigation is underway,” Sawhney said.

Gurgaon seeks to recruit 6,000 civil defence volunteers

GNS News Agency, May 17

Gurgaon Deputy Commissioner Ajay Kumar on Monday appealed to the residents to enroll as civil defence volunteers, with a target of increasing the number of personnel from the current 350 to more than 6,000. “The district administration is confident of at least 6,000 new enrollments... The volunteers will be taught firefighting and survival skills,” Civil Defence Chief Warden Mohit Sharma told The Indian Express.

Asked why there is a need to recruit more such volunteers at a time when India and Pakistan have come to an understanding to stop military activities, Sharma said, “They don’t need to be enrolled only during war or extreme emergency situations... The district administration has to take care of other tasks to prepare for potential emergencies. These volunteers would help strengthen our preparedness for any exigency we may face as a city.” Kumar, in his appeal, highlighted the importance of collective responsibility towards supporting disaster management, public awareness campaigns, and community welfare initiatives. He said that a programme will be held at 8 am on Wednesday at Tau Devi Lal Stadium to train aspiring civil defence volun-



teers who register till then. “Get trained, stay prepared, and serve when needed,” he added. The district administration has issued an online form to be filled out by those interested in enrolling as civil defence volunteers. One has to be above the age of 16 to apply for the same. While applying, aspirants have to specify their preferred area of duty, such as first aid, traffic management, awareness campaigns, rescue operations, crowd control, administrative support, and helping the elderly.

Come July, Delhi University’s undergrad students will enter their 4th year. Here’s what they can expect



The Academic Council last week approved the curriculum for the seventh and eighth semesters, effectively setting the stage for the complete implementation of the Four-Year Undergraduate Programme (FYUP). Colleges, however, are anxious about the strain it will put on teachers as well as infrastructure

GNS News Agency, May 17

For the first time since the Delhi University (DU) adopted the National Education Policy (NEP), undergraduate students will formally step into a fourth academic year in July. The Academic Council last week approved the curriculum for the seventh and eighth semesters, effectively setting the stage for the complete implementation of the Four-Year Undergraduate Programme (FYUP). Speaking to The Indian Express, a senior DU official said, “With courses for the fourth year being cleared by the Academic Council on May 10, these will now be presented before the Executive Council on May 23. The university will tentatively begin the fourth year for students in July... Every student currently studying at DU has been enrolled under a four-year programme.”

The new curriculum offers students the option to choose between three specialisation tracks in their final year – Dissertation Writing, Academic Projects, and Entrepreneurship. The first track is designed for those pursuing academic research, the second focuses on applied research, while the third allows students to develop entrepreneurial ideas through market research, business planning, and financial modelling. Each of these components carries 12 credits, distributed across the two final semesters. To accommodate the expanded academic load, DU plans to implement the University Grants Commission’s “8 to 8” policy for class timings, under which classes can be scheduled between 8 am and 8 pm to maximise infrastructure use. “Colleges like Hansraj, Kirori Mal, Hindu, and others are coming up with new structures and preparing to accommodate more students. Since the fourth year is research-oriented, we have a majority of faculty who have completed their PhDs, and we believe more teachers will be encouraged to pursue PhDs as it comes with an incentive,” the official said.

A principal from a prominent North Campus college

Delhi HC postpones Madras Camp demolition to June 1, says need to relocate its residents before monsoon



GNS News Agency, May 1

The Delhi High Court has postponed the demolition of the unauthorised Madras Camp — a jhuggi-jhopdi (JJ) cluster located on the Barapullah drain bank near Jangpura — to June 1, nearly three weeks after the scheduled date of May 10. The authorities had issued a demolition notice to the squatters to remove encroachments and unauthorised construction on the Barapullah drain to de-clog it.

A bench of Justices Prathiba Singh and Manmeet Pritam Singh Arora was hearing a bunch of applications filed by Madras Camp dwellers, seeking the court’s intervention in their relocation to Narela. The court said that the relocation of Madras Camp residents is of “utmost urgency and significance, particularly in light of the approaching monsoon season”. It also maintained that while the “clearance of Barapullah drain was imperative to prevent water-logging during monsoon”, the “rehabilitation of Madras

Camp dwellers is also essential for the de-clogging of the Barapullah drain”. Of the 370 jhuggis in Madras Camp, residents of 189 have been found eligible for rehabilitation under the Delhi Slum and Jhuggi Jhopri Rehabilitation and Relocation Policy, 2015. Set to be rehabilitated to Narela, the residents had highlighted before the court that the flats where they would stay lacked basic amenities. While noting that the “demolition ought to be done in a systematic manner”, the HC directed the authorities — Delhi Development Authority (DDA), Municipal Corporation of Delhi, Delhi Urban Shelter Improve-ment Board (DUSIB), Public Works Department and Government of National Capital Territory of Delhi — to hold two camps between May 10 and 12. While the first camp “would be for handing over possession letters of the Narela flats”, the second “shall be for the purpose for sanctioning loans, if required”.... the representatives of banks shall be duly present at the camps so that if any of the dwellers wish to avail of loan facilities, it can be arranged without inconvenience,” the HC directed. The court also directed DDA and DUSIB to ensure that the amenities are made available at the flats in Narela by May 20. After May 20, the bench directed, the Madras Camp dwellers “shall start moving their belongings to the respective flats allotted to them in Narela” and if any of the residents choose not to take possession letters or avail of loan facilities, “no further opportunity shall be granted to them for seeking allotment of the flats at Narela or any rehabilitation camps”. The court has given the dwellers time between May 20 and 31 to shift out of Madras Camp, following which, demolition shall begin from June 1.

Tailor held in UP’s Bareilly for uploading ‘pro-Pak’ video on social media

GNS News Agency, May 17

A 22-year-old tailor was arrested in Bareilly district on Monday for allegedly uploading a video on social media in support of Pakistan, police said. The police said the post aimed at disturbing communal harmony and spreading hatred and animosity. A case was registered against Sajid under Sections 197 (imputations, assertions prejudicial to national integration) and 353 (statements conducing to public mischief) of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS) at the Deorania police station. Sajid’s mobile phone which contained anti-national and pro-Pakistan videos was seized, the police said, adding it will be sent for forensic examination. The matter came to light after some local residents objected to the content.

“Mohammad Sajid will be produced in court on Tuesday. On checking his phone, we found a lot of objectionable content,” said Deorania Station House Officer (SHO) Dinesh Kumar Sharma. Meanwhile, a video purportedly showing Sajid raising a ‘Pakistan Murdabad’ (down with Pakistan) slogan in police custody is circulating on social media.

Meanwhile, a 27-year-old man was arrested in Sambhal for allegedly sharing a video on his Facebook page



in which it was claimed that India’s fighter plane Rafale was shot down by Pakistani forces, police said. According to police, Jamaat Ali, was arrested after it was found that he had shared a video claiming that India’s Rafale fighter jet was shot down by Pakistan and its pilot taken captive. During investigation, it was found that Ali has also allegedly liked and shared several other videos in support of Pakistan on his Facebook account, police said, citing the FIR. Ali has been booked under Section 152 (acts endangering sovereignty, unity and integrity of India) of the BNS, police said.

EC begins verification of unrecognised parties

GNS News Agency, May 17

West Bengal Chief Electoral Officer has ordered verification of addresses of political parties that are registered with the Commission but are unrecognised, ahead of the 2026 Assembly elections. Sources in the Election Commission say there are eight recognised political parties and close to 70 registered, but unrecognised parties in the state. Parties like Amra Bangali, Paradise Party, Bahujan Mukti Party, All India Labour Party, Bhumi Putra Party, and Hindustan Shakti Sena are registered, but have not taken part in any election for a long time.

The sources said that the office of CEO Manoj Kumar Agarwal in a recent virtual meeting with the district election officers (DEOs) had asked them to carry out a field verification to ascertain the current status of such registered parties’. The CEO’s office has directed the DEOs to report if these parties have taken part in the last three elections and submitted any audit report of their expenditure. As per an official of the State Election Commission, political parties (recognised and unrecognised) have to submit audit reports over income and expenditure, but most of them have not.

According to an official of the State Election Commis-



sion, both recognised and unrecognised political parties have to submit audit reports regarding their income and expenditure, but most of them have not submitted the reports, raising questions such as whether these parties exist merely on paper. Either these unrecognised parties do not exist anymore or their office addresses have changed without the commission being informed of the new addresses, as communications sent to many of them have been returned without any reply, the official said.

‘Illegal’ Bangladeshi immigrant arrested for forging documents to obtain Indian IDs

GNS News Agency, May 17

The Detection of Crime Branch (DCB) of the Ahmedabad city police on Monday said it has booked and arrested a 30-year-old woman, an alleged illegal immigrant from Bangladesh who had “forged documents” for obtaining Indian IDs. In a statement on Monday, the DCB said it had received information that a woman, originally from Bangladesh, had obtained an Indian passport by submitting fake documents.

Based on the tip-off, a preliminary investigation was conducted, during which it was found that the Aadhaar card and other documents in possession of the woman that mentioned her as an Indian citizen had been forged by the said suspect, officials said. Officials carried out a probe after obtaining details of a form filled by the suspect to obtain an Indian passport. According to the DCB, the woman declared that she had been residing at the address mentioned in the form since her birth in 1994. However, when the crime branch officials went to the address to verify her claims, they allegedly found that the plotting of the society had been done only in 2009 and possession had been given to residents only in 2012. While conducting a technical analysis of the mobile number written in the passport form, it was found that the number submitted by the suspect was registered in someone else’s name.

Also, from 2017 to 2021, she had changed her addresses from places in Gujarat to ones in Maharashtra a total of six times. While verifying the email ID submitted in the application, officials found that it was activated for the first time in Pakistan. Besides, all of her social media ac-



Based on the tip-off, a preliminary investigation was conducted, during which it was found that the Aadhaar card and other documents in possession of the women that mentioned her as an Indian citizen had been forged by the said suspect, officials said.

counts were activated from Bangladesh. A case was subsequently registered against her. When the police raided her current residence, where she lives with her husband and child, they also found Bangladeshi currency and a birth certificate allegedly issued by the Uttar Pradesh government. She was placed under arrest and produced in the local court, which granted the DCB a four-day remand of the accused till May 16.

Trump starts Gulf visit seeking big economic deals



RIYADH, - U.S. President Donald Trump arrived in Saudi Arabia on Tuesday on a four-day visit to the wealthy Gulf region, focusing more on economic deals than pressing regional security matters ranging from war in Gaza to talks over Iran's nuclear program. With a who's who of powerful American business leaders in tow, Trump is visiting Riyadh, site of a Saudi-US Investment Forum, before going to Qatar on Wednesday and the United Arab Emirates on Thursday. He has not scheduled a stop in Israel, a decision that has raised questions about where Israel stands in Washington's priorities. The Reuters Tariff Watch newsletter is your daily guide to the latest global trade and tariff news. Sign up here.

"While energy remains a cornerstone of our relationship, the investments and business opportunities in the kingdom have expanded and multiplied many, many times over," Saudi Investment Minister Khalid al-Falih said as he opened the forum. "As a result ... when Saudis and Americans join forces very good things happen, more often than not great things happen when those joint ventures happen," he said before Trump's arrival.

Trump is hoping to secure trillions of dollars of investments from the Gulf oil producers. Saudi Arabia had pledged \$600 billion but Trump has said he wants \$1 trillion from the kingdom, one of Washington's most important allies. The Saudi-US investment forum began with a video showing soaring eagles and falcons and celebrating the long history between the United States and the kingdom. At the front of a palatial hall sat Larry Fink, the CEO of Blackrock, Stephen A. Schwartzman, CEO of Blackstone, Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent, and Saudi Finance Minister Mohammed Al Jadaan and Falih.

Speaking at a forum panel as Trump touched down in Riyadh, Fink said he had traveled to Saudi Arabia more

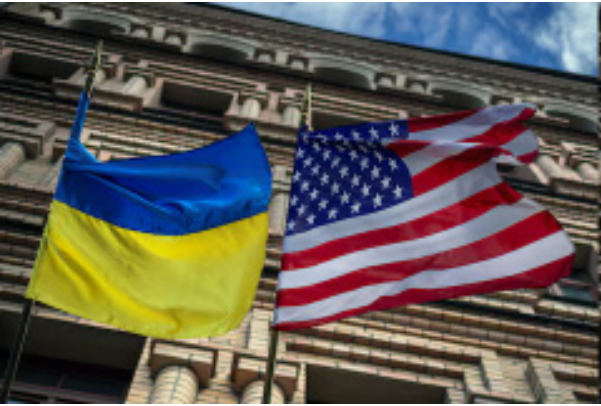
than 65 times over 20 years. He said the kingdom had been a follower when he first started visiting but was now "taking control" and broadening its economy out of its oil base. After landing, Trump punched the air when he caught sight of Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, also known as MbS, before shaking hands with the de facto leader. MbS has focused on weaning the kingdom's economy off hydrocarbon dependence in a major reform programme dubbed Vision 2030 that includes "Giga-projects" such as NEOM, a futuristic city the size of Belgium. Saudi Arabia and the U.S. have maintained strong ties for decades based on an iron-clad arrangement in which the kingdom delivers oil and the superpower provides security. Trump has also said he may travel on Thursday to Turkey for potential face-to-face talks between Vladimir Putin and Volodymyr Zelenskiy on Russia's war in Ukraine. An aide to Zelenskiy said the Ukrainian president would take part only if Putin does. The Russian leader has not said if he will attend, and has questioned Zelenskiy's legitimacy. Trump's second foreign trip since returning to the presidency - his first was to Rome for Pope Francis' funeral - comes at a time of geopolitical tension.

In addition to pressing for a settlement in Ukraine, his administration is pushing for a new aid mechanism for Gaza after 19 months of war and urging Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to agree a new ceasefire deal there. Israeli officials have put a brave face on Trump's decision to bypass Israel during his trip but there are growing doubts in Israel about its position in his priorities as frustration mounts in Washington over the failure to end the Gaza war. Over the weekend, U.S. and Iranian negotiators met in Oman to discuss a potential deal to curb Tehran's nuclear program. Trump has threatened military action against Iran if diplomacy fails. Iran's neighbours should retain neutrality as Trump visits the Gulf, Iran's Nournews quoted armed forces chief of staff Mohammad Bagheri as saying on Tuesday. Any aggression against Iran would lead to definitive retaliation, he added. Apart from the possible Turkey side trip, those matters are not the focus of Trump's Middle East swing as now scheduled. Trump is expected to offer Saudi Arabia an arms package worth more than \$100 billion, sources told Reuters. This could include a range of advanced weapons. Trump's Middle East envoy Steve Witkoff said last week he expected progress imminently on expanding the Abraham Accords, a set of deals brokered by Trump in his first term by which Arab states including the UAE, Bahrain and Morocco recognised Israel. But opposition by Netanyahu to a permanent stop to the war in Gaza or to the creation of a Palestinian state makes progress on similar talks with Riyadh unlikely, sources told .

Trump's offer to join Russia-Ukraine peace talks triggers flurry of diplomacy

MOSCOW/WASHINGTON, GNS News Agency, May 17, U.S. President Donald Trump's offer to join proposed Ukraine-Russia peace talks triggered a flurry of diplomacy as powers from Europe to the Middle East sought a possible path out of the deadliest conflict in Europe since World War Two. Russian President Vladimir Putin on Sunday proposed direct talks with Ukraine and, after Trump publicly told Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskiy to accept, Zelenskiy said he would but that Putin should attend in person. Then in a surprise on Monday, Trump - who is due to visit Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates and Qatar this week, offered to join the Ukraine-Russia talks in the Turkish city of Istanbul, which straddles the divide between Europe and Asia. "I've got so many meetings, but I was thinking about actually flying over there. There's a possibility of it, I guess, if I think things can happen, but we've got to get it done," Trump said before departing for his second foreign trip since his second term in the White House began in January.

"Don't underestimate Thursday in Turkey," Trump said. After Trump's offer, U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio discussed the "way forward for a ceasefire" in Ukraine with European counterparts, including the foreign ministers of Britain and France, and the EU's foreign policy chief. Ukrainian Foreign Minister Andrii Sybiha and his German and Polish counterparts were also on the call. Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov held talks with his Turkish counterpart Hakan Fidan. The Kremlin has repeatedly thanked China and Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates and Qatar for their help in mediating. Putin sent thousands of troops into Ukraine in February 2022, unleashing a war that has killed hundreds of thousands of soldiers and triggered the gravest confrontation between Russia and the West since the 1962 Cuban Missile Crisis. Reuters reported last year that Putin was open to discussing a ceasefire with Trump but that Moscow, ascendant in the war, ruled out making any major territorial concessions and insists Kyiv abandon ambitions to join NATO. After Trump told Zelenskiy to agree to Putin's offer of talks, the Ukrainian wartime leader said he would be willing to meet Putin in person in Istanbul, though the Kremlin has made no comment on whether or not Putin will travel himself. "We are committed to a serious search for ways of a long-term peaceful settlement," Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov told reporters on Monday. Before reporters could ask any more questions about the proposed talks, Peskov said: "That's all. I've said everything I could about this story." Putin and the Kremlin have repeatedly



mentioned the 2022 draft deal which Russia and Ukraine negotiated shortly after the Russian invasion started.

Under that draft deal, a copy of which Reuters has reviewed, Ukraine should agree to permanent neutrality in return for international security guarantees from the five permanent members of the U.N. Security Council: Britain, China, France, Russia and the United States. If Zelenskiy and Putin, who make no secret of their contempt for each other, were to meet on Thursday it would be their first face-to-face meeting since December 2019. Ukraine and its European allies told Russia that it would have to accept an unconditional 30-day ceasefire from Monday or face new sanctions, though the Kremlin said it would not be spoken to with ultimatums.

Russia's forces control just under a fifth of Ukraine, including all of Crimea, almost all of Luhansk, and more than 70% of Donetsk, Zaporizhzhia and Kherson regions, according to Russian estimates. It also controls a sliver of Kharkiv region. Russia is still advancing, though more slowly than in 2024, and both sides said fighting was taking place along the front, though some said the talks in Istanbul offered a potential chance to end the bloodshed. Konstantin Kosachev, chairman of the international affairs committee of the Federation Council, the upper house of Russia's parliament, told the Izvestia media outlet in remarks published on Tuesday that the talks between Moscow and Kyiv can move further than they did in the 2022. "If the Ukrainian delegation shows up at these talks with a mandate to abandon any ultimatums and look for common ground, I am sure that we could move forward even further than we did," Izvestia cited Kosachev as saying.

Pakistan says clashes with neighbour India killed more than 50

ISLAMABAD/NEW DELHI, GNS News Agency, May 17 Pakistan's army said on Tuesday that more than 50 people were killed in last week's military clashes with India which ended in a ceasefire agreed by the nuclear-armed neighbours, restoring peace to their border. The arch rivals fired missiles and drones targeting each other's military installations after India said it struck "terrorist infrastructure" sites in Pakistan and Pakistani Kashmir on Wednesday in retaliation for an attack on tourists. The Reuters Tariff Watch newsletter is your daily guide to the latest global trade and tariff news. Sign up here. Pakistan said the targets were all civilian. Its military said the dead in the attacks comprised 40 civilians and 11 of its armed forces.

India has said at least five military personnel and 16 civilians died. Both agreed to a ceasefire on Saturday, following diplomacy and pressure from the United States. The Indian military has said its bases are operational, despite minor damage. It was a "very special experience to be with those who epitomise courage, determination and fearlessness", Prime Minister Narendra Modi said on Tuesday, in comments posted on X accompanying photographs of his

visit to the Adampur air base. The base near the border in India's northern state of Punjab is a strategic location for its air force. On Monday, Modi warned Pakistan that New Delhi would again target "terrorist hideouts" across the border if there were new attacks on India and would not be deterred by what he called Islamabad's "nuclear blackmail". India blames Pakistan for an attack in Kashmir on April 22 targeting Hindu tourists that killed 26 men. Islamabad denies the accusations. Hindu-majority India and Muslim Pakistan both rule part of the Himalayan region of Kashmir, but claim it in full.

The neighbours have fought two of their three wars since independence in 1947 over the region and there have been several other limited flare-ups, including in 1999 and 2019. India has said the military operations chiefs of both nations spoke by telephone on Monday, reiterating their commitment to halt firing and consider steps to reduce troops on the border. Pakistan has not provided details of the call. Reporting by Asif Shahzad and Shivam Patel; Writing by Tanvi Mehta and Abinaya Vijayaraghavan; Editing by YP Rajesh and Clarence Fernandez

Freed Israeli-American hostage leaves Gaza, Israel says no ceasefire



GNS News Agency, May 17

CAIRO/JERUSALEM, May 12 (Reuters) - An Israeli-American hostage was released from 19 months of captivity in Gaza during a brief pause in fighting and reunited with his family, but Israeli strikes on the battered enclave soon resumed. Israel's military received Edan Alexander, 21, from the International Committee of the Red Cross, which facilitated his transfer from Palestinian militant group Hamas. The Reuters Tariff Watch newsletter is your daily guide to the latest global trade and tariff news. Sign up here. He was taken to an Israeli military facility and joined by his family. Video showed that his mother, Yael Alexander, cried as she hugged him, saying: "How strong you are. I love you so much, Edan. We were so worried." Alexander kissed and embraced his father, brother and sister as well. An Israeli Air Force helicopter then took Alexander and his family to a hospital where he was to receive treatment.

Alexander was the last living American held by Hamas and Israel's Channel 12 said his condition was "low", without citing a source. In photos provided by Israel, he looked pale but in good spirits. Fighting halted at midday in Gaza after Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said Israel would pause its operations to allow for the hostage release. Palestinian health officials reported Israeli tank shelling and an air attack after the hostage handover, and there was no deal on a wider truce or hostage releases as monitors warned of famine in the devastated enclave.

After Israeli fire resumed, authorities in Gaza said an air strike killed three people and wounded several others at a shelter housing displaced families in Khan Younis in the southern Gaza Strip. A woman was killed and several other people wounded when tank shells hit a school housing displaced families in the Tuffah neighborhood in the north of Gaza. Hamas said it freed Alexander as a goodwill gesture to U.S. President Donald Trump, who is visiting the region this week. "Edan Alexander, American hostage thought dead, to be released by Hamas. Great news!" Trump wrote on social media earlier on Monday. Netanyahu said Alexander's release came thanks to Israel's military pressure in Gaza and political pressure by Trump. In a photo

taken on the military helicopter and released by Israel, Alexander held a sign reading: "Thank you, president Trump."

Netanyahu has said there will be no ceasefire and that plans to intensify military action in Gaza continued. "Israel has not committed to a ceasefire of any kind," Netanyahu's office said. After growing up in New Jersey, Alexander, who has dual citizenship, moved to Israel and was serving in the Israeli army when he was captured in Hamas' 2023 attack. Social media video on Monday showed people dancing in the square of his hometown of Tenafly, New Jersey, after word of his release. The release, after four-way talks between Hamas, the United States, Egypt and Qatar, could open the way to freeing the remaining 58 hostages in the Gaza Strip, 19 months after Hamas' attack on Israel on October 7, 2023. Qatar and Egypt said Alexander's release was an encouraging step towards new truce talks. Israel will send a delegation to Qatar on Thursday to discuss a new proposal aimed at securing further hostage releases, Netanyahu's office said.

Before Alexander's release, Gaza health authorities said an Israeli strike killed at least 15 people sheltering at a school on Monday. Israel's military said it targeted Hamas fighters there who were preparing an attack. The Integrated Food Security Phase Classification, a global hunger monitor, reported on Monday that half a million people in the Gaza Strip face starvation and there is a critical risk of famine by September. 'BRING THEM ALL HOME' Trump is due to visit Gulf states on a trip that does not include Israel but special envoy Steve Witkoff, who helped arrange Alexander's release, was expected in Israel on Monday. Alexander's family thanked Trump and Witkoff, saying they hoped the release would hasten the freeing of the remaining hostages. "We urge the Israeli government and the negotiating teams: please don't stop," they said. Israel's government has drawn criticism over the deal to free Alexander, which laid bare the priority given to hostages able to rely on the support of a foreign government.

Einav Zangauker, whose son Matan is among 21 hostages still believed to be alive, said Netanyahu was choosing his political survival over ending the war. Addressing Trump in a statement she read with other hostage families, she said: "The Israeli people are behind you. End this war. Bring them all home". A ceasefire in late January halted fighting in Gaza for two months and allowed the exchange of 38 hostages for Palestinian prisoners and detainees in Israeli jails. Israel resumed its military campaign in March. It has since extended its control of the territory and blocked off aid, leaving its 2 million people increasingly short of food. Israeli forces invaded Gaza after a Hamas-led assault on Israel in October 2023 that killed 1,200 people and saw 251 taken hostage, according to Israeli tallies. Since then, over 52,000 Palestinians have been killed, Palestinian authorities say, and large swathes of the heavily built-up enclave have been laid to waste.

Australia's conservative Liberal party elect first woman leader after election loss

SYDNEY, GNS News Agency, May 17, Australia's conservative Liberal Party elected Sussan Ley, a former outback pilot with three finance degrees, as its first woman leader on Tuesday, after an election loss partly due to comparisons with U.S. President Donald Trump's policies. Prime Minister Anthony Albanese was sworn in for a second term on Tuesday after his Labor Party rode a voter backlash against global instability caused by Trump's policies to a come-from-behind victory in the May 3 national election. The Reuters Tariff Watch newsletter is your daily guide to the latest global trade and tariff news. Sign up here. The opposition conservative Liberal Party leader Peter Dutton, who had been labelled "DOGEy Dutton" by Labor after echoing Trump policies to cut thousands of public service jobs including diversity and inclusion roles, lost his seat. Ley said her appointment as the first female leader of the Liberal Party "sent a signal" to Australian women, although her agenda would be "much more than that", flagging the need for new policies on economic and tax reform. "We did let women down, there is no doubt about that, and it is true that the number of women supporting us is declining and I want to rule a line under that," she told a press conference in Canberra, reflecting on the conservative party's loss. The Liberal Party has lost city seats in Sydney and Melbourne to women who ran as independent candidates with policies supporting climate change and gender equality in the last two elections.

Ley said the Liberal Party needs to "meet modern Australia where they are". "Government is always formed in the sensible centre," she added. A former pilot who mustered livestock in Australia's vast outback and raised three children on a farm before graduating from university, Ley entered parliament in 2001. Deputy Leader of the Opposition Sussan Ley arrives at a Liberals party room meeting for a leadership ballot at Parliament House in Canberra, Australia May 13, 2025. AAP Image/Mick Tsikas via REUTERS Purchase Licensing Rights, opens new tab She acknowledged her mother, who she said was in end of life



care, as instilling in her the value of resilience. She also paid tribute to the "wisdom of shearers" she had listened to as a cook in the hut at the end of a hard day's work in the hot sun. She had become a strong person as a farmer's wife raising a family through years of drought, she said, and later gaining three finance degrees at university. The caravan Ley had lived in as a shearers' cook was later painted to become her Liberal Party campaign vehicle, she recalled. The Australian Electoral Commission is yet to finalise vote counting in several seats, although Labor said it is ahead in at least 94 seats out of the 150-seat House of Representatives. It was the largest Labor caucus since Australia was formed by the federation of six former British colonies in 1901, Albanese said. Albanese and his ministers were sworn in at a ceremony at Government House in Canberra, conducted by Governor-General Sam Mostyn. The key roles of treasurer, foreign affairs, defence and trade are unchanged. In new roles, Michelle Rowland was sworn in as attorney-general, Murray Watt as environment minister, and Tanya Plibersek as social services minister. Albanese will travel to Indonesia on Wednesday, and will attend the inauguration mass of Pope Leo XIV on Sunday in Rome, where he said he would also hold meetings with other leaders including European Union president Ursula von der Leyen to discuss trade.

How should Norway spend its cash? Solve global problems, says citizen panel

OSLO, - Norway's \$1.8 trillion wealth fund, the world's largest, should invest more money in sectors addressing global challenges such as climate change and health and accept it may get lower returns on these investments, a citizens' panel said. The initiative, a nationwide consultation on what the country should do with its wealth, was the brainchild of seven non-governmental organisations who wanted to bring into the public debate voices from society that are not usually heard. Make sense of the latest ESG trends affecting companies and governments with the Reuters Sustainable Switch newsletter. Sign up here.

The 56 Norwegians selected to represent the population - based on age, gender, place of residence, education and attitude towards climate change - met between January and May to create recommendations for lawmakers. They discussed how to spend the cash from the fund, which pools state oil and gas revenue and has a current value equivalent to each man, woman and child owning \$326,000. "A specific percentage of the oil fund should be set aside for sustainable investments where we accept higher risk and lower returns to promote social and economic development in developing countries," said the

panel's report, seen by Reuters. Other advice included having guidelines on how the fund should be spent in times of crises, such as pandemics and wars, and having new guidelines on how the fund should be used in the national budget. Currently up to 3% of the fund's value can be used in the budget without specifying what it should be spent on. The panel said it should be spent on "fundamental social structures" such as education, research and innovation, and not on "administrative expenses". The fund should also move faster to invest the 2% of its value earmarked for direct stakes in renewable projects abroad, like wind and solar farms. It has spent just 0.1% of its value on such investments. "The idea was that we were different people from different parts of the country. My experience is that we had all the same fundamental values," panellist Lill Synnøve Ludvigsen, a 17-year-old high school student, told Reuters in a phone interview from her home in Trondheim, Norway's third-largest city. The fund divests from companies deemed in breach of its ethical guidelines adopted by parliament for supplying fuel to Israeli settlements in the occupied West Bank, as well as from Mexico's Pemex for what it called an unacceptable risk that it is involved in corruption.

Pollachi sexual assault case and trial



The story so far: Six years ago, nine men from Pollachi, a picturesque rural town in Coimbatore where numerous movies have been filmed, were arrested for black-mailing, sexually assaulting, and videographing young girls and women between 2016 and 2018. The nine men, who have remained behind bars since their arrest, have been prosecuted for multiple offences, including criminal conspiracy, sexual harassment, rape, gang rape, and repeated rape on the same woman. The Mahila Court in Coimbatore found all nine accused guilty and sentenced them to life imprisonment for the remainder of their natural life. The court also ordered Tamil Nadu government pay a total compensation of 785 lakh to eight survivors of sexual assault.

What is the Pollachi sexual assault case?

On February 24, 2019, a college girl lodged a complaint with the Pollachi East police, alleging sexual abuse by four men in a moving car near Pollachi 12 days ago. The 19-year-old was the first survivor to speak up against the group of youngsters, who had allegedly been luring women and sexually assaulting them since 2016. The perpetrators filmed the sexual acts, which they later used for further sexual exploitation.

The police took up investigation and examined the mobile phones and laptops of the accused. What they saw in those devices was alarming. The officers had no doubt that the college girl's complaint was just the tip of the iceberg. The gadgets contained numerous video clips of the survivors — from students to married women — whom they had sexually assaulted at various locations. Most of these chilling crimes had taken place at the farmhouse of one of the accused K. Thirunavukkararu, at Chinnappalayam near Pollachi. Sensing the gravity of the case, on March 12, 2019, the State government directed the Crime Branch-CID to launch an investigation. Eventually, amid an outrage, he then Edappadi K. Palaniswami government transferred the case to the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI), and the agency took over the probe on April 25, 2019. Accused in the Pollachi sexual assault case at the Combined Court Complex in Coimbatore on April 28, 2025. Accused in the Pollachi sexual assault case at the Combined Court Com-

plex in Coimbatore on April 28, 2025. | Photo Credit: Special Arrangement

What did the agency find?

The central gency arraigned N. Sabarirajan, 32, aka Rishwanth, K. Thirunavukkarasu, 34, M. Sathish, 33, T. Vasanthakumar, 30, R. Mani, aka Manivannan, 32, P. Babu, 33, T. Haronimus Paul, 32, K. Arulanantham, 39, and M. Arunkumar as accused in the case. It found that Sabarirajan was the key perpetrator, who lured the girls and women, including the complainant. The first act of violation, as per the complainant, took place on February 12, 2019, in a car on Dharapuram Road. They also filmed the act, robbed her of a gold chain, and left her in a deserted place. The girl informed her family only after the accused demanded sexual favours from her, by threatening to leak the video. Numerous videos of sexual assault were found on the laptop of Sabarirajan and the mobile phone of Thirunavukkarasu. Using these, the police and the CBI identified the other accused and survivors. The case also stirred up a political controversy as Arulanantham had been the AIADMK Pollachi town students' wing secretary. He was expelled from the party a day after his arrest. Another youth, 'Bar' Nagaraj, who was involved in a case related to the assault on the brother of the college student, was a local secretary of Amma Peravai, an AIADMK-affiliated youth organisation. The Opposition parties had even sought to link a local AIADMK bigwig in the case.

Who were the survivors?

Investigations revealed the accused targeted young girls and women from middle class and lower socio-economic backgrounds. Though the accused are suspected to have sexually assaulted and exploited numerous women, only eight of them testified against them. The investigation faced a backlash when the then Coimbatore District Superintendent of Police R. Pandiarajan revealed the name of the complainant during a media briefing. It is believed some survivors chose to stay away from the investigation fearing their identities would be made public.

How was the trial conducted?

A special court room facility was created at the Combined Court Complex in Coimbatore for the trial of the case to protect the identities of the survivors, based on the direction of the Madras High Court. A chamber made of one-way glass at the court prevented others from seeing the survivors during the hearing and trial of the case. They were brought to the court with extreme care, while the accused were mostly produced through videoconferencing. Provisions of the Witness Protection Scheme, 2018, were strictly adhered to throughout the trial of the case that started on February 14, 2023. Names of the survivors were omitted from the chargesheet and other documents, and the court examined over 40 witnesses in the case.

Govt. data confirms massive undercount of COVID-19 pandemic deaths | Data



In 2021, an analysis of excess deaths — the increase in the death tally over expected numbers based on previous years (2015-2019) — shows that the number was nearly six times more than the reported COVID-19 death toll. This was the year when the delta variant of the SARS-COV-2 virus wreaked havoc across the country. Some States had a much higher multiple than the national average. For instance, the Gujarat government had officially reported only 5,812 COVID-19 deaths in 2021, but the excess deaths were 44 times this tally, the government data reveals. Similarly, the excess deaths in Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh were a multiple of 19.5 times more than the reported toll.

Chart 1 shows the total number of registered deaths in India over the years (in lakh). Over 1 crore registered deaths were recorded in 2021, a 27% increase compared to the previous year. The bump in 2021 is obvious on account of the pandemic. To estimate the multiple, we calculated excess deaths in 2021 using a three-step method. First, we analysed registered deaths in each State from 2015 to 2019 and extrapolated this trend to estimate expected deaths for 2020 and 2021. This gives a reasonable estimate of the expected number of deaths in these years, if not for an extraordinary event. Next, we compared these expected figures with the actual registered deaths revealed

by the newly released data. The difference between the two gave the number of excess deaths. Most of these excess deaths are likely attributable to COVID-19 — the only major disruptive event during those years. Moreover, pandemic-related restrictions had significantly reduced deaths from other causes, such as road accidents, making it unlikely that non-COVID-19 factors were behind the surge.

Chart 2 shows India's official COVID-19-related death count published by State governments in 2020 and 2021 compared to the excess deaths calculated based on the recently released reports. While the official COVID-19 death count in 2020 was about 1.5 lakh, about 3.8 lakh 'excess deaths' were recorded the same year. In 2021, while about 3.3 lakh COVID-19-related deaths were officially recorded, there were 21.5 lakh 'excess deaths' (6.5 times more). The Hindu had earlier reported on COVID-19 mortality, and had estimated an excess death multiple of 5.8 times in 11 States, based on the CRS data retrieved through RTI applications and official sources. This multiple was the highest among nations with the most recorded fatalities due to the virus.

Charts 3 and 4 show the top 10 States with the highest multiple and the possible undercount (excess deaths minus reported death totals) in absolute terms. An analysis of the State-wise data shows that in 2021, COVID-19 deaths could have been undercounted by a factor of 44 in Gujarat, the highest such undercount in the country. That is, there were over 2.5 lakh excess deaths in Gujarat in 2021, whereas the State's official COVID-19 death count for that year was 5,812. In Telangana, the multiple was 18. In Bihar, Andhra Pradesh, and Odisha, the multiple was over 13. While all over India, over 18.2 lakh deaths, most of them due to COVID-19, were possibly not counted, U.P. has the highest number of such deaths on account of a large population. U.P. could have possibly not counted over 2.6 lakh COVID-19-related deaths in 2021. While the State had 2.8 lakh excess deaths in 2021, U.P.'s official COVID-19 tally for that year was only 14,551 deaths. Gujarat, Maharashtra, and Tamil Nadu had undercounted over 2 lakh odd deaths in 2021, data shows.

What will be impact of India-U.K. trade deal? | Explained

The story so far: After nearly three-and-half years, India and the U.K. finally gave their nod to a Free Trade Agreement (FTA) this week. Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal said the pact would set a new benchmark for "equitable and ambitious trade between the two large economies". Though the fingerprint has not yet been made public, domestic industry has welcomed the announcement, amid concerns about the potential impact on agriculture and medium and small enterprises (MSMEs). The deal is likely to be signed after three months, and will take over a year to implement.

Why is the deal significant for both nations?

The U.K. is India's 16th largest trading partner and India is the U.K.'s 11th largest partner. Their bilateral trade is about \$60 billion with India enjoying a positive trade balance, which is expected to double by 2030, according to the Indian government's estimates. The new trade deal, as assessed by the British government, would increase the bilateral trade by another \$34 billion. The agreement comes in the backdrop of global trade reeling under uncertainty triggered by U.S. President Donald Trump's tariff regime.

While the details are yet to be published, the British government said it would benefit from India agreeing to slash tariffs on 90% of the product categories for export, with 85% of them becoming "tariff-free" within a decade. Further, basing its assessment on 2022 prices, it estimated that \$534 million worth in tariffs would be saved when the deal is enforced. On the other hand, New Delhi expects to benefit

from tariffs being eliminated on 99% of its export product categories. It expects an increase in export opportunities for sectors such as textiles, leather, footwear, auto parts, engineering as well as gems and jewellery, among others. The British government mentioned about curtailed tariffs on automobiles, whisky and gin, sectors which had been hit by Mr. Trump's tariffs. Alcoholic beverages from the U.K. will now have a 75% tariff rate, from the present 150%. This would be further reduced to 40% within a decade. Tariffs on automobile exports too stand reduced from over 100% to 10% albeit with a certain quota based on price for conventional combustion engine vehicles and capacity for electric vehicles. With respect to services, India has secured an exemption for Indian workers temporarily in the U.K. and for their employers from paying social security contributions for three years under the Double Contribution Convention. Immigration was among the major points of contention during negotiations with the erstwhile Conservative government. The FTA will also seek that visa processes remain "transparent" and no "unnecessary" obstacles are created in professional travel. How has domestic industry responded? Indian industry is upbeat about the announcement and expects a spike in exports. Textiles are among the major items of export to the U.K. Mithileshwar Thakur, secretary-general at the Apparel Export Promotion Council (AEPC), told The Hindu that exports are expected to "grow exponentially". He said India would now enjoy duty-free access to U.K. markets like their main competitors Bangladesh and Vietnam. On competition, he clarified that there was "hardly any" import from the U.K. in this sector.

Data reveals birth of Antarctica's hidden mountain range 500 million years ago



GNS News Agency, May 17

Have you ever imagined what Antarctica looks like beneath its thick blanket of ice? Hidden below are rugged mountains, valleys, hills and plains. Some peaks, like the towering Transantarctic Mountains, rise above the ice. But others, like the mysterious and ancient Gamburtsev Subglacial Mountains in the middle of East Antarctica, are completely buried. The Gamburtsev Mountains are similar in scale and shape to the European Alps. But we can't see them because the high alpine peaks and deep glacial valleys are entombed beneath kilometres of ice. How did they come to be? Typically, a mountain range will rise in places where two tectonic plates clash with each other. But East Antarctica has been tectonically stable for millions of years. Our new study, published in Earth and Planetary Science Letters, reveals how this hidden mountain chain emerged more than 500 million years ago when the supercontinent Gondwana formed from colliding tectonic plates. Our findings offer fresh insight into how mountains and continents evolve over geological time. They also help explain why Antarctica's interior has remained remarkably stable for hundreds of millions of years. A buried secret

The Gamburtsev Mountains are buried beneath the highest point of the East Antarctica ice sheet. They were first discovered by a Soviet expedition using seismic techniques in 1958. Because the mountain range is completely covered in ice, it's one of the least understood tectonic features on Earth. For scientists, it's deeply puzzling. How could such a massive mountain range form and still be preserved in the heart of an ancient, stable continent? Most major mountain chains mark the sites of tectonic collisions. For example, the Himalayas are still rising today as the Indian and Eurasian plates continue to converge, a process that began about 50 million years ago.

Plate tectonic models suggest the crust now forming East Antarctica came from at least two large continents

Exploring Bengaluru's complex relationship with water

We all know that Bengaluru was once known as the city of a thousand lakes, but did you also know that it was also once watered by many rivers? From the Arkavathi, which originates in Nandi hills, to the Krishnabhavanthi, which is believed to have been born in this very city and the Dakshina Pinakini traversing through the eastern ends of Bengaluru, including Chikkaballapur, Hoskote, Malur, Kadugodi, and Sarjapura, "the city once had a network of rivers and natural streams flowing through it," states a story map at Waterscapes of Bengaluru, a new exhibition jointly developed by the Visvesvaraya Industrial and Technological Museum (VITM) and the Paani Earth Foundation. The exhibition, which is being held at the VITM and will include workshops, expert interactions, and demonstrations, is open till Independence Day. "As August 15 approaches, through these efforts, we hope the rivers will finally get the attention they deserve, with tangible steps taken to set them free," says Jyoti Mehra, curator at VITM, which has partnered with numerous city-based organisations, including WELL Labs, Biome Environmental Solutions, MOD Foundation, Mythic Society and Ecosattva for the initiative. The exhibition, which is being held at the museum, looks at Bengaluru's waterscapes. Waterscapes of Bengaluru: Flows and Futures of our City's Rivers and Lakes, which takes visitors on a journey through the city's evolving waterscapes, from ancient wisdom to modern-day challenges, explores "the city's relationship with water, which has always been complex," she says. Through a series of digital interactives, games, puzzles, and hands-on water-based activities, the organisers hope to provide visitors with an immersive experience to help them learn about the background and threats faced by the city's rivers, once central to the city's ecological balance, but now heavily encroached upon and polluted. They will also get to explore Bengaluru's ingenious network of interconnected lakes, tanks, and open wells that once captured seasonal rain and supported everyday life, but is today largely distorted due to rapid urbanisation, resulting in dependence on large-scale water supply schemes like the Cauvery project, which pumps water over 100 km uphill to reach the city, says Mehra.

According to her, the explosive growth of Bengaluru's population from 0.16 million in 1901 to over 14 million today and widespread concretisation has forced the city to draw over 50% of its water from the ground. "The struggle to balance growth with its fragile hydrology is a constant one, which has led to people digging deeper, drawing farther, and reaching wider in search of water," she says, adding that the warning signs to the health of our water system are obvious: frothing lakes, floods, and failing borewells in the city. While this exhibition is a stark reminder of the acuteness of the crisis, it also celebrates the revival of water wisdom, from the K-100 project to the Million Wells Campaign to lake rejuvenation projects and urban wetland protection. "These efforts are living blueprints for a future where water is co-owned, co-managed, and co-created by all." The exhibition idea emerged rather serendipitously. Mehra was part of a panel discussion at the Energy and Resources Institute (TERI) focusing on sustainability and climate change when she met Madhuri Mandava, the co-founder of the Paani Earth Foundation. That is when she first learnt about the rivers of Bengaluru; till then, the only river she had associated the city with was the Cauvery. "Once that happened, I realised that would be apt to bring the story of rivers here... present a broader perspective of the whole waterscape of Bengaluru," she says of the exhibition, which she believes is especially timely given that it is now peak summer, when the city often experiences an acute water shortage. "The moment monsoons come, people forget. So, it is a very seasonal unrest that happens," she says. "We wanted to tap into that and sensitise the public." In her opinion, having people visit, experience this narrative and participate in various activities could be important in reviving our water bodies and managing water more sustainably. "Water is not just an environmental issue. It has a scientific basis... emotional and cultural aspect to it," says Mehra, who believes that using a mixture of artwork, mythologies,

more than 700 million years ago. These continents used to be separated by a vast ocean basin. The collision of these landmasses was key to the birth of Gondwana, a supercontinent that included what is now Africa, South America, Australia, India and Antarctica. Our new study supports the idea that the Gamburtsev Mountains first formed during this ancient collision. The colossal clash of continents triggered the flow of hot, partly molten rock deep beneath the mountains. As the crust thickened and heated during mountain building, it eventually became unstable and began to collapse under its own weight. Deep beneath the surface, hot rocks began to flow sideways, like toothpaste squeezed from a tube, in a process known as gravitational spreading. This caused the mountains to partially collapse, while still preserving a thick crustal "root", which extends into Earth's mantle beneath. To piece together the timing of this dramatic rise and fall, we analysed tiny zircon grains found in sandstones deposited by rivers flowing from the ancient mountains more than 250 million years ago. These sandstones were recovered from the Prince Charles Mountains, which poked out of the ice hundreds of kilometres away.

Zircons are often called "time capsules" because they contain minuscule amounts of uranium in their crystal structure, which decays at a known rate and allows scientists to determine their age with great precision. These zircon grains preserve a record of the mountain-building timeline: the Gamburtsev Mountains began to rise around 650 million years ago, reached Himalayan heights by 580 million years ago, and experienced deep crustal melting and flow that ended around 500 million years ago. Most mountain ranges formed by continental collisions are eventually worn down by erosion or reshaped by later tectonic events. Because they've been preserved by a deep layer of ice, the Gamburtsev Subglacial Mountains are one of the best-preserved ancient mountain belts on Earth. While it's currently very challenging and expensive to drill through the thick ice to sample the mountains directly, our model offers new predictions to guide future exploration. For instance, recent fieldwork near the Denman Glacier on East Antarctica's coast uncovered rocks that may be related to these ancient mountains. Further analysis of these rock samples will help reconstruct the hidden architecture of East Antarctica. Antarctica remains a continent full of geological surprises, and the secrets buried beneath its ice are only beginning to be revealed. Jacqueline Halpin is associate professor of geology, University of Tasmania. Nathan R. Daczko is professor of earth science, Macquarie University. This article is republished from The Conversation.



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histories, maps and graphics to tell the story of water helps draw more people into its conservation. "Knowledge is spread on many platforms today, but a museum space needs to focus on the engagement aspect," she believes. "Education and sensitisation cannot happen without engagement." Exhibition walkthrough The exhibition uses a first-person narrative technique to tell the stories of the city's rivers. "You can imagine whatever you want, what she is feeling... something like a living being," says Mandava, who feels that structuring the narrative this way will help visitors have a personal connection with these water bodies.

Another aspect of rivers, in connection to Bengaluru, that is explored is how the Cauvery is often reduced to being a source of tap water for most Bengalureans, rather than a living, breathing entity. According to an exhibit, the Bangalore Water Supply and Sewage Board (BWSSB) spends nearly 73 crores daily on electricity for pumping water, making the water from Cauvery one of the most expensive sources in this country. Additionally, "the moment you have river water coming through a pipe, you don't consider that the lake or tank next door needs to be preserved," believes Mehra. "And when you ignore it, it becomes a stagnant water body, losing its vitality and ecological function," she says, a sentiment reiterated by an exhibit titled Bengaluru's Legacy of Living Lakes. The exhibit, which discusses the cascading, interlinked design of lakes, many of which were developed during the reign of Kempe Gowda in the 16th century, dwells on how the city destroyed its water web and its far-reaching consequences, including frothing, fish kills, flooding and water contamination. "Many of these lakes have been converted into malls, playgrounds and bus stands, and the catchment points are all gone," says Mehra, while Mandava adds, "We have lost the big picture. Everybody looks at a lake as an isolated water body, but one forgets that it eventually flows into the river, coming back as 'food or milk for us," she reminds us, pointing out that in the Krishnabhavanthi basin, for instance, farmers grow cattle fodder and baby corn. "This comes back to Bengaluru in huge amounts." Success stories Despite the dire situation, the exhibition offers hope, sharing details of solutions such as rainwater harvesting, recharge wells and citizen-led initiatives for lake rejuvenation. It also highlights some success stories, including the K-100 project, an initiative by the Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) in collaboration with architect and urban expert Naresh Narasimhan of Mod Foundation, which transformed a stormwater drain into an attractive and usable public space and the revival of Aurangabad's Kham river. "It was about bringing together different organisations' work," says Mandava, who sees the exhibition as a platform to unite all these groups. "Bengaluru is one of the luckiest cities because of its numerous citizen groups and scientific institutions," she says. "We need to figure out how to come together and look for holistic solutions."

Counting calories on your own is dangerous and can make you sick



Whether you're trying to gain or lose weight, most experts recommend practising calorie counting. However, if not done properly, it can have adverse effects on your body and mind. Calorie counting is not just about numbers – it's about understanding your body's unique needs. Everyone wants to be in shape. If you ask a random person on the street whether they'd rather be skinny, obese, or fit, you can probably guess their answer.

With health taking priority, people are more mindful of what they eat, how they eat, and how much they consume. We all know someone who has downloaded an app to track their daily calorie intake, meticulously logging every meal and snack. It feels like a step towards a healthier lifestyle. But what if this seemingly harmless habit is actually doing more harm than good? Without proper guidance, obsessing over calorie counts can lead to serious physical

and mental health problems. What is calorie counting?

Deepali Sharma, clinical nutritionist at the CK Birla Hospital, Delhi, explains, "Calorie counting is a dietary method that helps individuals track their daily calorie intake to achieve specific health or fitness goals, such as weight loss, weight gain, or maintaining a healthy weight." "By recording the calories consumed from all foods and beverages throughout the day, individuals can assess their intake relative to their daily energy expenditure. This approach allows for informed adjustments in eating habits, supporting the achievement of desired health outcomes," she adds. Don't take it into your own hands While calorie counting can be an effective way to monitor your weight, it's also tricky. Experts always advise doing it under professional supervision because, without guidance, it can lead to health issues. Each body is unique, with different nutritional needs, so a "one-size-fits-all" diet plan may not work for everyone. These days, it's easy to get influenced by videos from social media influencers promoting quick-fix weight gain or weight-loss solutions. But real, sustainable results aren't achieved through shortcuts. This is where expert advice comes in handy. Mumbai-based ayurveda and nutrition consultant Dr Prachi Mhaskar tells us about the risks of unsupervised calorie counting. According to her, it can lead to: Insufficient nutrient intake from focusing only on calorie numbe Incorrect calorie targets that don't match your body's need Development of unhealthy relationships with foo Mental stress and anxiety around eating Physical health issues from under- or overeating Missing out on essential nutrients by focusing solely on calorie counts Dr Shweta Jaiswal.

A rally with a deeper intent



Last week, when India's defence forces launched Operation Sindoor targeting terror networks in Pakistan, M.K. Stalin was among the first Chief Ministers to commend the military action. He made it clear that Tamil Nadu stood resolute with the Indian Army in its fight against terrorism. Two days later, Mr. Stalin announced plans to lead a solidarity rally in Chennai. "This is a time to unite and show our support for the Indian Army, which is courageously confronting Pakistan's repeated violations and acts of terrorism," he declared.

Even Chief Ministers belonging to the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) did not wear their patriotism on their sleeve as visibly as Mr. Stalin did, with such a public display of support for the armed forces, especially when it was too early to judge whether the military operations would escalate into a war. However, by the time Mr. Stalin completed the 3.8-kilometre march on a sultry Saturday evening in Chennai, paying floral tributes to the portraits of fallen soldiers and to the victims of the April 22 Pahalgam attack at the War Memorial, a ceasefire had been announced. Mr. Stalin's act, which included him carrying the Indian flag at the beginning and end of the rally, likely fulfilled a deeper, underlying intent — of dispelling the label of the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK) being a "secessionist" party. Despite its history of having relinquished the demand for a 'Dravida Nadu' (a separate Dravidian state) during the 1962 Chinese invasion, and having shared power at the Centre for significant periods (1989-90, 1999-2003, and 2004-March 2013), the DMK has long endured this label. Critics routinely weaponise this tag to attack the party whenever it advocates for State autonomy, stronger federalism, or employs strong symbolic gestures. For instance, two months ago, when the Stalin government replaced the Indian currency symbol '₹' with the Tamil alphabet Roo in its Budget document, Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman sharply condemned it, viewing it as "more than mere symbolism". She argued that it signalled a dangerous mindset that "weakens Indian unity and promotes secessionist sentiments

under the guise of regional pride." In her view, it was a "completely avoidable" example of "language and regional chauvinism."

Mr. Stalin, who had approved the Tamil logo in the Budget's promotional materials, defended the move as a statement of his government's assertiveness regarding the State's language policy. While the promotion of Hindi is often framed by its supporters as an act of national integration, Tamil Nadu's opposition to Hindi imposition is dismissed as Tamil chauvinism. The DMK has faced similar accusations in the past. When former Chief Minister M. Karunanidhi set up the P.V. Rajamannar Committee to study Centre-State relations in 1969, he had to clarify that the demand for greater State powers was not a call for secession. Even after the committee's report was released in 1971, he reiterated that the aim was not to confront the Centre. Similarly, when Mr. Stalin recently announced the formation of the Justice Kurian Joseph Committee to strengthen State autonomy and federalism, the BJP viewed it with suspicion.

The Stalin government's strong opposition to the National Education Policy, the terms of the PM SHRI scheme, the three-language policy, and proposed delimitation have all been seen by 'nationalists' as more than just assertions of autonomy. In this context, his decision to lead a solidarity march on an issue where any dissenting view or reasoning is swiftly branded 'anti-national' was perhaps a carefully considered balancing act. Despite his strained relationship with the Chief Minister, Governor R.N. Ravi endorsed Mr. Stalin's rally. He thanked the Chief Minister for organising the rally, calling it an expression of "unequivocal solidarity of our 8-crore people of Tamil Nadu" with the Indian armed forces. It was Mr. Ravi who had previously criticised "too much stress on federalism" and had infamously claimed, "Unfortunately, in Tamil Nadu, there has been a regressive politics of 'we are Dravidian'... An entire effort has been created over the last half-century to reinforce this narrative that 'we are not part of the nation'..."

State govt urged to fill vacant posts of professors in medical colleges

Hyderabad: The members of Telangana Government Doctors Association (TGDA) on Wednesday urged the State government to relax the ban on transfers and fill vacant posts of professors in prestigious teaching hospitals such as Osmania Medical College, Gandhi Medical College and Kakatiya Medical College in Warangal. Senior office bearers of TGDA on Wednesday met Health Minister, Damodar Raja Narasimha and submitted a memorandum in which they said that premier State-run teaching hospitals are currently facing significant shortage of senior faculty, thus adversely impacting both medical education (PG training) and patient care.

"Several sanctioned posts remain unfilled, while there are eligible and willing faculty members awaiting transfers in the periphery. Addressing this issue, we request the Health Minister to permit transfers into existing vacancies, which would improve staffing without imposing any additional financial burden on the State government," TGDA in the memorandum said. We request the Health Minister to relax the current ban on transfers for posts of Professors in various departments and permit the filling of existing Professor vacancies in Osmania Medical College, Gandhi Medical College, Kakatiya Medical College, Government Medical College in Nizamabad through transfer of eligible faculty. These measures will not only strengthen the aca-



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ademic framework of these institutions, but also significantly enhance healthcare services to the public, the members of TGGDA added.

Do you really need two foundations for combination skin?



Struggling to find the perfect foundation for your combination skin? You might want to consider using separate products for different areas. Life would be much simpler if there were only two skin types: dry and oily. But, of course, it couldn't be that easy—enter combination skin. People with this skin type face unique challenges because they can't simply grab a product and expect it to work seamlessly. The struggle intensifies when choosing a foundation. Formulas designed for dry skin leave them with an oily shine, while options for oily skin make dry areas look patchy and uneven. So, does this mean people with combination skin need two different foundations to tackle different parts of their face? Or is there a way to strike the perfect balance?

Understanding combination skin "Combination skin is characterised by both oily and dry areas on the face. Typically, the T-zone (forehead, nose, and chin) tends to be oily, while the cheeks remain dry. This imbalance can make skincare and makeup application a bit tricky," Dr Shifa Yadav, consultant, dermatology and cosmetology, Artemis Hospitals, Gurugram, tells India Today. Further, Dr DM Mahajan, senior consultant, dermatology, Indraprastha Apollo Hospitals, New Delhi, explains that this skin type occurs due to varying concentrations of oil-producing sebaceous glands across the face, with more active glands in the T-zone. The skin's condition can also fluctuate based on seasonal changes, hormones, and stress levels.

"What makes combination skin unique is this distinct dual nature—some areas might be prone to shine and breakouts, while others might experience flakiness or tightness. This skin type is actually quite common, affecting a large percentage of people, particularly during their younger years. It requires a balanced approach to skincare since different areas of the face have different needs," he adds. Meanwhile, Megha, a Karnal-based makeup artist, shares that it's quite easy to figure out if you have combina-

tion skin. She explains, "To determine if you have combination skin, cleanse your face and leave it bare for about an hour. If your T-zone becomes oily while your cheeks stay dry or comfortable, you likely have combination skin." You can also use blotting paper to understand your skin type. Press blotting papers on different areas of your face—if only the T-zone shows significant oil transfer while other areas show little to none, that's a strong indicator. Finding the right foundation for combination skin is no cakewalk. People with combination skin face several challenges in their skincare and makeup routines. The main difficulty lies in finding products that can effectively address both oily and dry areas without aggravating either condition. They often struggle with controlling the shine in the T-zone while preventing the dry areas from becoming flakier. Seasonal changes can exacerbate these issues, making skin more unpredictable. Applying makeup evenly can be particularly challenging, as products may look different on various areas of the face—appearing cakey on dry patches while sliding off oily zones. Products that work well on one area might irritate another, making it difficult to maintain a consistent skincare routine. Achieving the perfect base Dr Yadav mentions that while it's not necessary for people with combination skin to use two different foundations, you can consider using a lighter, oil-free formula for the oily T-zone and a more hydrating formula for the dry cheeks. However, many people find a single, well-balanced foundation to be sufficient. Dr Mahajan agrees that some people with combination skin find it helpful to use different formulations for different areas. However, a more practical approach is finding one versatile foundation and adjusting the application technique and preparation of different areas.

He shares that the key lies in proper skincare and priming before foundation application, suggesting the use of a mattifying primer on the T-zone and a hydrating primer on drier areas.

What's the right choice? "A satin finish foundation is often ideal as it offers a balanced look without being too matte or too dewy. Those with combination skin should look for a lightweight, hydrating foundation that controls oil without over-drying, helping to create a smooth, natural finish," says Megha. She adds that medium coverage is a good choice as it evens out the skin tone while allowing for a natural look. It avoids the heavy feel of full coverage, which can emphasise oiliness or dryness, and can be built up as needed. The makeup artist further states, "For a flawless finish, try using a damp sponge or a foundation brush. Light application across the T-zone with a bit more on drier areas ensures even coverage, avoiding an overly matte or shiny look." The application technique also matters

The Problem in Your Plate: Why an Indian home-cooked meal is not always healthy



Just because food is homemade doesn't mean it's automatically healthy. Contrary to popular belief, home-cooked meals aren't always nutritious and can work against your health goals. "Why are you always eating out? It's unhealthy!" If you grew up in an Indian household, chances are you've heard your parents say this every time you head out for a meal. Home-cooked food, indeed, is considered healthier. You know it is hygienic; you are sure of the quality of ingredients going in; you know there is no addition of harmful preservatives. Not to forget, there's that amount of love that goes in. Research supports this too. "Compared to pre-prepared meals, fully and partly home-cooked meals in diverse families with young children are more likely to include nutritious ingredients," states a 2019 study on the nutritional benefits of home-cooked food.

Health experts also highly recommend eating home-made meals over ordering from outside, especially now, with a plethora of restaurant options and the convenience of food delivery. When food is just a few clicks away from your doorstep, who wants to take time out of an already- hectic schedule to cook a meal in the kitchen? But health experts urge you to resist that temptation of eating out – for all the right reasons. "Home-cooked meals are often healthier because you control the quality of ingredients, portion sizes, and cooking methods. Restaurants and outside vendors may use excessive amounts of oil, salt, and preservatives to enhance flavour and increase shelf life, which can contribute to various health issues like obesity, hypertension, and cardiovascular diseases. Furthermore, home-cooked food is usually fresher, and you can ensure better hygiene standards, which reduces the risk of foodborne illnesses," says Priya Paliwal, chief dietitian at Sri Balaji Action Medical Institute, Delhi. However, this does not mean you can eat anything and everything just because it is cooked at home. Contrary to popular belief, home food is not always healthy.

What can go wrong with home food? A lot.

To make food tastier, many of us tend to go extra with oil, butter, sugar, or spices. You know how that extra spoonful of ghee or butter is often an Indian mum's ultimate love language. Similarly, having deep-fried dishes (even if cooked at home) daily can lead to health issues. "Home food is unhealthy when there is excessive use of oil, sugar, and salt. Many people now also use several processed items like ginger-garlic paste or tomato puree for food prepara-

tions, which often contain harmful preservatives and food colours," says dietitian Vidhi Chawla, founder of Fisco Diet and Aesthetic clinic in Delhi. "Cooking food with too much oil, sugar, or salt can cause heart problems, diabetes, or hypertension. Deep-frying or overcooking vegetables destroys the nutrients present in them," adds Parmeet Kaur, chief nutritionist and dietitian at Marengo Asia Hospital, Gurugram. Not just deep-frying but overcooking is also a problem. "Overcooking vegetables can strip them of essential nutrients. Also, avoid cooking on a high flame," says Vidhi.

Portion size is another big issue that can make home-cooked food work against your health goals. Excess calorie intake, even from home-prepared food, can lead to weight gain, metabolic changes, digestive issues, and an increased risk of chronic diseases. "Just because food is made at home doesn't mean it should be consumed in large quantities," says Paliwal. Whether it is kheer, aloo-poori, biryani, sambar rice, or a regular roti with sabzi, don't regularly indulge in overeating. Now comes the most troublesome and common bit: skipping food groups. The different food groups include fruits, vegetables, grains, protein sources (such as meat, legumes, and nuts), dairy, and fats and oils. These provide essential nutrients for a balanced diet. If a plate full of rice and rajma (or any lentil/curry) is what your lunches look like, you are doing it horribly wrong. Where's the salad for fibre? Or the raita as a probiotic? Or the green chutney for micronutrients? "A plate that consists mainly of one or two food groups, such as three rotis with dal or just rajma and rice, lacks variety and can lead to nutritional deficiencies. Meals should ideally consist of a balance between carbohydrates, proteins, fats, and fibre," says dietitian Paliwal. A primary focus on rice/roti is another issue that promotes nutritional imbalance.

Even though Indian food culture is rich across regions and promotes balanced meals – like roti/rice, dal, sabzi, raita, and pickle for lunch in the North, or steamed rice, sambar, rasam, avial (mixed vegetable curry), curd, and papad in the South – busier lifestyles have turned elaborate traditional everyday meals into quick lunches, often missing many food groups. According to ICMR's dietary guidelines, a healthy meal includes generous amounts of vegetables, adequate whole grains and pulses or beans, modest portions of nuts or seeds, complemented by fruits and plain fermented yogurt or curd. It should be free of added sugars or contain minimal amounts and be seasoned with minimal oil/fats and salt for taste. This is what your daily food intake

Over 78% of top paid H-1B applicants were from India



In the last four years, more than 78% of the top paid H-1B applicants (whose proposed wage rate exceeded \$1 million per year) were from India. Among the Indians whose wage rate exceeded \$1 million per year, over 25% were women. Also, over 65% of these high-paid H-1B applicants from India were sponsored by relatively smaller companies in the U.S. Moreover, the salary range of H-1B applicants whose sponsors were U.S.-based companies was in general higher than the salary range of H-1B applicants whose sponsors were India-based companies. The H-1B visa is a non-immigrant visa that allows U.S. companies to employ foreign workers in specialty occupations that require theoretical or technical expertise.

These conclusions are based on data obtained by Bloomberg from the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS). Each April, the USCIS conducts a random lottery to determine which H-1B applicants can proceed to submit visa petitions. Candidates may have multiple registrations submitted by different employers. Once selected, an employer can file an H-1B petition on behalf of the beneficiary. These petitions include details about the proposed job, such as salary and location, and form the basis of the conclusions presented in the story. Only about 1 lakh approved H-1B petitions, filed in the 2021-2024 period, for which all relevant data were available, were taken for the analysis.

How scientists are exploring what extraterrestrial life could look like

We have only one example of biology forming in the universe: life on earth. But what if life can form in other ways? How do you look for alien life when you don't know what alien life might look like?

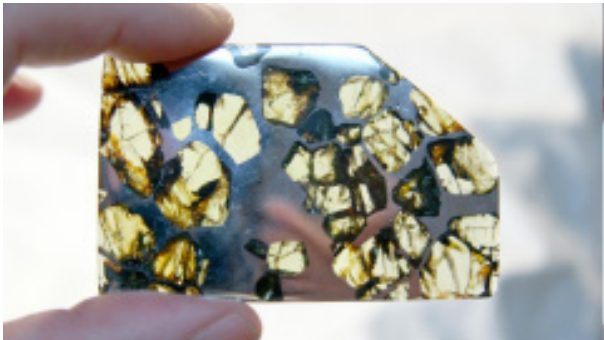
These questions are preoccupying astrobiologists, who are scientists who look for life beyond earth. Astrobiologists have attempted to come up with universal rules that govern the emergence of complex physical and biological systems both on earth and beyond. I'm an astronomer who has written extensively about astrobiology. Through my research, I've learned that the most abundant form of extraterrestrial life is likely to be microbial, since single cells can form more readily than large organisms. But just in case there's advanced alien life out there, I'm on the international advisory council for the group designing messages to send to those civilisations.

Detecting life beyond earthSince the first discovery of an exoplanet in 1995, over 5,000 exoplanets, or planets orbiting other stars, have been found. Many of these exoplanets are small and rocky, like earth, and in the habitable zones of their stars. The habitable zone is the range of distances between the surface of a planet and the star it orbits that would allow the planet to have liquid water, and thus support life as we on earth know it.

The sample of exoplanets detected so far projects 300 million potential biological experiments in our galaxy – or 300 million places, including exoplanets and other bodies such as moons, with suitable conditions for biology to arise. The uncertainty for researchers starts with the definition of life. It feels like defining life should be easy, since we know life when we see it, whether it's a flying bird or a microbe moving in a drop of water. But scientists don't agree on a definition, and some think a comprehensive definition might not be possible. NASA defines life as a "self-sustaining chemical reaction capable of Darwinian evolution." That means organisms with a complex chemical system that evolve by adapting to their environment. Darwinian evolution says that the survival of an organism depends on its fitness in its environment. The evolution of life on earth has progressed over billions of years from single-celled organisms to large animals and other species, including humans. Evolution is the process of change in systems. It can describe how a group of something becomes more complex – or even just different – over time. Exoplanets are remote and hundreds of millions of times fainter than their parent stars, so studying them is challenging. Astronomers can inspect the atmospheres and surfaces of earth-like exoplanets using a method called spectroscopy to look for

While an approved H-1B petition is necessary for obtaining an H-1B visa, it does not guarantee one. After receiving approval from the USCIS, applicants may either apply for an H-1B visa at a U.S. consulate abroad or seek an Adjustment of Status with the USCIS if they are already in the U.S. Chart 1 shows the proposed yearly wage rate in \$ (vertical axis) against the number of workers employed by the sponsor in the U.S. (horizontal axis). Each circle corresponds to an applicant whose application got selected in the lottery and whose H-1B petition was approved. The higher the circle, the higher the proposed salary. The farther to the right, the bigger the company size of the sponsor. Indian applicants are highlighted in a different colour.

Of the 1 lakh H-1B applications, only 123 had a proposed salary of \$1 million and above per year. Of them, 96 (78%) were from India. Over 90% of the proposed salaries were in and around the \$1,00,000 range. Chart 2 shows the same information, but only for Indians. Here, female and male applicants are differentiated using colours. Of the 96 applicants from India identified in Chart 1, 25 (26%) were women. As can be seen in both charts, most of the applications with a higher pay — circles on the top — are crowded towards the left of the chart, pointing to the low employee count for those sponsors. Sixty-three of the 96 applicants identified in Chart 1 were sponsored by U.S. companies which had fewer than 1,000 employees in the U.S. In other words, bigger companies — both U.S.-based and India-based — did not sponsor many high-paid H1B applicants. Most of their applicants' proposed salaries were in the lower range, with very few exceptions. Chart 3 shows the proposed yearly wage rate in \$ for H-1B applicants of well-known sponsors (big-sized firms), in the 2021-2024 period. It ignores outlier salaries to find the usual salary range proposed for most applicants. The proposed salary range of U.S.-based employers such as Apple and Google were considerably higher than the proposed salary range of Indian-based companies such as Infosys and TCS.



chemical signatures of life. Spectroscopy might detect signatures of oxygen in a planet's atmosphere, which microbes called blue-green algae created by photosynthesis on earth several billion years ago, or chlorophyll signatures, which indicate plant life. NASA's definition of life leads to some important but unanswered questions. Is Darwinian evolution universal? What chemical reactions can lead to biology off earth? Evolution and complexity

All life on earth, from a fungal spore to a blue whale, evolved from a microbial last common ancestor about 4 billion years ago. The same chemical processes are seen in all living organisms on earth, and those processes might be universal. They also may be radically different elsewhere. In October 2024, a diverse group of scientists gathered to think outside the box on evolution. They wanted to step back and explore what sort of processes created order in the universe – biological or not – to figure out how to study the emergence of life totally unlike life on earth. Two researchers present argued that complex systems of chemicals or minerals, when in environments that allow some configurations to persist better than others, evolve to store larger amounts of information. As time goes by, the system will grow more diverse and complex, gaining the functions needed for survival, through a kind of natural selection. They speculated that there might be a law to describe the evolution of a wide variety of physical systems. Biological evolution through natural selection would be just one example of this broader law. In biology, information refers to the instructions stored in the sequence of nucleotides on a DNA molecule, which collectively make up an organism's genome and dictate what the organism looks like and how it functions. If you define complexity in terms of information theory, natural selection will cause a genome to grow more complex as it stores more information about its environment. Complexity might be useful in measuring the boundary between life and nonlife.

‘In Hinduism, no matter how much you try to regiment, there are still elements of fluidity’



Manu Pillai tells his audience how a Bala Murugan temple deity in Kerala's Alappuzha district acquired the rather catchy moniker, "Munch Murugan." When a small boy in the region fell ill, his parents took him to this Murugan temple to pray for his recovery. "The child had a Munch chocolate in his hand," says the writer and historian to Manasi Subramaniam, Editor-in-Chief and Vice-President, Penguin Press, Penguin Random House India, who he was in conversation with at the 13th edition of the Bangalore Literature Festival. The little boy, as the story goes, put his Munch chocolate bar in front of the deity and miraculously recovered. "Since then, the deity is called Munch Murugan, and everybody who goes to the temple places, not just any chocolate, but Munch in front of this deity," he says. Pillai says it is modernity and colonisation that truly kickstarted the process of creating Hinduism's sense of self. Pillai says it is modernity and colonisation that truly kickstarted the process of creating Hinduism's sense of self. | Photo Credit: ROOP_DEY

Inherent fluidity Pillai, who was responding to Subramaniam's question on whether the inherent fluidity of Hinduism was lost when the religion began to define itself, uses this anecdote to drive a pertinent point. "Some of these stories may be apocryphal, but these are recent stories, which means that the tendency to change... to retain that fluidity still remains," says the historian and writer, whose latest book Gods, Guns & Missionaries: The Making of the Modern Hindu Identity, examines the mutual impact of Hindu culture and Christianity upon each other and how these encounters contributed to the birth of an aggressive, more immutable form of Hinduism. "In Hinduism, no matter how much you try to regiment it, there are still elements of fluidity and change within it." In his session, Pillai discusses the evolution of Hinduism, its encounter with Christianity, and the impact of colonisation and reform on it. He also shares his apprehensions about taking on a subject that could be construed as controversial, admitting that he was constantly worried about being cancelled by both the left and the right as he wrote the book. "Would you rather be cancelled by the left or the right," asks Subramaniam, rather cheekily, to which Pillai cautiously responds. "I think I would not be beaten up if I was cancelled by the left. The chances of getting beaten up are probably higher with the right." The creation of legends as Hinduism evolved, says Pillai, was a creative way of knitting together different ideas without denying them, referring to the religion as a sort of tapestry that's been constantly woven and expanding in different directions. The creation of legends as Hinduism evolved, says Pillai, was a creative way of knitting together different ideas without denying them, referring to the religion as a sort of tapestry that's been constantly woven and expanding in different directions.

Keeping the faith Hinduism, according to Pillai, is a composite framework, something very clear in the Puranas, which "is a way of connecting the local with the pan-Indian and universalising that with the local." He points out that when the Vedic religion came in contact with a whole set of other cultures "a bit of co-option" happened, a marriage of sorts where "each retains much of its original flavour but is also slightly modified to become part of a larger framework... what I would define as Hinduism." There was a conscious effort, at least on the part of Brahmins, to connect everything into that framework, he says, adding that this was often done through stories. This creation of legends as Hinduism evolved, says Pillai, was a creative way of knitting together different ideas without denying them, referring to the religion as a sort of tapestry that's been constantly woven and has been expanding in different directions. "It doesn't have an outer border," he says. In his opinion, the impulse to stitch up an outer border only happened because of external pressures. "In some ways, you do see evidence of this in the Islamic period," he says. "Islam is a big part of the culture of how Hinduism eventually responds and develops a sense of self." But it was modernity and colonisation that truly catalysed the process of creating Hinduism's sense of self. "When you're faced with pressure from the outside... that's when you must figure out how you define yourself," explains Pillai. "I think that rigidity does appear in Hinduism's political manifestation because the political assertion of identity is built on people coming together and asserting a certain muscle." Missionaries and more By most accounts, the arrival of the first missionaries to India did not seem to have threatened Indians in the beginning. "Why were they so unthreatened by the idea of these

missionaries, and at what point did they feel threatened?" asks Subramaniam. In his response, Pillai offers insights into early Europeans' perception of Hindu society, which was shaped by their own cultural history as a country that had once been pagan, even though Christianity was now deeply entrenched in it. While Europeans had worshipped trees, sacrificed animals and had deities and idols throughout much of antiquity, by the time they began arriving in India, a deep fear of idols had seeped into their collective imagination. "There was a sense that gods worshipped in images were representatives of Satan. There was only one god, and the path to that god was through the Bible," he says. They couldn't help but see them as demonic forces since "they came out of a certain world view and applied their cultural lenses to make sense of what they were seeing," believes Pillai. They couldn't help but see them as demonic forces since "they came out of a certain world view and applied their cultural lenses to make sense of what they were seeing," believes Pillai |

Another worldview In India, the Europeans were in for a rude shock as they were confronted with fierce gods like Narasimha and Kali, often depicted as somewhat bloodthirsty. They couldn't help but see them as demonic forces since "they came out of a certain world view and applied their cultural lenses to make sense of what they were seeing," believes Pillai. According to him, these early European missionaries had arrived convinced that they would bring the light of the Bible and everyone would wake up. "But that did not happen. The Hindus seem to be perfectly happy to continue with their so-called demonic gods." Therefore, Pillai claims, the missionary also had to reinvent himself in interesting ways. Soon, a certain Hinduisation of Christianity happened, with missionaries, including the Italian Jesuit Roberto de Nobili, who even began eating and dressing like an Indian, having to study the former to engage in philosophical discussions and debates with the Hindus of that time, who didn't take them very seriously. For starters, Indians, too, had their perceptions of white people, including a belief they were cannibals who liked to fry their children in butter and eat them. And yes, many Indians, including the Mughal emperor Shah Jahan, appear to have been disgusted that white people did not use water to clean themselves after using the toilet. "That sentiment still prevails," laughs Subramaniam. Additionally, "Europeans didn't rule here yet except in pockets like Goa where there has been violence by now," says Pillai. "So the Hindus are amused by these white people trying to destabilise their sense of god." The inherent pluralism of the Hindu faith with "so many forms... a conglomerate... a composite of so many traditions" meant that though many people were willing to accept that Christianity was a way to God and even recognised the value of the Bible, they refused to accept that it was "the only way to God," says Pillai, referring to a rather amusing analogy used at that time. "Just as a trader brings different customers to his shop by having multiple products on his counter, God has also created multiple options for humankind." Colonisation, however, seems to have significantly impacted how the faith evolved. "The conflict begins when the power equation changes," says Pillai. As the British Raj became more dominant and began directly ruling over different parts of the country, "pressure starts building up home in Europe," with the prevailing feedback being this: "Your job is not to promote Brahmins, support temples and take Hindu deities on processions. Your job is to support the missionary enterprise." As the power dynamics changed, people started becoming more and more nervous about their encounters with European powers since "it's no longer a debate between the equals. Now you feel that the white man is in government... sweeping up all these territories... controlling the temples... paying the salaries of the Brahmins," says Pillai. "So suddenly, the white man, in his religion, is a very conscious, serious person." Pillai also talks about how Hindus often came up with stories to explain this advent of Christianity and rebelled against it in different ways: dressing in the effigy of Ravana in the clothes of British administrators, for instance, during Ramilila performances. "At this point, these debates become very negative... very polemic," says Pillai. Reformers like Raja Ram Mohan Roy contributed to these debates. "Even as he promotes Advaita Vedanta and this esoteric idea of a metaphysical, formless kind of God and a pure Hindu monotheism, in some ways, he's borrowing the Western structure," says Pillai. Just like how in the West, the prevailing narrative was that Catholicism corrupted Christianity, and the Protestant Reformation was about restoring pure Christianity, Raja Ram Mohan Roy, the founder of the Brahmo Samaj, believed that there was pure Hinduism, which got corrupted into the Puranic form. "So you're essentially taking that Western framework and applying it to Hinduism to develop a kind of Renaissance," believes Pillai. "The Western gaze sort of comes into play, and how we define Hinduism is also afflicted by this." This eventually became a more rigid Hindu identity and was later taken up by Bal Gangadhar Tilak and then Vinayak Savarkar, says Pillai. Despite this and repeated attempts at homogenisation of the faith, Pillai believes that Hindu culture is inherently pluralistic, with an innate capacity to accept, incorporate and move on. "This is also a form of evolution. We may not like it, but maybe this is how it's evolving at this juncture," he says.

The women who remain largely invisible

Across India and South Asia, women have long been at the forefront of movements resisting unjust development, extractivism, and climate degradation. They have led protests against destructive mining, dams, and infrastructure projects. Yet, when it comes to decision-making, these women are largely invisible. From the forests of Odisha to the coastlines of Tamil Nadu, women have led some of the most sustained resistance movements. In Sijimali (Odisha), women continue to protest mining projects threatening their forest-based way of life, often facing police violence. In Jharkhand, Adivasi women in Dewas are blocking coal mining operations to protect ancestral land. In Tamil Nadu, women from fishing communities have been at the forefront of protests against the Kudankulam Nuclear Power Plant. These movements represent a powerful assertion of community-led development and environmental protection rooted in lived realities. Leadership not acknowledged Despite being central to the resistance, women are systematically excluded from consultations, especially those that claim to uphold free, prior, and informed consent (FPIC). In many cases, community meetings and decisions on land are dominated by men, while women, who bear the disproportionate burden of displacement and environmental degradation, are sidelined. Women's perspectives are also frequently devalued or dismissed as emotional, despite being rooted in acute socio-environmental knowledge. In Bangladesh's Phulbari, women resisted an open-pit coal mining project, enduring police crackdowns while organising

mass mobilisations. In India's Narmada Bachao Andolan, Medha Patkar's leadership brought global attention to the devastating impact of dams. Yet, policies designed in response to such movements have often remained blind to the gendered impacts of displacement and rehabilitation.

Legal frameworks in South Asia do exist to protect women's land rights — at least on paper. India's Forest Rights Act (2006) and PESA Act (1996) recognise women's role in Gram Sabhas and grant equal rights to forest resources. Nepal's Joint Land Ownership Policy encourages land co-ownership between spouses. Bangladesh prioritises women in land distribution under its Khas land programme. However, these frameworks are undermined by systemic gaps: land titles often remain in the name of male household heads, with women rarely listed as joint or sole owners. Implementation mechanisms lack gender sensitivity, and Gram Sabhas are frequently held in male-dominated settings. Additionally, many displaced women are not counted as heads of households and are thus excluded from compensation. There is no comprehensive gender-sensitive land policy at the national level in India. State land redistribution programmes often overlook single women, widows, or women without formal documentation. Despite the 2005 amendment to the Hindu Succession Act granting equal inheritance rights, customary laws and local practices frequently override statutory provisions, particularly in tribal regions. The intersection of formal legal barriers with entrenched patriarchal norms leads to a practical erasure

of women from land governance processes.

This invisibility becomes even more glaring in the context of climate change. In India and beyond, extreme heat, water scarcity, and environmental pollution are deepening existing gender inequalities. Women walk farther for water, care for sick family members, and work longer for less — all while being excluded from decisions on climate resilience, rehabilitation, or mitigation. Yet, most climate adaptation frameworks fail to integrate women's traditional ecological knowledge or ensure their participation in planning. While FPIC is increasingly cited in international standards and development finance frameworks, its actual implementation rarely includes gendered perspectives. What use is "consultation" if it takes place in spaces where women feel unsafe to speak? What legitimacy does consent hold if it is given without understanding the long-term ecological and social impacts, or if it is granted by male leaders who don't represent women's interests?

Need for structural change If we are serious about gender justice, climate justice, and inclusive development, this must change. Governments and corporations must ensure that consultations are not only free and prior but informed and inclusive. This means scheduling meetings at times accessible to women, ensuring women-only spaces when necessary, and providing translation and legal aid. It means recognising women as independent landowners, not just as dependents of male household heads. At the same time,



women's leadership within movements must be amplified. Too often, women do the groundwork — organising, protesting, feeding, and sustaining the movement — without having a seat at the table. Movement allies, NGOs, and policymakers must acknowledge and support women's leadership, not just on the streets but in negotiation rooms, legislatures, and compensation boards. If development is to be democratic, if climate policy is to be just, and if resistance is to be meaningful, the voices of women must not only be heard — they must lead. Their stories are not of victimhood, but of vision. It's time our policies, laws, and institutions reflected that truth. Bhoomika Choudhury, International lawyer and researcher specialising in business and human rights, corporate accountability, and labour rights

Donald Trump’s new pharma order could increase pressure on India to hike drug prices, stocks tank on margin worries



Global pharma companies could ramp up pressure on India to raise the prices of drugs in India and other developing markets, as US President Donald Trump’s new executive order is set to force companies to align US drug costs with cheapest ones abroad. Trump said he would introduce a “most favoured nation” (MFN) policy whereby the US pays “the same price as the nation that pays the lowest price anywhere in the World”. “Prescription drug and pharmaceutical prices will be reduced, almost immediately, by 30 per cent to 80 per cent. Prices will rise throughout the world in order to equalise and, for the first time in many years, bring fairness to America. I will be instituting a Most Favoured Nation’s policy, whereby the United States will pay the same price as the nation that pays the lowest price anywhere in the world,” Trump said in a social media post.

“For many years, the world has wondered why prescription drugs and pharmaceuticals in the United States are so much higher in price than in any other nation—sometimes being five to ten times more expensive than the same drug, manufactured in the exact same laboratory or plant, by the same company,” Trump said. International trade experts said Trump’s executive order may offer immediate relief to American patients, but it is likely to trigger a global price recalibration—with pharmaceutical giants intensifying pressure on lower-cost markets like India to raise their prices as the low cost markets would determine prices in the lucrative US market. India’s generic drug industry, which is not only a source of low-cost medicines in India but also in the US and UK, has long been a bone of contention for large pharma companies in developed countries. These companies argue that weak intellectual property rights in India leave them uncompetitive. Trump’s executive order follows the US placing the Indian patent regime on its “Priority Watch List” for intellectual property rights (IPR), which has a significant bearing on drug manufacturing. Head of think tank Global Trade and Research Initiative (GTRI), Ajay

Srivastava, said that Trump’s MFN pricing policy should be a wake-up call, as pharmaceutical companies facing tighter price controls in the West will be forced to redouble their efforts to raise prices in markets like India. “The battleground is no longer just legal—it has moved to trade negotiations. India must respond with strategic clarity and unyielding resolve. As global pharmaceutical firms turn to free trade agreements (FTAs) to extract Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights ‘(TRIPS)-plus’ commitments, India must hold the line on its patent regime—one that enables affordable access, prevents monopolistic extensions, and safeguards public health,” Srivastava said.

India’s pharmaceutical laws fully comply with the WTO’s Agreement on TRIPS. However, India has long resisted pressure to adopt “TRIPS-plus” provisions—additional patent protections often pushed by developed countries through Free Trade Agreements (FTAs). These include data exclusivity, automatic patent term extensions, patent linkage, broader patentability criteria, and evergreening practices, Srivastava said.

Margins of distributors could face pressureA pharma industry executive told The Indian Express that the order will not have a negative impact on Indian generic manufacturers and exporters, and would instead squeeze the margins of distributors or patent drug manufacturers. “If I sell at, say, \$1, the actual cost paid by the pharmacy is \$9–10. Around \$8 is taken by the distributors. In the generic space, if he really wants to do something and bring down the price, he needs to attend to this supply chain lobby—then definitely that will help American patients,” the Indian pharma executive told this paper on condition of anonymity. The executive further explained that out of the \$670 billion US pharma market, only 21 per cent is generics, while the remaining 79 per cent or so are patented drugs. “In generics, price erosion has already happened. In the generics space, there is only one big gap. If it is addressed, that would be good for our country also. What is happening is that over five or six distributors are ruling the entire US market in generics. They are also keeping their profit out of the US,” the executive said. In generics, the money is hidden in the supply chain, which Trump has to attend to. The problem for the US is that currently, these patented drug manufacturers are keeping their head offices mostly outside the US—in Ireland, Europe, etc.—and they are getting exorbitant profits mainly in the US, which they are keeping out, the person quoted above said. The comments triggered a sell-off in pharmaceutical stocks on Monday amid concerns that profits could be hit if firms have to cut prices in the US. In India too, pharma stocks tanked.

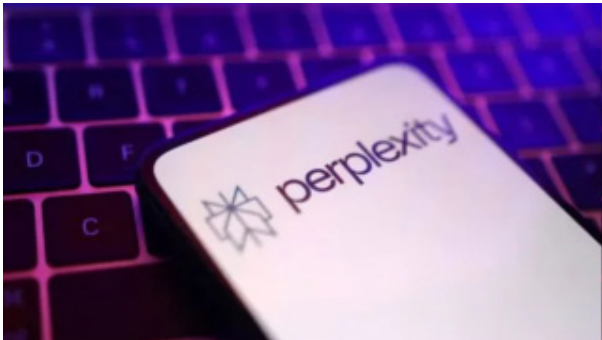
In race to build Google Chrome rival, why Perplexity’s fresh funding is crucial

Perplexity aims to break Google’s decades-long dominance on Internet search, and is currently in the process of launching its own browser—called Comet—to rival Google’s Chrome. Perplexity aims to break Google’s decades-long dominance on Internet search, and is currently in the process of launching its own browser—called Comet—to rival Google’s Chrome. Generative artificial intelligence (AI) firm Perplexity is said to be in the process of closing a \$500 million funding round, which would value the start-up north of \$14 billion, and possibly cement its place as one of the most promising AI firms that has the potential to disrupt Internet search.

Perplexity aims to break Google’s decades-long dominance on Internet search, and is currently in the process of launching its own browser—called Comet—to rival Google’s Chrome. It has attracted intense interest from investors, having previously raised funding from the likes of Nvidia, SoftBank’s Vision Fund 2, and tech pioneers including Amazon founder Jeff Bezos, OpenAI co-founder Andrej Karpathy, Google AI executive Jeff Dean and Meta’s Yann LeCun. The firm’s meteoric rise comes as Google fights its own battles – most prominently, an anticompetitive challenge against the company, where regulators in the United States have been pushing for breaking up the search giant.

It is expected that the fresh funding would go towards fueling the firm’s browser ambitions. “Perplexity will be launching Comet, a new agentic browser, very soon! This is a pretty serious engineering undertaking. Please join us to help build the future of internet browsing, with AIs doing deep research and tasks for us,” the firm’s founder Aravind Srinivas had said in a LinkedIn post earlier this year. The browser is likely to include agentic AI capabilities and the ability to automate certain tasks. According to a screenshot shared by the firm’s founder Aravind Srinivas on social media platform X, the browser could send automated responses to a post on X through Comet.

Perplexity’s current AI offering, a platform which wraps around other large language models like OpenAI’s ChatGPT and China’s DeepSeek with its own fine-tuning of responses, is considered by many to be a credible way to search the



Internet. The service offers quick summaries of responses to any given question and also shows the resources on which it was basing its summary on. Unlike the current search engine experience, where a question is responded by multitudes of links to other websites which may actually contain the answer to the question, AI-based browsers are expected to change the paradigm of online search, by not only offering personalised, concise responses to a query, but also prompting a user to look for more related and relevant prompts that could further solve their query.

Last month, a US judge ruled that Google has illegal monopolies in ad technology, setting up a possibility that regulators could push for breaking up the company. Last year, a US judge ruled that Google violated antitrust law, spending billions of dollars to create an illegal monopoly and become the world’s default search engine. These judgments are a setback to the online search giant, which has seemingly been on the backfoot of perception wars in the AI race, which have come to be dictated by the likes of OpenAI, and more recently, China’s DeepSeek. For years, Google has wielded great power over the Internet, from being the undisputed leader of online search to its acquisition of Android (and later the bundling of its services), which powers a majority of smartphones around the world today. The rise of the likes of OpenAI and Perplexity is the first time the Mountain View, California, based company has faced increasing competition in its own fortress.

Trading activity by individuals in equity derivatives stays high; Sebi re-examining

Despite tightening of regulations in equity index derivatives, the trading activity of individuals in the segment continues to remain high. Concerned over higher participation of individuals in the segment, the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) is re-examining the trading activity, sources said. It could be noted that in October 2024, the Sebi had announced a set of six measures to strengthen the equity index derivatives, also known as equity futures & options (F&O), framework, which included recalibration of contract size for equity derivatives, rationalisation of weekly index derivatives products and increase in tail risk coverage on the day of options expiry. The new measures were announced following an exponential surge in trading volumes in the segment, with the majority of investors incurring losses. Post the new set of measures announced last year in the segment, Sebi analysed the trading activity in the equity derivatives segment for the period from December 2024 to March 2025. “Number of individuals trading in equity derivatives is down 12 per cent year-on-year (YoY) and up 77 per cent from two year ago,” as per the findings. The Sebi analysis showed that on a year-on-year basis, index options volume of individuals is down by 5 per cent (in terms of premium) and 16 per cent in notional terms.

However, compared to two year ago, index options volume is up by 34 per cent (in premium) and 99 per cent (in notional terms). “Sebi continues to monitor the activity and will re-examine the trading activity of individuals in index options from an investor protection and systemic stability perspective,” said a source. The source said even after tightening of rules last year, India continues to see the highest level of trading in the equity derivatives segment, particularly in index options, in relation to the size of its cash market. It could be noted that Sebi, in its efforts to enhance trading convenience, strengthening risk monitoring and investor protection, had proposed a set of measures in February this year, aimed at aligning risk metrics in the derivatives segment with actual market exposure. The consultation paper recommended moving to a Future Equivalent (FutEq) measure to measure positions in the market. According to sources, the public feedback on the proposals recommended by the consultation paper has been largely positive. The regulator has made some changes in the proposals after getting the feedback from the public. The Sebi has relaxed the position limits for index options and index futures to Rs 1,500 crore on a net basis and Rs 10,000 crore on a gross basis (each side).

10,000 steps not the only way to heart health: New study reveals an alternative



Incidental but brisk physical activities include climbing stairs, walking a dog, doing your groceries physically and walking back with the bags (like you would walk with weights) mopping the floor, mowing the lawn and walking to your car parked some distance away. Incidental but brisk physical activities include climbing stairs, walking a dog, doing your groceries physically and walking back with the bags (like you would walk with weights) mopping the floor, mowing the lawn and walking to your car parked some distance away.

As a cardiologist, I often find it difficult to get my 40-minute walk or my 10,000 steps at a single stretch. So I do exercise snacking, splitting my routine into 10 minutes in the morning and then 20 minutes in the evening. In between, I often do shorter vigorous activities like climbing the stairs to my department instead of taking the lift. And now research shows that these short burst activities done several times a day are as good as 10,000 steps in protecting your heart. Prof Emmanuel Stamatakis of the University of Sydney and his team analysed data of 24,000 participants from the UK Biobank and found that as little as three minutes of moderate, non-structured exercise activity, or what we incidental physical activity, can help lower your risk of heart disease and mortality. Not only that, this way people

of any age can meet their daily quota of step counts without feeling pressured.

What qualifies as short burst vigorous activities?

Incidental but brisk physical activities include climbing stairs, walking a dog, doing your groceries physically and walking back with the bags (like you would walk with weights) mopping the floor, mowing the lawn and walking to your car parked some distance away. In short, it refers to everyday activities that require a higher level of physical exertion. First and foremost, short intense bursts of activity like jumping jacks or brisk walking can elevate your heart rate, building endurance. These help you burn calories consistently. Brisk exercises, even in small chunks, help reduce the risk of heart disease by improving blood flow, lowering cholesterol levels and strengthening the heart muscle. Exercise snacks can help increase oxygen consumption, improve blood vessel function and make your heart more efficient at pumping blood. Such drills neutralise the effects of sitting for a long time. The chances of a cardiac event are reduced as you end up lowering weight, low density lipoprotein (LDL) or bad cholesterol and blood pressure.

Why is exercise snacking easy to adhere to?

Exercise snacks are easy to incorporate into a busy day, making it easier to get regular exercise without needing to dedicate long periods of time. In fact, many of my patients get worried when I tell them that they cannot miss walking 10,000 steps a day. So I tell them to divide them through various activities, making 10,000 steps look easy enough to complete. Some simple interventions can be to shop for your fruits and vegetables physically at the local market and walking back home. Take five-minute brisk walking breaks at the workplace, walk post dinner, do some gardening and strength training at least twice a week. The latest research shows that about 4.6 minutes per day of vigorous and incidental physical activity and about 23.8 minutes per day of moderate incidental physical activity lower risk of both cardiovascular events and deaths.

Health preparedness in situations of war

While the possibility of a full-blown war between India and Pakistan seems to have been abated after the nations consented to a mutual ceasefire, it might be an important chance to think about health systems preparedness — and how public health physicians should be better trained to handle such uncertain situations.

Consequences of war on human healthA series of protracted wars around the world have highlighted the far-reaching consequences of wars on human health. A statement by WHO about ethnic conflict in Sudan reveals that the majority (>67%) of hospitals were out of service, > 4 million women were at risk of gender-based violence, and sharp increase in the probability of vector-borne and infectious diseases. More than the violence itself, it is the absence of daily amenities such as food, shelter, water, clothing, and sanitation that takes the maximum toll on health. If there is an accompanying cocktail of reduced immunity, poor nutrition, and increased exposure to risk factors predisposes war victims to various infections, which are often worsened by disrupted healthcare delivery, communication blackouts, transport shutdowns, short medical supplies, and a dwindling workforce, thereby, creating a vicious loop.

Prolonged wars, particularly in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs), can have profoundly detrimental effects. They lead to an increase in the number of refugees whose overwhelming need for care puts an enormous strain on an already fractured healthcare system. The vulnerable populations—children, women of reproductive age, and the elderly—often take the brunt. Non-communicable diseases, mental health, vaccination services, and MCH (maternal and child health) facilities often fall through the cracks of the healthcare system which has been reoriented towards handling war wounds. The medium- and long-term consequences of such health disparities are alarming. Wars do lead to regression of a country’s development and negate any strides made in health equity. They also exacerbate environmental degradation, rapid deforestation, habitat destruction, greenhouse emissions (the third year of the Ukraine war caused the CO2 emissions to rise by 230 metric tons), and contamination of natural resources with munition residues disrupt the natural food cycles. All of us are well aware of environmental impacts of chemical warfare (such as Agent Orange in the America-Vietnam War) or the genetic mutations observed in multiple generations after the Hiroshima-Nagasaki bombing. But while there are studied effects of environmental degradation, sometimes off-the-page impacts can even take epidemiologists by surprise. The destruction of mangroves in Vietnam during the war led to the creation of craters, which became breeding sites for mosquitoes and a reason for the steep rise in vector-borne diseases in the region. Public health as a discipline that looks at the intersection of health with social, psychological, physical, and economic impacts of war, acts as a bridge to the community. Experts suggest that decentralising healthcare alone can ensure optimal care in a crisis. A WHO handbook on disaster focuses on community participation. The community is often the first responder and should be endowed with practical knowledge to provide first aid care. Take, for example, the unlicensed midwives of Mosul (Iraq) with limited formal training who operated from bombed houses to provide care to pregnant women.

The disaster cycle involves mitigation and preparedness even before the disaster strikes. Detailed protocols for disaster management integrated with armed conflicts should be available at all healthcare facilities. At regular intervals, these protocols must be reiterated through knowledge dissemination and mock drills. Contingency protocols for fuel, power, water, and communications should be in place. The functioning 700-bed Al-Shifa hospital in the recent Israel-Palestine conflict was crippled, due to, among other factors, the lack of generator fuel. A mere 300 liters of fuel was sent by Israel as aid to the hospital, which requires at least 8000-12000 litres every day. A safe, strategic reserve of essential medicines, lifesaving drugs, blood bags, and vaccinations is essential to building resilient healthcare systems. Deployment of mobile health units and investment in healthcare innovation is another way of improving disaster preparedness. Healthcare systems that had preexisting digital infrastructure showed resilience, operating through telemedicine, and remote prescriptions in Ukraine. In Gaza, solar-powered dialysis machines were used to help patients with kidney failure.

Continued surveillance and documentation to check the existing as well as future needs of the community are paramount. Collaborative efforts with international



organisations such as ICRC, MSF, and the WHO should be strengthened. Diplomatic efforts between the warring countries should ensure that civilian health is not impacted, and this can be done through the creation of neutral health corridors and the availability of aid and emergency facilities. In Afghanistan, UNICEF, WHO, and Afghan health authorities negotiated for temporary ceasefires called ‘Days of Tranquility,’ which were used for vaccinating children and continuing the country’s fight against polio. In the 2008 edition of War and Public Health, Levy and Sidel emphasised the tragic impacts of war: “War accounts for more death and disability combined.” They also harp on primary, secondary, and tertiary prevention strategies that can be employed by public health professionals to address war. However, it is unfortunate that, worldwide, topics such as refugee health and the impacts of war remain out of the ambit of the public health courses. Most countries invest in their military capacity; however, they forget to make proper preparations for healthcare. A 2000 report showed that Ethiopia spent \$16 on military while only \$1 on health in 1990. On the opposite, the Assad regime of Syria was more hostile to its doctors, who were prevented from performing their duties due to fear of persecution. Until John Lennon’s dream of ‘all people living’ in peace’ when “there’s no countries, nothing to kill or die for,” is realised, it is important for doctors to be aware of their rights and responsibilities so that they can not only protect themselves but also the people suffering during a war.

The overlooked threat among women’s cancers

Ovarian cancer enjoys a reputation of being a silent killer. Is it really a silent killer? Just how significant is the disease? Ovarian cancer gives out several clues; however, we fail to pick them up. The various risk factors are clearly known, yet we tend to ignore this precious subgroup. Though screening is not routinely recommended, tests to detect the disease in its early stages are available. Ovarian cancer, despite being a common cancer, remains under a shroud, and time has come to focus on its awareness almost as much as it’s more popular sisters, breast cancer and cervical cancer.

Ovarian cancers rank third behind cancers of the breast and cervix in Indian women, endometrial cancer making the last of the quartet. The numbers of ovarian cancers in India is startling! studies combining various population registries have shown that that India may have the most number of ovarian cancers globally, and the second highest incidence in the world. It is the 7th most common cancer worldwide. Its incidence is 2.5 % of all female cancer cases, but accounts for 5 % of the deaths. 90% of the cases are seen in the post menopausal age group of 54 to 65 years. The most dangerous statistic is that almost 60% are diagnosed with the disease having spread more than locally when survival (5 year survival) is around 29%. Survival when disease is restricted locally is around 90%. The difference in this statistic is very significant, especially since clear risk factors exist. The incidence is four fold amongst first degree relatives of patients with ovarian cancers, and two folds amongst second degree relatives. Two distinct genetic mutations which cause increased incidence of ovarian cancer are identified. These account for 20% of cases which are due to these inherited mutations, mainly BRCA 1 and BRCA 2. Other risk factors include obesity, tall height (due to growth hormone exposure early in life), cigarette smoking, physical inactivity and nulliparity. The late recognition of signs and symptoms is one of the major obstacles in recognizing the disease. The other major obstacle is the absence of reliable screening tests.

From U-19 to 8,000 runs and 100th Test: How PCA stadium saw Virat Kohli Test career unfold



GNS News Agency, May 17

While former Indian captain Virat Kohli announced his Test retirement after a 123-Test match career on Monday, the 36-year-old played his 100th Test match at IS Bindra PCA International Stadium at Mohali in March 2022. While Kohli has scored 30 Test centuries in his Test career, the Indian batsman played four Test matches at the Mohali stadium in his Test career spanning 14 years with his highest score being an unbeaten 67 against Australia in 2013. Overall, Kohli scored a total of 244 runs in seven innings in four Test matches at Mohali during his career.

With his 100th Test match being played in March 2022 amid Covid-19 restrictions against Sri Lanka, the then PCA secretary R P Singla remembered the special Test for the Mohali stadium. "When BCCI announced Mohali as the venue for Virat Kohli's 100th Test match, it was a moment of pride for PCA. The stadium had hosted some iconic matches like India-Australia Test in 2008, which saw Sachin Tendulkar crossing Brian Lara's then record of most num-

ber of runs in Test cricket, and to host Virat Kohli's 100th Test was special for all of us. Amid Covid-19 restrictions, we made all the arrangements and also got special memorabilia made for Virat Kohli for the historic feat," said Singla. With a total of 9,230 runs in 210 Test innings, Kohli stands fourth in the all-time list of Indian batsmen with most runs only behind Sachin Tendulkar (15,921 runs), Rahul Dravid (13,265 runs) and Sunil Gavaskar (10,122).

During his knock of 45 runs against Sri Lanka in his 100th Test, Kohli also crossed the 8,000-run mark in Test matches during his knock of 45 runs making him 16th fastest in the world to score 8,000 runs in Test cricket. Kohli's wife Anushka Sharma and brother Vikas Kohli too were in attendance to see him achieve the historic feat of playing in his 100th Test. Kohli Virat Kohli being felicitated by Rahul Dravid on his 100th Test match at IS Bindra PCA International Stadium in Mohali in March 2022; (right) with wife Anushka Sharma. Sportspics "Fans were allowed to watch the historic Test match only three days prior to the Test match. So, we had to make special counters for tickets. There was a lot of craze to watch Virat Kohli play his 100th Test match here and Virat Kohli crossing the 8,000 run mark in Test cricket made the Test more special," recalled Singla. BCCI's former chief curator Daljit Singh too remembered the times Kohli played in Test matches at Mohali stadium. "I had first seen him when he had come as part of the U-19 side for a tournament at Mohali. He has grown to be one of the stalwarts of Indian cricket. First there was Sunil Gavaskar, then Sachin Tendulkar and then came Virat Kohli. His fitness was supreme all these years and all the youngsters should take a leaf out of Virat's fitness and dedication to excel in future," said Singh.

'Rammed into vans and taken to hotel... madness': Alyssa Healy recalls what happened the night PBKS-DC was abandoned

GNS News Agency, May 17

Australia's women's team captain Alyssa Healy recalled the anxiety and stress the players had to face last week in Dharamsala after the Indian Premier League match between Punjab Kings and Delhi Capitals was called off because of the India-Pakistan conflict. On May 8, the lights at the stadium went off in the 11th over due to attacks in Pathankot, roughly 90km from Dharamsala. The next morning, the league was suspended. On Monday, following a ceasefire understanding between India and Pakistan, it was announced that the IPL would resume coming Saturday. Describing the sequence of incidents that night, Healy said it was a 'surreal experience' and 'there was madness'. "It was a surreal experience," Healy told The Willow Talk podcast, according to The Australian. "All of a sudden a couple of the light towers went out and we were just sitting there up the top waiting... we're a large group of family and extra support staff and the next minute the guy who wrangles the group of us and gets us on the bus came up and his face was white.

"He was like, 'we need to go right now'. Then (another) guy came out and his face was white and he grabbed one of the children and said, 'we need to leave right now'. We were like, 'what's going on?' We weren't told anything. We had no idea. Next minute we are being shuffled into this room which was like a holding pen. All the boys were in there. Faf (South African star Faf du Plessis) didn't even have shoes on. We were all just waiting there looking stressed. 'I said to Mitch, 'what's going on?' He said the town 60km away had just been smacked by some of the missiles so there was a complete blackout in the area. That's why the lights were off because the Dharamsala stadium



was like a beacon at that point in time. "All of a sudden we're crammed into vans and off we go back to the hotel. There was madness. "We ended up going southwest towards the (Pakistan) border, which was a little bit terrifying," she was quoted as saying by The Australian. "Mitch and I have played too much Call of Duty and we're noticing all the (surface-to-missile) sites that were just sitting there ready to go. They're radar-operated systems that shoot missiles at aircraft. (We saw) a few of them on the way through in some small towns." Healy also recalled how the anxiety levels increased when firecrackers went off near the team hotel when the players were having lunch. "Some peanut down in the village decides it's a great idea to set off some fireworks in the middle of the day," she recalled. "I think everyone at lunch (froze), turned around and was like, 'oh my God!' And then I could pinpoint, I could see the fireworks going up. I hope it was a wedding and I hope they have a beautiful marriage but that was just not good timing. There was anxiety and terrified at the same time, but I still feel like we would have been OK. We weren't right in the firing line."

PCB names Mike Hesson as Pakistan's white ball head coach



GNS News Agency, May 17

Former New Zealand coach Mike Hesson was appointed as the head coach of the Pakistan men's cricket team in white-ball cricket, the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) announced on Tuesday. Hesson will take over from Aqib Javed, who was appointed on an interim basis in November, a month after Gary Kirsten resigned, barely six months after taking the job. Hesson's appointment will be effective from the 26th of May, 2025. Hesson led New Zealand in the finals of the 2015 ODI World Cup final during his six-year spell as head coach for the national team. Later, he also

served as the head coach of the Kenya national team and the Indian Premier League franchise Punjab Kings XI. Apart from that, he was the director of cricket operations for the Royal Challengers Bengaluru in the IPL from 2020 to 2023. The 50-year-old is currently the head coach of Pakistan Super League defending champions Islamabad United.

In 2018, Hesson stepped down as New Zealand's coach, citing a break from the rigours of international cricket. Javed — who represented Pakistan in 22 Tests and 163 ODIs from 1988 to 1998 — who also took over as Pakistan's interim red-ball coach after Jason Gillespie resigned in December, has been appointed as director of high performance, the PCB said. PCB are yet to provide any details on who would take over as Pakistan's coach in red-ball cricket. "Mike brings with him a wealth of international experience and a proven track record of developing competitive sides," PCB chairman Mohsin Naqvi said in a statement. "We look forward to his expertise and leadership in shaping the future of Pakistan's white-ball cricket," he added. Pakistan has had lacklustre performances in the recent past with a group stage exit in 2the 023 ODI World Cup in India, the 2024 T20 World Cup in the USA and Caribbean Islands and the 2025 Champions Trophy, which they co-hosted with the UAE.

Pakistan T20 cricket league set to resume after ceasefire

Islamabad: The Pakistan Super League is set to resume this weekend after a ceasefire between Pakistan and India. "PSL X picks up from where it left off! 6 teams, 0 fear," Pakistan Cricket Board chairman Mohsin Naqvi posted Tuesday on X. "Let the aura take over as we unite and celebrate the spirit of cricket," he posted. "Get ready for 8 thrilling matches starting 17th May, leading up to the Grand Final on 25th May. Best of luck to all the teams!" Pakistan and India agreed to a truce last Saturday after talks to defuse their most serious military confrontation in decades.

The Pakistan-based Twenty20 league was suspended last Thursday after an Indian drone fell near the Rawalpindi Cricket Stadium, which was due to host a game featuring foreign players from Australia, England, South Africa, West Indies, New Zealand and Afghanistan. The organizers first proposed moving the tournament to Dubai but later decided

to postpone it after foreign players showed their reluctance to participate in the tournament due to security concerns. Around 43 foreign cricketers — competing in six PSL teams — were flown out of Pakistan from an airbase in Rawalpindi. It was not clear how many foreign players will return to Pakistan for the remainder of eight games, which are likely to be played at Rawalpindi and Lahore. Quetta Gladiators have already qualified for the playoffs and lead the standings with 13 points. Karachi Kings, Islamabad United, Lahore Qalandars and Peshawar Zalmi are in the running to fill the remaining three playoff spots. Multan Sultans, led by Mohammad Rizwan, are already out of playoff race after losing eight of their nine league games. On Monday, the world's most lucrative T20 league — the Indian Premier League — also announced the resumption of the tournament.

'Thank you, coach Andy': Djokovic, Murray end partnership after six months



GNS News Agency, May 17

Novak Djokovic has ended his stint with coach Andy Murray after six months. (Reuters) Novak Djokovic has ended his stint with coach Andy Murray after six months. Novak Djokovic and Andy Murray have ended their coaching partnership after six months together. The decision comes on the back of the Serb's poor run of results this season. "Thank you, coach Andy, for all the hard work, fun & support over last six months on & off the court, really enjoyed deepening our friendship together," said Djokovic in a statement. Thank you, coach Andy, for all the hard work, fun & support over last six months on & off the court. I really enjoyed deepening our friendship together. Djokovic and Murray announced their blockbuster association in late November 2024, only months after the latter had announced his retirement. The duo were off the blocks finely, with an

injured Djokovic defeating Carlos Alcaraz in the Australian Open quarter-finals earlier this year before being forced to retire from the next round against Alexander Zverev.

Djokovic had lavished praise on Murray's work ethic and had agreed to extend their stint up until Wimbledon this year. However, the 24-time Grand Slam champion has struggled on his way back from injury. Djokovic suffered three losses before heading into the Miami Open where he suffered a defeat in the final against Jakob Mensik. He has since marked another three-match losing streak, including the straight-sets opening-round exits before world No 32, Alejandro Tabilo in Monte Carlo, and No/ 44, Matteo Arnaldi in Madrid. The latest defeat also prompted Djokovic to withdraw from the Italian Open. "Kind of a new reality for me, I have to say," Djokovic said in Madrid. "Trying to win a match or two, not really thinking about getting far in the tournament. It's a completely different feeling from what I had in 20-plus years of professional tennis, so it's kind of a challenge for me mentally to really face these sensations on the court, going out early now regularly in the tournaments." "Thanks to Novak for the unbelievable opportunity to work together and thanks to his team for all their hard work over the past six months. I wish Novak all the best for the rest of the season," Murray said in a statement. The 37-year-olds, born just a week apart in May, have competed with each other as rivals since their childhood days. In 36 meetings at the professional level, Djokovic has held a superior record over the Briton, winning on 25 occasions.

South Africa squad for WTC final against Australia: Temba Bavuma leads 15-man team, Kagiso Rabada included

GNS News Agency, May 17

South Africa on Tuesday unveiled their 15-member squad for the forthcoming ICC World Test Championship final against Australia, to be played at the Lord's Cricket Ground in London on June 11-15. Pace spearhead Kagiso Rabada, who served a one-month suspension for a recent positive dope test, will mark his return just in time for the summit clash. The pace set will also be bolstered by the inclusion of Lungi Ngidi, who has made a successful comeback from injury. Young seamer Kwena Maphaka will make for Ngidi in the squad which also poses the pace threat of Marco Jansen, Corbin Bosch and Wiaan Mulder. Head coach Shukri Conrad believed the outfit covered all bases for South Africa in English conditions. "Firstly, I want to congratulate each of the players selected for this squad. It is a special moment for this group to contest the WTC Final. Over the past 18 months, we've worked hard to build a competitive red-ball unit, and this achievement reflects that progress. A key part of our success has been consistency in selection, and we've stuck with the core group of players who have been part of this WTC cycle. We've selected a balanced squad for the conditions we expect at Lord's." Qualifying for the summit clash for the first time in three cycles, the Proteas will be led by Temba Bavuma.



Having played in 12 Tests during the league stage across the 2023-25 cycle, South Africa racked up eight wins, three losses and a draw to tally a points percentage (PCT) of 69.44. While the Saffers topped the table, Australia finished second with a 67.54 PCT. South Africa squad for WTC final: Temba Bavuma (c), Aiden Markram, Lungi Ngidi, Tony di Zorsi, David Bedingham, Keshav Maharaj, Tristan Stubbs, Corbin Bosch, Senuran Muthusamy, Marco Jansen, Kagiso Rabada, Kyle Verreyne, Dane Paterson, Wiaan Mulder, Ryan Rickelton.

What foreign media said about Virat Kohli's retirement



GNS News Agency, May 17

The news of Virat Kohli announcing retirement from Test cricket on Monday made headlines across the globe. The 36-year-old widely regarded as a torchbearer of Test cricket received widespread admiration for the same not just from England and Australian media but also from the New York Times. Apart from being the face of Indian cricket, Kohli emerged as a universal sports icon and with 272 million followers on Instagram remains one of the most followed athletes around the globe. Given his popularity, his unexpected retirement with the England tour just a month away, even caught the attention of New York Times. The New York Times paid a fitting tribute to Indian batting in an article headlined "Virat Kohli made one billion Indians dream again and helped save Test cricket."

"Eyes focused, collar turned up, an armband on the left and an armband tattoo on the right, the iconic wrist-twirl of the bat. Virat Kohli, the world's most famous cricketer, at the crease in whites, brought balance, poise and ferocity — a sight to behold unless you were in the opposition XI." The New York Times via The Athletic wrote about Kohli. Writing on The Times London, former England captain Mike Atherton began with what Kohli brought to the game. "Farewell then to Test cricket for one of the best, most charismatic and influential players of my lifetime. Virat Kohli's retirement from the five-day game was anticipated, with reports emanating from India about his intentions late last week, but that does not lessen the magnitude of the moment: the going of a figure who continued to hold Test cricket dearest of all, and to fight his country's corner with relentless determination and pride, signals the end of an era in Indian cricket," he wrote.

Atherton then went on to make special mention about Kohli's charisma and placing it only behind Viv Richards, Imran Khan and Shane Warne. "More than anything, Kohli had great presence as a cricketer; you could not take your eyes off him. He was one of the four most charismatic cricketers I have seen, alongside Viv Richards, Imran Khan and Shane Warne. He was sometimes no angel, of course, as the shoulder bump on young Sam Konstas in the last year's Boxing Day Test would concede, and he could be petulant and short-tempered, but the ledger is very much in his favour. The game has been enriched by his presence," Atherton commented. In BBC website, former England seamer Steve Finn recalled how he faced up a then 17-year-old Kohli in an Under-19 fixture. "What I remember most

vividly is how keen he was to engage in a battle with us. In age-group cricket, some players are there to score their runs so they progress through the system. Not Kohli. He was there to win. It was this trait that elevated him above his peers and served him so well throughout a Test career that has carried the hopes of 1.4bn people," Finn wrote in a column for the BBC.

'I don't think Virat Kohli and Rohit Sharma will play 2027 ODI World Cup': Sunil Gavaskar

GNS News Agency, May 17

The Indian cricket has been pressed hard into a huge transition over the course of one week with stalwarts Virat Kohli and Rohit Sharma announcing their retirements ahead of the five-match Test tour to England in June. Following Rohit who quit the longest format last week, Kohli dropped the bombshell announcement on Monday, ending his career with 9230 runs in 123 Tests. While both Kohli and Rohit have committed themselves to hold on in the ODI format, India batting legend Sunil Gavaskar feels that India's superstar duo will not make it to the next Cricket World Cup in late 2026.

The veteran batters were integral to India's Champions Trophy triumph in March this year in Dubai, with Kohli top-scoring in the semi-final against Australia and Rohit leading the charge against New Zealand with his blazing 76, deeming him Player-of-the-Match. With India's red-ball squad moving into transition, Gavaskar feels that Rohit and Kohli's futures in the 50-overs format depends entirely on how the team management and selectors' perspective. "They have been massive performers in this format of the game. Again, the selection committee will probably be looking at the 2027 World Cup. They will be looking at whether they will be able to be in the team for the 2027 World Cup?" Will they be able to make the kind of contributions they have been making? That will be the thought process of the selection committee. If the selection committee thinks 'yes, they can', then both of them will be there for that," Gavaskar told in a chat with Sports Today.

Candid in his admission, Gavaskar said that he could not foresee the two prolific batters making it to the next iteration of the World Cup. "No, I don't think they will be playing. I am being very honest. But, who knows, in the next year or so, if they strike a rich vein of form, and if they keep scoring hundreds and hundreds, even God can't drop them," Gavaskar stressed.

‘My standards go lower than my heels when I meet someone’: RJ Mahvash says that she is ‘dumb in love’



Social media personality RJ Mahvash is currently making a transition into acting through a new web series, *Pyaar Paisa Profit*. She will be seen alongside *The Archies* (2023) actor, Mihir Ahuja, and the show will also feature Ashish Raghav, Pratik Yadav, Shivangi Khedkar and Neil Bhooapalam. While promoting her new show, Mahvash talked about her love life and the kinds of choices she makes while looking for a partner. Mahvash told Radio Nasha that just like her character in the series, she doesn't always make the right decisions when it comes to love. "Just like my character in the series, I am dumb in love, but I also avoid red flags. My standards go below my heels when I meet

the person; before that, they're very high." She added that in reality, people should be 'dumb in love', and you don't need to think very deeply while falling in love with someone.

Mahvash, who is a well-known content creator, found space in tabloids across the country when she was sighted alongside cricketer Yuzvendra Chahal, watching a match. Back then, Chahal was going through his divorce with Dhanashree Verma, and this fuelled the dating rumours between Mahvash and the cricketer even more. Both personalities, however, denied this claim and said that they were just good friends. The rumours picked up some steam again when Mahvash took to Instagram to congratulate Chahal on securing a hat-trick in an IPL match. The caption of the story read, "God mode on kyaaa? @yuzi_chahal23 strength of a warrior, sir (salute emoji)." Earlier, Mahvash made an appearance on Yuva's YouTube channel and addressed her love life, saying that she does not relate with the dating practices of today. "I'm very single and happy. I don't understand the current concept of marriage, and I am someone who would only date someone when I want to marry that person, so I don't go out on casual dates. Just like Ali in Dhoom, I start imagining kids and the future." Among all the rumours and speculations about her personal life, her life on the professional front seems to be going just fine. Apart from *Pyaar Paisa Profit*, she has also been listed as a producer for Nawazuddin Siddiqui's delayed project *Section 108*.

Coolie director Lokesh Kanagaraj reveals why his Rajinikanth-Kamal Haasan film was shelved; comments on chances of revival: ‘It’s about two ageing gangsters’

With an enviable track record and 100 per cent success rate so far, Lokesh Kanagaraj ranks among the most promising and bankable directors in Tamil cinema. Following the phenomenal success of the "Thalapathy" Vijay-starrer *Leo* (2023), Lokesh is set to make a grand comeback, this time with an even bigger ambitious project, headlined by "Superstar" Rajinikanth. Titled *Coolie*, the movie is currently in its post-production phase and will be released hit the screens on August 14. One of the very few young filmmakers fortunate enough to have worked with both Rajinikanth and Kamal Haasan (in *Vikram*), Lokesh had, in fact, once contemplated a project featuring both Tamil cinema legends together. Despite coming close to being greenlit, the project was ultimately put on hold due to multiple reasons.

Director Lokesh Kanagaraj himself recently opened up about the highly ambitious movie, which would have featured the two Tamil icons as ageing gangsters. Originally envisioned to go on floors after *Kaithi* (2019), the filmmaker has said that it would be difficult to revive the project now. "I tried sincerely, but it didn't happen. It was dropped because of COVID-19. We were about to sign (the contract). They, in fact, spoke to each other in front of me. After I narrated the story to them, both Rajini sir and Kamal sir spoke to each other in front of me on the loudspeaker," he said during a chat with Sudhir Srinivasan on his YouTube channel.

He further mentioned that the project was supposed to be bankrolled by Kamal Haasan himself. "It seems they (Rajini and Kamal) had made a commitment to each other early on, agreeing to collaborate in this particular year. One of them had said, 'I will work in your company's production venture.' Apparently, this discussion happened quite a while ago. Then, later, they came across me and I shared this idea with them," he mentioned. Although Lokesh is not sure if he would be able to restart the movie now, the director, nonetheless, emphasised that the decision of the two Tamil stars would be final in the matter. "The (story) idea won't



change. It's about two ageing gangsters and their lives. However, the current market size is entirely different now. At that time, neither *Jailer* (2023) nor *Vikram* (2022) had happened. We discussed this project back then. With the release of these two movies, their businesses have expanded significantly. To do a movie balancing that... The scale of the film may not... Just think about it: first, their salaries have to be paid, then mine; and if we were to go for a shoot after that, the process would be too big. It's great if the movie happens; let's see. It's up to both of them. They should take the call. But practically, it's a bit difficult now." While K Balachander's *Apoorva Raagangal* (1975), which marked Rajinikanth's feature film debut, was the first movie in which he and Kamal appeared together, they collaborated on a handful of films afterwards, including *Moondru Mudichu*, *Avargal*, *16 Vayathinile*, *Aadu Puli Attam*, *Aval Appadithan* and *Ninaithale Inikkum*. They were last seen together in the Hindi movie *Geraftaar*.

‘Anurag Kashyap was a drunkard who palmed off work to Vikram Motwane’: Vivek Agnihotri says it became difficult to deal with filmmaker

Controversial filmmaker Vivek Agnihotri, best known for films such as *The Kashmir Files* and *The Tashkent Files*, recalled working with Anurag Kashyap and Vikramaditya Motwane on the film *Dhan Dhana Dhan Goal*. He said that Anurag was a drinker back then, which became difficult to handle on set. They also had differences over the direction in which to take the film, and Agnihotri implied that he also didn't see eye-to-eye with star John Abraham. In an interview with Hindi Rush, the filmmaker said that he has since quit mainstream Bollywood.

Asked about his equation with Anurag, whose political ideologies are perceived to be different to Agnihotri's, the filmmaker commented about his 'maansik haalat (mental wellbeing)'. He added, "Of course I've interacted with Anurag. We worked together on *Goal*. He was writing the movie. Saif Ali Khan and Priyanka Chopra were supposed to do it, but Saif had some personal issues at the time, so he left. Then we got John and Bipasha. Anurag was a heavy drinker back then, and he couldn't be trusted. He brought Vikram Motwane on board, who is a very talented guy. He told me, 'Mera naya ladka hai woh kaam karega'."

He continued, "Gradually, he palmed off all the work to Vikram. But they had a different vision for the film, which didn't match with mine. Ultimately, we were at loggerheads. The production house had a word with Anurag... He became difficult to handle, because only an alcoholic knows what an alcoholic goes through. It became a very big problem. We've worked closely, and we are cordial whenever we've met. But yes, he has said certain things about me on social media." In a past interview with *Mid-Day*, Motwane recalled the experience of working with Agnihotri, and said that the original script he wrote with Anurag was one of the best things he's ever written. "So, UTV was producing the film, and Vivek had approached them with this story idea that he wanted to do about football, and they said okay. But he wanted a really good writer, so they called up Anurag, and he said, 'Look, I know nothing about football, but this guy (Motwane) knows everything about football. So, I wrote



it, and they were happy. The film got made, but not exactly in the way that Anurag and me wanted, to put it mildly. But it is what it is. At that time, it was like beggars can't be choosers, you got paid for work. I still believe the original script of mine is one of the best things I've written. I loved it. I'm crazy about football, and for me, it was a big passion thing about a sport I've loved." Anurag has said in recent interviews that he no longer drinks. He said at an event in Annapurna College of Film and Media, "When I was dealing with a lot of things in the industry, I was also an alcoholic for a brief period of time. I was an addict and I went to de-addiction centre, after which I discovered new details about my writing process."

Virat Kohli tells Premanand Ji Maharaj, ‘abhi thik hain’ as he visits Vrindavan after Test retirement; Anushka Sharma ask, ‘Jap se ho jayega?’.



A day after former Indian cricket team captain Virat Kohli announced his retirement from Test cricket, the ace batsman visited the temple town of Vrindavan in Uttar Pradesh's Mathura district, accompanied by his wife, Bollywood actor Anushka Sharma. The couple also met Premanand Govind Sharan, or Premanand Ji Maharaj, at his ashram there and sought his blessings. Now, photos and videos of their visit to Vrindavan have gone viral on social media. While one of the videos shows them arriving in Vrindavan by car, the photos feature the couple kneeling before Premanand Ji Maharaj at his ashram. In the images, the guru, clad in yellow robes, is seen speaking to the power couple, dressed in simple attire, through a microphone as they listen intently. This is not the first time the couple has been spotted visiting the spiritual leader. They reportedly met him earlier in January 2023 and again in January 2025.

As the duo greets him, he asks Virat, "Prasanna ho? (Are you happy?)" Virat answers, "Ji, abhi thik hain (Yes, I'm okay)." Maharaj Ji gently replied, "You should stay well." "Ye vaibhav milna kripa nahi hai ye punya hai. Bhagwan ki kria maani jati hai andar ka chintan badalna... Bilkul aise hi rahi jaise reh rahe ho bilkul sannasrik ban kar raho, lekin andar ka chintan apka badal jaye, usme yash ki bhavna na reh jaye... Andar ka chintan ye rahna achaiye ki 'Prabhu bhot janm vyateet ho gaya ab mujhe aap chahiye'." (Prosperity is not merely God's grace — it is the result of virtue (punya). It is considered to be a movement toward the divine. What truly matters is the transformation of your inner self... Live just as you are living now, fully engaged in

the world, but let your inner self change. Let there be no desire for recognition or fame within. Your inner thoughts should be: 'Lord, enough of all worldly experiences, now, I seek only You')."

Anushka then asks him, "Kya jap se ho jaega?" Taking to Instagram to announce his Test retirement on Monday, Virat wrote: "It's been 14 years since I first wore the baggy blue in Test cricket. Honestly, I never imagined the journey this format would take me on. It's tested me, shaped me, and taught me lessons I'll carry for life. There's something deeply personal about playing in whites. The quiet grind, the long days, the small moments that no one sees but that stay with you forever." He continued, "As I step away from this format, it's not easy — but it feels right. I've given it everything I had, and it's given me back so much more than I could've hoped for. I'm walking away with a heart full of gratitude — for the game, for the people I shared the field with, and for every single person who made me feel seen along the way. I'll always look back at my Test career with a smile." Sharing a picture of the two of them walking side by side on a ground, Anushka Sharma noted on social media later, "They'll talk about the records and the milestones — but I'll remember the tears you never showed, the battles no one saw, and the unwavering love you gave this format of the game. I know how much all this took from you. After every Test series, you came back a little wiser, a little humbler — and watching you evolve through it all has been a privilege." "Somehow, I always imagined you'd retire international cricket in whites — But you've always followed your heart, and so I just want to say my love, you've earned every bit of this goodbye," she added.

Namashi recalls dad Mithun Chakraborty was tagged a B-grade actor, says film industry wouldn't give him work today: ‘Bollywood has forgotten outsiders’

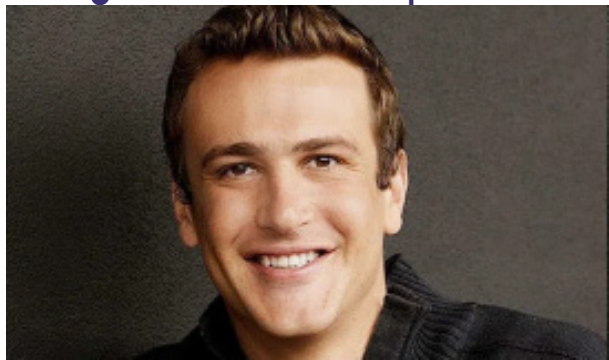


After Govinda's wife Sunita Ahuja recently called out Bollywood for not treating the iconic '90s star fairly, another voice has joined the conversation. Namashi Chakraborty, son of '90s star Mithun Chakraborty, has now shared his thoughts along similar lines and revealed how the Hindi film industry once labeled his father a B-grade actor. In a recent interaction on the YouTube channel *Who's On Air?* with Kamlesh Shetty, Namashi spoke about how his father has always maintained a humble demeanour despite being one of the biggest stars of his time. He said, "I was never raised in a way that I felt special. My father doesn't behave like a star even today, even though he was the biggest star of his generation. He is a very down-to-earth, humble, honest man." Calling out Bollywood folks as unauthentic, he said, "My father is not very much like a Bollywood star. Bollywood people are very fake, my father is a great exception."

Namashi lauded his father's journey — coming from Bengal and making a name in Mumbai, entirely on his own. The star kid shared that it was Mithun's grit that carried him through his career, even when the Mumbai media labeled him a B-grade actor. "What sets him apart is that he is self-made. There was a time, in mid 90s, when my father's career was declining as a lead. So, he started doing low-budget action films in Ooty. He made about a 100 of them in Ooty, and the media had termed him a B-grade actor. They would look down on his films. The fact that he was able to do 100 films living in Ooty was unheard of. He made his own industry but the media never supported that, they have their favourites." Namashi took examples of self-made superstars Govinda and Shah Rukh Khan and commented

on the current state of Bollywood and how the industry has become unwelcoming to outsiders. "Bollywood has forgotten to give work to outsiders. We now look at people with names and backgrounds and who is whose friend. That's why we don't have superstars anymore but back then anybody who had talent could make it. Today, if a Mithun Chakraborty comes from Bengal, I don't think Bollywood would be excited to launch him or give him a chance. Today, people don't believe in outsiders, everything has become about your name. We don't look for talent, we look for surnames," he added.

Jason to star in psychological thriller 'Sponsor'



"Sponsor" features Segel in the role of Peter, who makes a big mistake by deciding to drive after the party while being drunk.

Los Angeles: Actor Jason Segel, best known for his role in the sitcom "How I Met Your Mother", will headline the psychological thriller "Sponsor". According to the entertainment news outlet *Variety*, the upcoming film will be directed by James Ponsoldt. It will also reunite Segel and Ponsoldt, who have previously worked in the series "Shrinking". "Sponsor" features Segel in the role of Peter, who makes a big mistake by deciding to drive after the party while being drunk. What follows is a terrible accident that leaves him with a choice to either go to prison or take on a recovery program.

"We set out to explore what happens when support becomes control, when the person you turn to for salvation slowly becomes your worst nightmare," Segel and Ponsoldt said in joint statement. "After collaborating on 'Shrinking,' we were excited to channel that same emotional intimacy into a psychological thriller, where the stakes are darker, more dangerous, and deeply personal. We can't wait to bring this unsettling story to life with such an incredible team."