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For last 58 years and counting, this Telangana village has recited Bhagavad Gita every day without break

Sangareddy: Gollapally village in Kondapur mandal, just 15 km from Sangareddy town, is a village with a difference. Here, for the last 58 years, elders, women and youth come together to recite the Bhagavad Gita every day. Read that again. Yes, every day, for the last 58 years. The practice, which was started by Munagala Manik Reddy, Praveda Anji Reddy and Ivuram Narayan Reddy, all youngsters then, has been continuing until today without a break. Having attended a Bhagavad Gita recitation programme in another village, the trio decided to start the practice in their own village on the occasion of Dasara in 1967. Since then, generations of people born and brought up in the village have continued the practice.

HM Amit Shah confirms killing of top naxal leader Namballa Keshav Rao in Chhattisgarh



GNS News Agency, May 21

Hyderabad: At least 27 Naxalites were killed in an encounter with security forces in Chhattisgarh's Bastar region on Wednesday. Earlier reports suggested that top Maoist leader Namballa Keshav Rao, alias Basavaraju, was among those killed. Confirming the reports, Union Home Minister Amit Shah took to X to announce the death of the top Maoist leader in the encounter. In his statement on the social media platform, Amit Shah said, "A landmark achievement in the battle to eliminate Naxalism. Today, in an operation in Narayanpur, Chhattisgarh, our security forces neutralized 27 dreaded Maoists, including Namballa Keshav Rao, alias Basavaraju — the General Secretary of CPI-Maoist, topmost leader, and the backbone of the Naxal movement.

"Applauding the security forces and agencies for their role in the major breakthrough, he added that this is the first time in history that a General Secretary-ranked leader has been neutralized by the forces. The Home Minister also reiterated that the Modi-led government at the Centre is committed to eliminating Naxalism before March 31, 2026. Kesava Rao hailed from Srikakulam district of Andhra Pradesh and is aged around 67 years. He was made the General Secretary of the CPI Maoist, after its charismatic leader Muppala Laxmana Rao alias Ganapathi stepped down from the post in 2017.

Congress conspiring to destroy Kaleshwaram project, putting Telangana growth at risk: KTR

GNS News Agency, May 21

Nalgonda: BRS working president KT Rama Rao came down heavily on the Congress government for conspiring to destroy the Kaleshwaram project and putting Telangana's growth at risk. Asserting that justice and righteousness will prevail, he said the Congress's diversionary tactics would not stop the people from seeing through their failures. "All their notices and allegations are mere dust. People will soon teach Revanth Reddy a lesson," he warned.

Addressing the media in Nalgonda on Wednesday, Rama Rao said both the Congress and BJP were indulging in political theatrics, while ignoring real issues plaguing people. He questioned Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy's silence on the SLBC tunnel collapse that claimed eight lives. "Rescue efforts were not taken up seriously. The government could not even recover the bodies because of its obsession with commissions (bribes)," he said.

The former Minister also pointed to the collapse of the retaining wall at Sunkishala project in Nalgonda and the government's continued inaction. He said unable to run the State for last 17 months, the Congress government was



indulging in the diversion drama deploying multiple commissions in the name of investigations. "This government is left with no options but divert attention of people from crucial issues. Even contractors are now protesting at the State Secretariat, indicating the reality of the State," he said. He pointed out the allegations from Congress's own MLAs and Ministers that no work happens without bribes under the Congress regime. He also tore into the failure of the Congress to implement its six guarantees, questioning the status of the promised one tola gold under Kalyana Lakshmi and Rs 4,000 social security pensions.



passengers in the car—Venkatapathy, Jyothi Swaroopa, and Chetan Sirish—suffered minor injuries, while a girl named Deekshita sustained a serious head injury and was transferred to Khammam for treatment. Coal tipper accidents have become a serious threat to commuters' lives on the Kothagudem-Vijayawada road, with many drivers frequently driving recklessly. On Tuesday, an elderly man, Shaik Moulana from Yerragunta, was crushed to death when he was on his way to the masjid to perform namaz.

elephants and other documents were also given to Andhra Pradesh forest officials. After performing the sacred Gaja Puja, the Karnataka leaders sent off the Kumkis by waving a flag while Pawan Kalyan received the tuskets by showering flowers. According to an official statement here, Kumki elephants named Deva, Krishna, Abhimanyu and Mahendra were handed over to Andhra Pradesh. The Mahouts from Karnataka will stay with the Kumki elephants for two months and train the Mahouts from Andhra Pradesh on their care and other issues. Speaking on the occasion, Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah said that their government is ready to give more elephants to Andhra Pradesh in the future to meet its requirements. Pawan Kalyan gave an assurance that he would personally monitor the health and care of the Kumki elephants given to the state. He hoped that the two states would continue their friendly ties.

Experts urge people to take precautions as a fresh wave of Covid-19 infections emerges

Hyderabad: As different cities including Mumbai, Chennai, urban centres of Kerala and Karnataka apart from South-east Asian countries like Singapore and Thailand, reporting a fresh wave of Covid-19 infections, experts urge people not to panic but be diligent in adopting precautions. The fresh Covid-19 positive cases are widely believed to have been caused by the JN.1 sub-lineages of SARS-CoV-2 and linked to two deaths in Maharashtra since January. Experts emphasize the need for the State Public Health wing initiating surveillance, collect samples for genome sequencing and take measures towards general pandemic preparedness.

Telangana emerges as India's top state in Per-Capita GSVA: ICRA report

GNS News Agency, May 21

Hyderabad: Telangana has emerged as the top State in the country in terms of per-capita Gross State Value Added (GSVA) (at current prices) for financial year 2023-24, a sharp rise from its ninth position in 2014-15. The State's per-capita GSVA has more than doubled over nine years, from around Rs 1.25 lakh in 2014-15 to about Rs 3.5 lakh in 2023-24. This leap marks the fastest per-capita GSVA growth among all States, with Telangana registering a CAGR of 6.8 per cent, significantly above the national average of 5.8 per cent. Karnataka and Tamil Nadu followed Telangana in the top three rankings for 2023-24, replacing Haryana, Uttarakhand, and Kerala from 2014-15.

The latest study released by ICRA (formerly Investment Information and Credit Rating Agency), attributed Telangana's impressive performance to sustained investments in irrigation, strong agricultural output, particularly in crop production, and robust growth in industrial and services sectors. Sharing the report, former Finance Minister and BRS MLA T Harish Rao credited the remarkable rise to the vision and governance of the previous BRS government led by former Chief Minister K Chandrashekhara Rao.



"This didn't happen by chance. It is the result of Chandrashekhara Rao's clear vision, leadership, irrigation projects, proactive agricultural policies and strong industrial reforms," he stated. He took a dig at Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy's claims branding Telangana as financially bankrupt. "The real bankruptcy is not economic, but in his thinking. Ignoring proven success and failing to build on this legacy, only misleads the people and undermines Telangana's progress," he added.

Three killed, one injured as their car rams into truck at Hyderabad's Hayathnagar

GNS News Agency, May 21

Hyderabad: Three youths died and another was injured in a head-on collision between a car and a truck at Kuntloor village in Hayathnagar on the city outskirts on Wednesday morning. The victims were identified as P Chandrasena Reddy (24), Chunchu Trinadh Reddy (24) and Chunchu Varshith Reddy (23), all students of a private college. The injured person is A Pawan Kalyan Reddy (24). All residents of Kuntloor.

As per available information, the incident occurred at 6am, when the youths who were proceeding in a car from Pasumamula village towards Kuntloor and the truck was proceeding from Kuntloor towards Pasumamula. On reaching near Narayana College (Basara Campus) in Kuntloor, the car driver missed to notice a curve and negotiate and collided head-on with the truck which was coming in the opposite direction. While three youths suffered grievous bleeding injuries and died on the spot, another was shifted to a private hospital in Hayathnagar for treatment. On being alerted by other motorists, the police reached the spot



and pulled out the dead bodies from the car which was heavily damaged in the accident. They were shifted to the hospital for autopsy. The Hayathnagar police said that a case has been registered in this regard and an investigation has been initiated. Sadness gleaned in Kuntloor village as all the four persons who belonged to the village lost lives and got injured in the mishap.

PM Modi to inaugurate all-women-operated railway station in Begumpet on May 22

GNS News Agency, May 21

Hyderabad: Prime Minister Narendra Modi will virtually inaugurate three railway stations across Telangana, including an all-women-operated railway station in Begumpet, on Thursday.

Union Minister for Coal and Mines, G Kishan Reddy on Wednesday said the three Amrit Bharat Stations in Telangana — Begumpet, Warangal and Karimnagar — are all set to be dedicated to the public by the Prime Minister at 9.30am. The Prime Minister will be virtually inaugurating them along with about 100 other stations across the country. The railway authorities informed that all arrangements were in place for the inauguration in the presence of public representatives and people. Begumpet, the first all-women-operated railway station in the South-Central Railway (SCR), besides Karimnagar and Warangal stations, has been re-



developed at an estimated cost of Rs 25 crore each with modern passenger amenities and reflecting the local culture and heritage.

Madras High Court stays amendments taking away T.N. Governor's power to appoint Vice-Chancellors

GNS News Agency, May 21

The Madras High Court on Wednesday (May 21, 2025) stayed the operation of a series of amendments carried out by the Tamil Nadu Legislative Assembly to make the State government, instead of the Governor, the appointing authority for Vice-Chancellors of various State-run universities. A summer vacation Bench of Justices G.R. Swaminathan and V. Lakshminarayanan granted the interim stay pursuant to a public interest litigation petition filed by advocate Kutty alias K. Venkatachalapathy of Tirunelveli to declare all the amendment Acts as null and void. The orders were passed after hearing senior counsel Dama Seshadri Naidu, assisted by V.R. Shanmuganathan, for the petitioner and Advocate-General P.S. Raman as well as Senior Counsel P. Wilson representing the Chief Secretary and Higher Education Secretary respectively. Initially, the A-G as well as Mr. Wilson urged the court to grant time for filing a counter affidavit and contended that there was absolutely no urgency in taking up the stay petition for hearing during the summer vacation hearing. However, the Bench rejected their request. The Division Bench was also informed that the State government had already filed a petition before the Supreme Court urging it to transfer the PIL petition, pending before the High Court, to itself and hear it along with connected cases already pending before the top court. Higher Education Secretary C. Samayamoorthy too filed a memo before the High Court contending that the



PIL petition was politically motivated as it had been filed by a person who was the Tirunelveli district secretary of Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and an advocate by profession. Though the petitioner had challenged the State laws on 56 grounds, his primary contention was that the laws were repugnant to Regulation 7.3 of the University Grants Commission Regulations on Minimum Qualifications for Appointment of Teachers and Other Academic Staff in Universities and Colleges, 2018. Stating the validity of Regulation 7.3 was in itself a subject matter of the litigations pending before the Supreme Court for quite sometime now, the Secretary said it would only be appropriate to transfer the present PIL petition to the top court and tag it along with the cases pending there. The memo also stated that a mention was made before a Bench headed by Chief Justice of India (CJI) B.R.

Karnataka hands over four trained Kumki elephants to Andhra Pradesh

GNS News Agency, May 21

Amaravati/Bengaluru: The government of Karnataka on Wednesday handed over four Kumki elephants to Andhra Pradesh to mitigate man-elephant conflicts in parts of the state. Deputy Chief Minister Pawan Kalyan, who is also the minister for forests and environment, received the specially-trained elephants at a ceremony held in Bengaluru.

Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah, Deputy Chief Minister D.K. Shivakumar and Forest Minister Eshwar B. Khandre handed over the elephants to Andhra Pradesh forest officials. Karnataka has agreed to give six Kumki elephants to Andhra Pradesh. However, two elephants could not be handed over on Wednesday due to their health and also due to the fact that their training was not completed. They will be handed over later. Agreements relating to Kumki elephants, licenses, guidelines for the protection of these

Indian Chronicle

English Daily

Governor vs CM: Shadow boxing continues unabated

Ever since his appointment as Governor of Tamil Nadu in September 2021, R N Ravi has had a continuous battle with the incumbent DMK government in Chennai. This is no isolated case as first citizens of many states have been targets of trenchant criticism from the lawmakers of the respective states for failing to discharge their constitutionally-mandated duties. The Stalin-led government got a reprieve from the Supreme Court after the self-rumped 'historic judgement'. It held that reservation of 10 Bills by Ravi for Presidential approval was 'erroneous in law'. The apex court, in its April 8 judgement, also clearly elaborated that under Article 200 of the Constitution, the role of the Governor is to mandatorily abide by the aid and advice of the council of ministers of the state governments, negating the scope for any discretion in the former's favour. Between then and the recent missive by Tamil Nadu Chief Minister Stalin urging the Opposition to unite against Centre's move on Governor's powers, the President of India, in an unprecedented Constitutional move went back to the SC on May 13 with 14 questions seeking its advisory opinion whether the judiciary can impose deadlines or direct how Governors and the President should act on State Bills. The Centre, which had described the SC judgement as 'clear overreach', has sought a Constitution bench to resolve the matter. Even Vice-president Jagdeep Dhankhar expressed serious reservations about the ruling, calling it an instance of "judicial overreach". He remarked, "We never bargained for democracy for this day. The President is called upon to decide in a time-bound manner, and if not, the bills become law." Not surprisingly, it has become the latest legal debate to echo in various corners of the country, with top professionals expressing their opinions on the issue.

Interstate Thief Arrested in Tirupati, Gold and Silver Recovered



"(May 21, Indian Chronicle Rayalaseema coordinator)""The Tirupati District Police have successfully apprehended an interstate thief, V. Nagaraju alias Vasu, and recovered 168.55 grams of gold and 192.5 grams of silver. Nagaraju, hailing from Veerbhadr Nagar, Banashankari 3rd Stage, Hosakerahalli, Bengaluru, Karnataka, is an accused in multiple cases across Karnataka, including dacoity, robbery, night burglaries, and motorcycle thefts."Mr. Prasad, DSP of Chandragiri Sub-Division, announced the significant arrest at a press conference held today at the Tiruchanur Police Station. The operation was initiated following a complaint lodged by Mr. E. Kumar Raja of Kothur village, Tirupati Rural Mandal, regarding a house burglary."Acting on the directives of Tirupati District SP Mr. Harshavardhan Raju and under the close supervision of Tirupati Crime Additional SP Mr. Nagabhushanam Rao, various police teams from Tiruchanur, led by DSP Mr. B. Prasad, intensified their search efforts for the perpetrator. Their diligent work led to the successful apprehension of V. Nagaraju alias Vasu at Mundlapudi Cross in Tirupati Rural Mandal."DSP Prasad further elaborated on the accused's criminal history, stating that Nagaraju faces numerous charges in Karnataka, specifically at the Kaggalipura, Girinagar, Rajeshwari Nagar, Hanumantha Nagar, and CK Achchukattu Police Stations, for serious offenses including dacoity, robbery, night burglaries, and motorcycle thefts."SP Harshavardhan Raju extended his commendation to the police personnel involved in cracking this case. Those recognized for their exemplary efforts include CIB. Sunil Kumar, Sis M. Aruna, T. Sainath Chowdary, E. Jagannadha Reddy, and the dedicated Crime Party staff.

Dollars Diwakar Reddy Assumes Charge as TUDA Chairman



"May 21, Indian Chronicle Rayalaseema coordinator)""Dollars Diwakar Reddy today officially assumed office as the Chairman of the Tirupati Urban Development Authority (TUDA). His appointment comes as part of the nominated positions recently announced by the state government, with the prestigious TUDA Chairman role being conferred upon the prominent Tirupati local, Dollars Diwakar Reddy."In the last general elections, Dollars Diwakar Reddy actively worked for the victory of Telugu Desam and Janasena MLA candidates in both the Tirupati and Chandragiri constituencies. Recognizing his dedicated services, the government decided to appoint him to the TUDA position, despite intense competition for the role."Mr. Reddy took charge on Wednesday afternoon in the presence of TUDA Vice Chairman Mourya. Prior to assuming his duties, a large-scale rally was organized from Tummala Gunta to the TUDA office. The event saw significant participation from leaders and cadres of the Telugu Desam, BJP, and Janasena parties."###

OPPO Strengthens Collaboration with Google Gemini on Reno14 Series

OPPO Reno14 Series

with Google Gemini

Hyderabad:OPPO and Google have further deepened their strategic partnership. Recently, OPPO's flagship Find X8 announced support for Android™ 16 Beta 3, highlighting the close collaboration between the two companies. Furthermore, in OPPO's upcoming Reno14 Series, Gemini will be able to pull information and take actions across multiple apps and services, including OPPO Notes, Calendar, and Clock.

This significant milestone underscores OPPO's commitment to providing seamless and intuitive AI experiences to its users."Our mission at OPPO is to use AI to meaningfully empower our users, which we achieve through strategic partnerships like our collaboration with Google," stated Kai Tang, President of OPPO's Software Engineering, "With the Reno14 Series, we are collaborating closely with Google to systematically integrate Google Gemini into OPPO core apps. This integration will enable users to effortlessly perform complex actions across multiple apps using simple natural language queries, significantly enhancing AI convenience."Gemini Connects to OPPO Apps

Building on the foundation laid by ColorOS 15, OPPO

has collaborated closely with Google to take AI integration to the next level.In the upcoming Reno14 Series, Gemini will connect to OPPO apps and services, including OPPO Notes, Calendar, and Clock, allowing users to pull information and complete tasks directly in their chats. With a single prompt, users can ask Gemini to work across their apps simply by pressing and holding the side button to activate Gemini.Gemini will soon support multi-app journeys, helping users complete complex tasks and save time. For instance, users will be able to ask Gemini to summarise key points from a lengthy document and save the summary directly into OPPO Notes for easy access. Leveraging Gemini's powerful multimodal capabilities, users will be able to capture essential steps from recipe tutorials on YouTube, instructing Gemini to save them efficiently within OPPO Notes.

Managing schedules and daily routines will also become more intuitive. After booking travel arrangements, users will be able to ask Gemini to "add this to my OPPO Calendar," and it will automatically create an event in OPPO Calendar. OPPO AI: Driving Innovation and Empowering UsersAt the Mobile World Congress 2025, OPPO unveiled its enhanced AI strategy, committing to delivering comprehensive, secure, and continuously evolving AI solutions. The company also announced its ambitious goal of bringing generative AI features to approximately 100 million users by the end of 2025.

Pakistani gunmen must be driven out of the country“—



Salute to the three services “— Grand Tiranga rally in Mulugu— Leaders of political, public and student organizations participated with national flags "Mulugu representative, Mahipal, Indian Chronicle: In retaliation for the attack by gunmen on Indians in Pahalgao, Kashmir, people organized a huge rally in Mulugu in support of the attacks by the three services on Pakistan. Leaders of various political, public, caste and student organizations participated. People from the trade and business sectors closed their shops and participated in the Tiranga rally. Speaking at the Tiranga rally, Pesaru Vijay Chandra Reddy said that no matter who tries to attack the country, all Indians will support the soldiers with open arms. He made it clear that Pakistan is adopting a dual policy and that no matter how many conspiracies anyone hatches, all Indians are one. On this occasion, a rally was held from Tirumala Talkies in Mulugu to the area hospital, displaying national flags and a huge banner.



ner. They chanted slogans like Bharat Mata Ki Jai and Vande Mataram and sang songs praising the services of the soldiers. On this occasion, security measures were taken under the leadership of Mulugu CI Suresh and SI Venkateswarlu. On this occasion, children performed in the guise of national leaders. Similarly, women also participated in large numbers. Former MP Sitaram Nayak, Porika Govind Nayak, Dubasi Ramesh, Sirikonda Balaram, Chintalapudi Bhaskar Reddy, Vasudeva Reddy, Kotha Surrender, Sanikommu Ramesh Reddy, Chenna Vijay, Nagarapu Ramesh, Satish, Raj Kumar, Rayanchu Nagaraju, Vankudothu Jyoti, Porika Vijay Ram, Gandrakota Kumar, Ajmira Krishnaveni Nayak, Vankudothu Swaroopa, Gadam Kumar, Aakuthola Chandramouli, Kondi Sambasiva, Bhukya Jawahar Nayak, Pittala Madhu, MD Shafi, Gadam Devender, Karupothula Yadagirigaud, Kaviraj, Aadepu Kiran, Banala Raj Kumar, Sunny, K. Kutumba Rao, Bhaskar Reddy, and others participated

Ministers Assure Positive Action on Journalists' Housing and Welfare Demands.



"PS Ashokan"Indian Chronicle"Manthani May,20""Peddapalli: Telangana State Ministers Ponguleti Srinivas Reddy (Revenue, Housing & Public Relations) and Duddilla Sridhar Babu (IT & Industries) have responded positively to appeals made by working journalists in the district, seeking allotment of housing plots and welfare benefits."The ministers were presented with formal representations by members of the Telangana Union of Working Journalists (TUWJ – IUJ) during a Revenue Conference held at Muppirithota village in Eligedu mandal on Tuesday. The delegation, led by TUWJ state vice-president and district president Burra Sampath Kumar Goud, requested the government to allot 250 square yards of government land and sanction Indiramma houses to all eligible journalists, similar to the benefits extended to Telangana movement participants."The demands also included:"Health insurance coverage of up to ₹10 lakh instead of the existing Aarogyasri scheme."Life insurance of ₹10 lakh for journalists, similar to the Rythu Bima scheme."Free travel facilities for all accredited journalists on TSRTC buses across the state."50% to 75% fee concessions for journalists' children in private schools and colleges."Allocation of land and sanction of funds for the construction of Press Bhavans in district headquarters, as well as at Manthani, Sultanabad, and other mandal centres."Sridhar Babu Acts Swiftly, Contacts Collector""Responding to the representation, Minister Sridhar Babu immediately contacted Peddapalli District Collector Koya Sri Harsha over the phone, instructing him to identify available government land suitable for distribution to journalists. He assured that once the land is identified, allotments would be made promptly to all eligible journalists. He added that local MLAs Chintakunta Vijay Ramana Rao (Peddapalli) and Raj Thakur Makkan Singh (Ramagundam) would jointly follow up on the issue to ensure a resolution."Revenue Minister Ponguleti Srinivas Reddy also assured the delegation that the government is committed to addressing journalists' concerns and promised to take appropriate steps."The meeting saw the participation of

several TUWJ leaders and senior journalists, including Samala Harikrishna (State Official Committee Member), Lingamurthy Yadav, Bhukala Sarayya, Gudla Srinivas, Kethireddy Praveen Reddy, Mallesh Yadav, Kalvala Shankar, Tirupati Goud, Lakshmiopathi, Ashok, Satish Reddy, Ranjith, Nagapuri Tirupati, J. Lakshman, among others.

Bharat Biotech's oral cholera vaccine successful in clinical studies

Hyderabad: Bharat Biotech's Oral Cholera Vaccine Hilchol has demonstrated against both Ogawa and Inaba serotypes, proving non-inferior in healthy Indian adults and children, supporting its potential as an effective OCV.

According to a press release, the study findings have been published in the Science Direct, Vaccine journal 126998 to assess a double-blind, randomised phase III clinical trial to evaluate safety, immunogenicity, non-inferiority and lot-to-lot consistency of single component oral cholera vaccine Hilchol in comparison to a comparator vaccine in a diverse participant group of 1,800 individuals, from infants to adults, across 10 clinical sites in India.

The highlights from the findings included Robust Immunogenicity, Strong Safety Profile and The vaccine was well-tolerated and immunogenic across all age groups — including infants (≥1 year), children, and adults.

"This publication highlights our continued commitment to providing affordable, effective, and accessible vaccines for the populations who need them the most," said Dr Krishna Ella, Executive Chairman of Bharat Biotech.

JSW MG Motor India Continues its Relentless Aggression in the EV Segment

Launches MG Windsor Exclusive PRO variant Available at INR 17,24,800 and BaaS Price of INR 12.24L + INR 4.5/km



Hyderabad:Continuing its momentum in the Indian EV sector, JSW MG Motor India today launched the MG Windsor Exclusive PRO variant, further expanding its electric vehicle offerings. The MG Windsor Exclusive PRO variant will be available at an ex-showroom price of INR 17,24,800 and BaaS price of INR 12.24L + INR 4.5/km. Starting today, customers can book this car at their nearest MG dealership by paying a sum of INR 11,000 and the deliveries of this variant will commence in the first week of June. Bringing together luxury and practicality, the Exclusive PRO variant offers the signature comfort of the MG Windsor alongside a larger battery pack for worry-free long-distance travel.

Speaking on the launch, Rakesh Sen, Head of Sales, JSW MG Motor India, said, "The overwhelming response to the MG Windsor PRO is evident, with more than 8,000 bookings recorded within 24 hours of its launch. With the top variant now established, we are expanding accessibility of the MG Windsor by introducing the Exclusive PRO variant, offering a larger battery pack alongside premium comfort and convenience. This move is intended to bring the MG Windsor PRO closer to more customers." The MG Windsor Exclusive PRO features the futuristic AeroGlide design language and is built on MG's Global Smart Electric Platform, renowned for its reliability. The new interiors are plush, and the reclining (up to 135 degrees) The Aero Lounge seats make every journey a premium experience. Its immersive technology, powered by i-SMART # with 80+ connected features,100+ AI-based voice commands, and entertainment features, is powered by a massive 15.6" GRANDVIEW Touch Display in the central console, fitted with nine speakers. JSW MG Motor India will offer a lifetime battery warranty to the first owner of the MG Windsor PRO. In addition, the company will extend its 3-60 assured buyback plan*** for the MG Windsor PRO ensuring that it'll retain 60% of its value after 3 years.

Full Price List of the MG Windsor Portfolio:

Variants	BaaS Price (in INR)	Ex-Show-room Price (in INR)
Excite (38kWh)	9.99L + 3.9/km	13,99,800
Exclusive (38kWh)	10.99L + 3.9/km	15,04,800
Essence (38kWh)	11.99L + 3.9/km	16,14,800
Exclusive PRO (52.9kWh)	12.24L + 4.5/km	17,24,800
Essence PRO (52.9kWh)	13.09L + 4.5/km	18,09,800

Sitarama Canal pending land acquisition should be expedited. District Collector Jitesh V. Patil



"Ranjith naik Bhukya ,Bhadrachalam,May 21(Indian Chronicle) :""District Collector Jitesh V. Patil has ordered the officials to complete the land acquisition work of the Sitarama Lift Irrigation Scheme Canal as soon as possible. On Wednesday, a review meeting was held with the irrigation and survey officials at the Collector's Camp Office on the land acquisition of the Sitarama Lift Irrigation Scheme Canal. Speaking on the occasion, the Collector said that gram sabhas should be held for land acquisition for the construction of the Sitarama Canal. Gram sabhas should be completed within a week across the district. Farmers should be made aware that the value of land will increase with the construction of canals. Irrigation officials should complete the land acquisition in coordination with surveyors. They said that the surveyors would be provided with the necessary modern machinery and laptops. They should adopt modern methods in land survey and complete the land survey as soon as possible. If any problems arise in the land survey, the officials should be informed immediately.Irrigation officials were ordered to take up plans to remove silt from the ponds across the district. He said that a large-scale campaign should be organized to mark the ponds and take the soil to the needy farmers to use in their fields. He suggested to the officials that water reserves can be increased by removing silt from all the ponds. All the officials should take this up on a war footing and carry out silt removal work in all the ponds. Awareness programs should be taken up to widely plant sabudal and tangedu palm trees along the ponds and canals.

Kakatiya University Girls Team Talented in All India University Softball Competition“



“Warangal, May 21 (Indian Chronicle):”“The Kakatiya University women’s team participated in the All India University Softball Competition and Talented in the competition. held at Vikrama Sinhapuri University in Nellore from April 30 to May 3. Polepalli Nagalakshmi Well played in this competition. She is from Devannapeta village in the 65th

Division of the Greater Warangal Municipal Corporation, the father (Polepalli Raju) and the village elders and coach Honored with a shalwa. Participate in such sports in the future and achieve good success. Among them were Panjala Bhopal Goud, Ayyala Samba reddy, Raju and Rajendra Prasad participated.

SV University Launches “Yogandhra-2025” Campaign Brochure to Promote Yoga Awareness“



“May 21, Indian Chronicle Rayalaseema coordinator”“Sri Venkateswara University, Tirupati, joined hands with the Government of Andhra Pradesh in supporting the State-wide “Yogandhra-2025” campaign by launching its official brochure today. This initiative aims to promote awareness about the benefits of yoga and encourage mass participation in the lead-up to International Yoga Day on 21st June 2025, to be held at Visakhapatnam.”“The brochure was formally released at 12.30 pm in the chambers of the Hon’ble Vice-Chancellor, Prof. Ch. Appa Rao, in the presence of university officials and faculty members.”“Speaking on the occasion, Prof. Ch. Appa Rao, Vice-Chancellor, remarked, “Yoga is more than a physical exercise—it is a pathway to inner balance, mental clarity, and holistic well-being. Through the Yogandhra campaign, we are proud to support the Government’s vision of build-

ing a healthier and more mindful society.”“Prof. M. Bhupathi Naidu, Registrar, added, “This initiative comes at a time when the need for mental and physical wellness is paramount. SV University remains committed to promoting such practices among its academic community.”“The event was attended by Sri Vamsi Royala, CEO, RUSA; Prof. N. Chendrayudu, Dean, CDC; Prof. T. Damodaram, NSS Coordinator; Prof. S. Kishore, Dean of Examinations; Dr. Harikrishna Yadav, Assistant NSS Coordinator; and Dr. P. Vivek, Assistant Cultural Coordinator.”“As part of this initiative, Sri Venkateswara University will observe “Yoga Month” from 22nd May to 21st June 2025, during which daily yoga sessions will be held at 8:20 AM to 9 am in front of the Administrative Building for all teaching and non-teaching staff. Conducted under the guidance of trained yoga instructors, these sessions aim to cultivate a culture of wellness and mindfulness across the university campus.

Manthani Congress Pays Tribute to Rajiv Gandhi's Visionary Legacy.



“PS Ashokan”Indian Chronicle”Manthani May,22”“On the occasion of former Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi’s death anniversary, a solemn tribute program was held at the Minister’s Camp Office under the leadership of the Manthani Mandal Congress Party. Leaders remembered Rajiv Gandhi as the architect of modern India—a visionary who championed technology, education, youth empowerment, and peace. Born in 1944, Rajiv Gandhi entered politics following the tragic death of his brother Sanjay Gandhi. After

Indira Gandhi’s assassination in 1984, he became India’s youngest Prime Minister at age 40. His tenure from 1984 to 1989 saw the promotion of computerization, expansion of telecom networks, establishment of C-DAC, and the launch of Navodaya schools. He lowered the voting age from 21 to 18 and worked toward national unity through the Punjab and Assam Accords. He also strengthened grassroots democracy through Panchayati Raj reforms.”

“The event was attended by Manthani Mandal Congress President Aili Prasad, Vodnala Srinivas, PACS Chairman Kotha Srinivas, District Secretaries Kududula Venkanna, Udari Shankar, Peravena Lingayya, Ram Rajashekar, Akula Kiran, Kishan Ji, SC Cell Division President Manthani Satyam, former Sarpanches Aili Srinivas, Erukala Madhu, Karna Krishna, Bheemuneni Swamy, Nagula Rajayya, and several Congress leaders including Ramaswamy, Akkapaka Sadi, Gollapalli Srinivas, Kasipeta Babu, Sripathi Banayya, VK Ravi, and Kurra Lingayya. All participants paid floral tributes and shared their admiration for Rajiv Gandhi’s ideals and contributions to India’s progress.

Those who have shown the best talent in public service will be recognized“–

SP Shabarish congratulates Pasra SS who was selected as the best SS“Mulugu Representative, Mahipal, Indian Chronicle: Police officers and personnel who are constantly in maintaining law and order and providing the best services to the people will be recognized, said District SP Dr. P. Shabarish. To provide the best services to the people, the state government has included Pasra Police Station in Govindaraopet Mandal, Mulugu district among 10 police stations in the state as part of the public feedback on police services through QR codes within the police stations. SP Kamalakhar congratulated Mulugu SP Shabarish on receiving the award from the hands of State DGP Jitender. Speaking on the occasion, the SP said that it is a pleasure to solve the problems of the people who come to him and earn the admiration of the people by providing the best services. He said that it is a matter of pride that Pasra Police Station is among the 10 best police stations in the state. He said that the district police will continue to work continuously to maintain peace and security and to gain the respect of the people at all times. “– Handover of 7 mobile phones recovered through CEIR portal”“Mulugu SI Venkateshwarlu said that 7 mobile phones lost by the victims were identified, recov-



ered and returned to them through CEIR portal. On Wednesday, the lost victims were called to the police station and returned. The SI congratulated the staff for recovering 7 phones worth Rs. 80 thousand belonging to Moto, Realme, Vivo, Poco, Oppo, etc. He advised those who have lost their mobile phones to immediately file a complaint at the police station.

Officials should work in coordination and prevent damage due to floods“–



Rehabilitation centers should be prepared.”– Additional staff should be deployed.”– Houses in dilapidated condition should be identified and shifted to rehabilitation centers.”– Gram Panchayat vehicles should be prepared.”– Cases should be registered if tourists go to waterfalls in forest areas without permission during the rainy season.”– Advance review on precautions to be taken against floods”– District Collector Divakara T. S.”Mulugu Representative, Mahipal, Indian Chronicle: District Collector Divakara T.S. has instructed the officials of all departments in the district to work in coordination and take steps to prevent damage due to floods. On Wednesday, ITDA PO Chitra Mishra, Additional Collector C.H. Mahender Ji, Additional Collector Local Bodies Sampath Rao, DSP Ravinder along with district officers of various departments, mandal special officers, tehsildars and MPDOs held a review meeting. Speaking at the event, the district collector said that all department officers should work in coordination and take steps to prevent damage due to floods. He said that the damage was caused due to more than normal rainfall last year. There are many streams and Godavari in the district and the rains in the upper reaches cause severe floods, and the district administration should be alert, he said. He said that village, mandal and district level officers should be alert and identify the areas where rainfall has been recorded in the mandals for the last three years and prepare reports without errors. He said that they should be ready to take action on a war footing when floods occur. He suggested that Panchayat secretaries should be available at the village level, a mobile team should be formed at the village level, and that areas that cause flood intensification in the villages should be identified in a planned manner by coordinating with Panchayat secretaries, public representatives, women’s association members, ration dealers and youth. He said that the ponds and ponds in the villages should be kept free of obstacles, as if there is a flood, the water flow could be blocked and the ponds could be cut off. He suggested that low-lying areas should be identified and people from flooded villages should be shifted to rehabilitation centers and protective measures should be taken. Barricades should be set up with the help of police to ensure strict control over the roads and the overflowing streams. He said that signboards should be set up to control traffic on the roads. Arrangements should be made for rehabilitation centers in every village, all basic facilities should be provided in the rehabilitation centers, and the services of tractors and JCBs should be used in the event of floods. Medical and health department staff should be alert during floods, pregnant women and patients receiving emergency treatment should be identified and shifted to hospitals in advance. He said that people should be alerted by taking measures keeping in mind the rise in Godavari in the Godavari catchment villages. Medicines, food and basic facilities should be provided to students of hostels and Gurukul schools during the rainy season, and medicines



required for the treatment of seasonal diseases during the rainy season should be made available in all government hospitals. He said that the Panchayat secretaries should identify and remove houses in dilapidated condition, bent electric poles, and trees that are in the process of falling in the villages. He said that emergency medical services should be provided in the flood-affected areas, continuous sanitation programs should be undertaken and bleaching should be done. He said that the irrigation officials should inspect the pond embankments and take continuous protective measures during floods. He said that cattle herders and farmers should stay at home and not cross ponds and canals during floods. He ordered the village, mandal and district officials to be available in their offices for emergency services. He said that fogging machines should be installed in every gram panchayat to prevent the spread of mosquitoes and fogging should be done in gram panchayats every day. He suggested that water should not be polluted, and that good water pipes should be inspected and repaired. He ordered the irrigation officials to set up signboards near each pond and inform the higher authorities about the storage details of the ponds from time to time. He said that the Panchayat Raj and RWS departments should work in coordination to prevent contamination of drinking water and conduct good water tests through fluoroscope. He ordered to provide a report on the details of dangerous roads and set up indicator boards there. He suggested that all medicines related to seasonal diseases of livestock should be made available during the rainy season through the Animal Husbandry Department and that farmers should be made aware of the precautions to be taken for livestock during the rains. He said that precautions should be advised to farmers during the rainy season, and that fishermen and fishermen should be made available in every village through the Fisheries Department. He ordered that assistance measures should be taken with them in case of floods and life jackets and rafts should be arranged for them. He said that steps should be taken to prevent water from stagnating on the roads, that bent tree branches on the side of the road should be removed, that fogging should be done every day, and that there should be no mosquitoes and no stagnant water. The electricity department officials should be alert during rains and winds, identify current poles and transformers in a dilapidated condition, identify current wires under trees, identify and repair current wires hanging down in crop fields and on roads, and take steps to restore power supply in a short time if major floods occur and power goes out. At the mandal level, the mandal special officers were instructed to coordinate with all the departmental officials and organize a meeting. They said that no damage should be caused due to floods under any circumstances. District officials of all departments, Irrigation, National Highway, R&B, Panchayat Raj, electricity officials, tehsildars, MPDOs, MPOs and others participated in this meeting.”

Congress Leaders Issue Stern Rebuttal: “Baseless Allegations Against Minister Sridhar Babu Will Not Be Tolerated”



“PS Ashokan”Indian Chronicle”Manthani May,21.”“In a scathing rebuttal to recent criticisms, senior Congress leaders have unequivocally warned former Zilla Parishad Chairman Putta Madhukar that any unwarranted and defamatory remarks against Minister Sridhar Babu will be met with resolute resistance.”“Addressing a press conference on Wednesday at the Minister’s Camp Office in Manthani, Congress Party leaders, under the stewardship of Manthani Congress President Aili Prasad, condemned what they termed “malicious propaganda” orchestrated by political adversaries. Prominent figures including Single Window Chairman Kotha Srinivas, Publicity Committee Chairman Vodnala Srinivas, former MPP Konda Shankar, and veteran leader Akula Kiran were present.”“The leaders asserted that Minister Sridhar Babu’s tireless efforts and instrumental role in securing the electoral victory of Peddapalli MP Gaddam Vamsi Krishna are irrefutable. They emphasized that the Congress Party has always championed the rights and dignity of marginalized communities, particularly Dalits, and that any attempt to undermine such contributions through slander will be confronted head-on.”“Questioning the credibility and intent behind Putta Madhukar’s statements, the leaders demanded clarity on his association with MP Vamsi Krishna and challenged him to enumerate any substantial developmental initiatives he had undertaken during his tenure. In stark contrast, they highlighted the transformative progress achieved under Minister Sridhar Babu’s leadership, which, they affirmed, is widely acknowledged by the public.”“Referring to the recent controversy surrounding protocol issues, the leaders asserted that such matters fall strictly within the purview of the Congress Party’s internal mechanisms. If MP Vamsi Krishna genuinely perceives a breach of protocol, they advised that the appropriate course of action would be to escalate the matter to the Parliament Privileges and Ethics Committee or the party’s central leadership—rather than allowing opposition forces to exploit it for political mileage.”“They criticized the opposition for exhibiting undue enthusiasm in meddling with Congress’s internal affairs, warning that such interference is both uncalled for and inappropriate. The leaders reiterated that Minister

Sridhar Babu, along with his brother Srinu Babu and the broader Congress cadre, worked relentlessly during the MP elections. The overwhelming majority of 53,000 votes secured in the Manthani constituency stands as testament to their dedication and grassroots engagement.”“They concluded by stating that the Department of Endowments would issue an official clarification on the protocol issue and urged detractors to refrain from sensationalism and personal vilification, which they described as detrimental to democratic discourse.”“Among the notable attendees at the press conference were Gotikaar Kishan Ji, Manthani Satyam, Kududula Venkanna, former Vice Chairman Sripati Banayya, former councillors V.K. Ravi and Sammayya, Manthani Rakesh, former Sarpanch Chandru Rajamallu, Yerukala Madhu, Bandari Prasad, Ram Rajashekar, Velpula Raju, Nagula Rajayya, Youth Congress State Leaders Arla Nagaraju, Ulla Anil Reddy, Yerukala Suresh, Ellanki Vamsi, and several other key party functionaries.

District SP makes surprise visit to Churchupalli Police“



“People should be constantly alerted to avoid falling victim to cybercrimes. SP Rohit Raju ““Ranjith naik Bhukya ,Bhadrachalam,May 21(Indian Chronicle) :““Bhadradi Kothagudem District SP Rohit Raju made a surprise visit to Churchupalli Police Station on Wednesday. On this occasion, he inspected the surroundings of the police station. Later, he made several suggestions to the police officers and staff present there. He advised that the surroundings of the police station should be kept clean at all times and that justice should be done responsibly to the victims who come to the police station with various problems. Later, he inquired about the details of various cases registered within the police station limits. He said that everyone should work for the speedy resolution of pending cases. He inquired about the problems of the officers working at the police station. Later, he visited the District Cyber Crimes Coordination Center located above the Churchupalli Police Station.

‘Apologise for baseless allegations’: Bengal LoP Suwendu Adhikari sends notice to former BJP MP John Barla



GNS News Agency, May 21

West Bengal’s Leader of Opposition in the Assembly, Suwendu Adhikari, has issued a legal notice to former BJP MP John Barla, demanding a public apology within 48 hours after the latter made “baseless allegations” against him. Barla, who recently switched his allegiance to the Trinamool Congress (TMC), had accused Adhikari of obstructing his efforts to build a 100-bed hospital in Alipurduar, for which railway funds had been allocated by the state. Barla was denied a ticket for the 2024 Lok Sabha elections by the BJP, joined the TMC in Kolkata on Thursday, in the presence of state party president Subrata Bakshi and Minister Aroop Biswas.

After switching camps, Barla claimed that Adhikari had obstructed his hospital project and stated, “Why should I stay in the party if I am not allowed to work?” Adhikari has strongly denied these accusations. “I am sending him a legal letter. He must either prove it within 48 hours or apologise publicly. Otherwise, I will file a criminal defamation case against him,” he said. Festive offer BJP leader from North Bengal John Barla joins Trinamool Congress, in Kolkata on

Thursday BJP leader from North Bengal John Barla joins Trinamool Congress, in Kolkata on Thursday. (Express Photo: Partha Paul)

Adhikari also said he had limited interactions with Barla, stating, “I have no contact with him. I spoke to him only once after his wife fell ill. Raju Bista sent his phone number, and I called him to inquire about his wife’s well-being. His wife was very ill at the time.” He also claimed that the BJP had assisted Barla after he lost his MP post and had to vacate his Delhi bungalow. The LoP accused the TMC’s election strategy firm, I-PAC, of scripting Barla’s statements. He alleged, “... If someone from BJP joins Trinamool, they have to repeat the slogans taught by I-PAC. The instructions there are to attack me more than the BJP. John Barla has also done the same thing.”

Adhikari on Friday elaborated on the legal notice on X: “Yesterday, the former BJP MP from Alipurduar and Union Minister of State, who changed parties and joined the thieves’ party after the party did not re-nominate him, in return, the owner of his new party — whom I defeated in Nandigram by 1,956 votes in the 2021 assembly elections — deliberately raised completely false and baseless allegations against me without any evidence, to please her. He has already memorized the script written by I-PAC and has come out in public.” The legal notice demands that Barla “make an unconditional apology to me in writing and publicly within 7 days. This apology must be published in major English and Bengali newspapers and on the media channels where this defamatory statement was broadcast.” The notice further states: “You must refrain from making any other defamatory statements or suggestive comments against me in the future... If these demands are not met, I will be forced to take civil and criminal legal action.”

Attari-Wagah border opens for 150 stranded Afghan trucks; traders say ‘huge relief’

GNS News Agency, May 21

In a significant relief to traders and transporters, more than 150 trucks carrying perishable goods from Afghanistan stranded between Lahore and Wagah have finally begun crossing into India through the Attari-Wagah land route. The development comes after a temporary ceasefire between India and Pakistan, following days of heightened military tension triggered after Operation Sindoor. Operation Sindoor, launched by India on May 7, 2025, was a retaliatory military action in response to the April 22 Pahalgam terror in which 26 people were killed.

A ceasefire was brokered on May 10 and extended to May 18, offering both countries a window for de-escalation and for resuming humanitarian and trade-related activities. Among the first signs of thaw in relations was the clearance granted to the stranded trucks to cross over. The trucks, mostly carrying dry fruits from Afghanistan, had been immobilised for nearly two weeks in the no-man’s land between Lahore and Wagah, causing anxiety among Afghan and Indian traders. Mukesh Sidhwani, a prominent dry fruit trader from Amritsar, welcomed the development. “The trucks have started crossing over. So far, five trucks have crossed. This is a huge relief. The goods are semi-perishable, and every day the delay translates into massive losses,” he said. “On average, around 40-50 trucks cross



over to India. However, now the situation is different. There is high tension between both countries, and truck clearance and checking may take some more time than the ordinary business days. We are hoping that all trucks will cross over into India in a week,” said Sidhwani. Trade stakeholders also flagged the broader economic implications. “Thousands of people in Punjab, especially Amritsar, depend on this trade — porters, drivers, customs agents, and dhaba owners. The ICP is a major investment. Leaving it unused hurts everyone,” Sidhwani said. With the trucks now entering the Indian territory, traders hope this signals a step toward normalised trade relations, at least with Afghanistan.

All about city’s cafes that give a royal treat to your pets too



As the demand for pet-friendly spaces grows, these cafés in Pune city continue to balance fun and hygiene, making them a go-to spot for pet lovers.

GNS News Agency, May 21

Pet-friendly cafes are becoming popular in Pune, offering a space where animals and pet parents relax together. These cafes focus on hygiene while ensuring a fun experience for pets and people. Staff members constantly monitor pet areas to keep them tidy and safe. As the demand for pet-friendly spaces grows, these cafés continue to balance fun and hygiene, making them a go-to spot for pet lovers in the city. At The Pets Café, customers can bring their pets as it is a cage-free, leash-free space. Maintaining hygiene is a priority. “We have two staff members dedicated to cleaning pet areas, and the space is mopped twice daily,” said owner Devesh Bahti. “Sanitizers and lint rollers are available at every table. We use only natural cleaning products to avoid allergies to dogs, and our crockery is washed twice daily. Pet food is stored separately to prevent cross-contamination,” he explained. He said that the Cafe has three pet dogs, and a professional groomer visits weekly for their care. “Taking care of dogs is like raising kids—we adapt as challenges arise. Despite strict rules against feeding them human food, some guests don’t follow them. So our managers supervise closely. For safety, we have a vet and trainer on call and ensure all boarding dogs are medically certified and well-trained.”

The Labrador Café is a pet-friendly café established in 2018. Smita Murthy, owner of the café, said, “We have an open kitchen, so pets are not allowed inside. However, we have an outdoor seating area where guests can sit with their pets.” Talking about the challenges, Murthy added, “Some visitors who don’t have pets or are not pet-friendly often come here. If that bothers, this may not be the place for you.” Pet Feast Café has been running for the past seven

years. Its owner, Sonal Zalkikar, said, “We started as an online pet bakery, specializing in fresh food, gourmet meals, and pet-friendly cakes. What was missing was customer interaction. So we created a space where pets have a dedicated menu and a section for toys, clothes, and merchandise. It’s a place to celebrate pet birthdays, enjoy a patisserie, and even have a dedicated menu for pet parents.”

On maintaining hygiene, Zalkikar said they use separate utensils for pets and people, ensuring thorough cleaning with antibacterial solutions after every pet’s meal. “Our kitchen staff follows strict protocols, using different utensils and scrubbing methods. The café itself is cleaned three times a day to maintain high standards,” Zalkikar explained. Located in Baner, Cafe Rustle Nest offers a peaceful, pet-friendly experience with both indoor and outdoor seating. “We don’t believe in loud music or distractions, as they may disturb pets,” said manager Bipul Dey, who was involved in the café’s ideation. Founded by chef Sagar Gire around four to six years ago, the cafe offers both continental and Indian dishes. A customer favourite is the creamy chicken Peri Peri. Though the café doesn’t have a dedicated pet menu, guests can request simple dishes like steamed chicken and vegetables. An in-house dog named Charlie often greets visitors at the entrance, and the café occasionally hosts community pet events. The tranquil ambiance converted from an old bungalow makes it a favourite for remote workers and pet lovers alike.

Cafe Katha blends a love for books with a love for pets. “We wanted to create a space where people can come, read, relax, and also bring their pets,” said Namrata Atre, owner of the cafe. The cafe, set in a converted bungalow, offers a calm indoor space and an open outdoor area for guests and their pets. Though the cafe doesn’t have a full-fledged pet menu, they do provide simple items like boiled eggs for pets. “We’re working on a dedicated dog menu soon,” Atre added. “What makes our cafe unique is the peaceful environment, the nostalgic bungalow setting, and the fact that we don’t charge people for bringing pets, we want families to come and enjoy good food and time together,” she said. Among the customer favourites are wood-fired pizzas, pink sauce pasta, and a variety of craft beers. This café, opened in December 2024, is home to 12 cats. Only cats are allowed here. “The café serves packaged food for its cats, while customers can enjoy a limited menu with coffee, tea, and other items. Our staff makes sure the cats don’t eat the customers’ food,” said Sarika Kale, who came up with the idea for the café. It is owned by Aditya Devdhar. “We allow customers to spend time with our cats, but we have strict rules. Lifting the cats is not allowed as it’s not good for them. Our team watches closely to ensure no one picks them up or feeds them. Children below six years are not allowed in the cat area, as they may not know how to handle them. Cats can be moody and may scratch,” said Kale. “We have a mix of Indian, Persian, Bengal, and Himalayan cats. Many people have shown interest, and we have also adopted rescued cats,” Kale added.

‘Let universities remain centres of knowledge’: Maulana Azad National Urdu University students protest move to cancel ties with Turkish institute



GNS News Agency, May 21

A group of students at Hyderabad’s Maulana Azad National Urdu University (MANUU) on Friday condemned the varsity’s decision to sever ties with Turkey by cancelling its academic memorandum of understanding (MoU) with Yunus Emre Institute. Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU) and Jamia Millia Islamia in Delhi also took a similar stance recently, in protest against Turkey’s support for Pakistan in the backdrop of the conflict with India.

“Don’t turn universities into RSS shakhas,” a statement from Azad United Students’ Federation, a group of students at MANUU, said. “This alarming trend reflects a

dangerous conflation of geopolitical tensions with academic collaboration. India’s proud civilizational ethos has always stood for dialogue, diversity, and the unfettered exchange of knowledge across borders. India has never closed its doors to intellectual engagement, even in times of political strife,” it added. “To use allegations of terrorism or political disagreements as a pretext to curb academic cooperation undermines the very spirit of higher education and international understanding,” the statement further said. MANUU had earlier signed an MoU in January 2024 with Yunus Emre Institute, Turkey, for five years, under which a diploma in Turkish language was started at the varsity’s School of Languages, Linguistics and Indology. According to the student group, the fight against terrorism must not become a fight against academic freedom. “Suspending scholarly ties in the name of nationalism not only damages our global academic standing but also risks transforming our universities into ideological outposts that echo the narrow vision of authoritarian forces,” they explained, while demanding the immediate reversal of these decisions. They urged academic institutions to uphold the values of free inquiry and global academic cooperation. “Let our universities remain centres of knowledge, not echo chambers of political propaganda,” the students said in the statement.

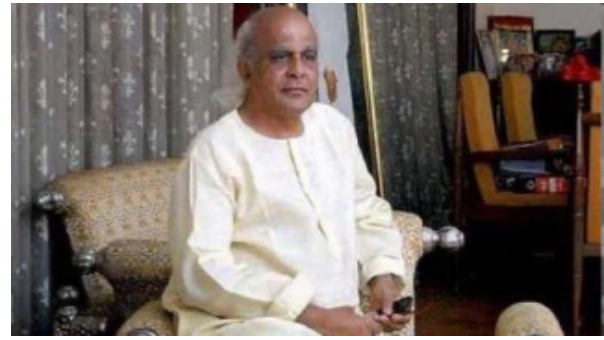
Gujarat Samachar owner says brother ‘arrested’ by ED

GNS News Agency, May 21

The family of Bahubali Shah, a director of the firm that runs Gujarat Samachar, one of the oldest newspapers in Gujarat, has said he has been detained by the Enforcement Directorate (ED). Shah’s elder brother, owner and Managing Editor of Gujarat Samachar Shreyansbhai Shah told The Indian Express Friday that ED officials came with an arrest warrant for Bahubali on Thursday evening, after two days of continuous searches by the Income Tax Department.

The ED did not respond to queries. Sources in I-T told The Indian Express: “Originally search warrants were issued for 24 premises, then subsequently increased. The company was being tracked simultaneously by both the ED and I-T Department for tax evasion.” Bahubali is a director at Lok Prakashan Limited, which runs Gujarat Samachar as well as GSTV. The 73-year-old complained of uneasiness after his alleged detention and is admitted in hospital. “Income Tax officials came to my house early morning on Wednesday, and went to all the premises of Bahubali, my sons Nirmam and Amam, and everyone else associated with us... Nobody is telling us anything. Yesterday (Thursday) at 6 pm they came with an arrest warrant for Bahubali, without any notice,” Shreyansbhai said. He added: “We don’t know why they are treating us like someone from the underworld... as if I am a criminal.” Shreyansbhai suggested that the action may be about a case dating back 30 years. “I do not know after all these years what happened all of a sudden... If the ED says I gave some money 30 years ago... what is the evidence they have? Justice delayed is justice denied.” Punishment to stand up for Truth has been the motto of the BJP government. Leading Gujarati newspaper Gujarat Samachar has always stood up against power, who so ever it be. However, showing mirror to BJP Government and PM Modi in the recent India – Pakistan fallout has ensured The family says that while Bahubali was taken to V S Hospital first, they insisted he be transferred to Zydus Hospital. Zydus sources said that Bahubali was moved from another hospital late Thursday night and “is currently in the ICU”. Hospital sources added that Bahubali was under medical evaluation by both neurologists and cardiologists for dizziness, blurry vision and uneasiness.

Shreyansbhai told The Indian Express that earlier, during Operation Sindoor, the X handles of Gujarat Samachar were suspended. “I don’t know why this was done.” Lok Prakashan was incorporated as a public limited company in 1940. One of its directors, Shreyansbhai’s wife Smrutiben, passed away on April 18. Earlier, GSTV digital head Tushar Dave said in a Facebook post that the I-T Department searched GSTV premises for nearly 36 hours. Dave could not be reached. Reacting to the “arrest”, Leader



of Opposition in Lok Sabha and Congress MP Rahul Gandhi said: “The attempt to silence Gujarat Samachar is another conspiracy to suppress the voice not just of one newspaper but of the entire democracy. When newspapers that hold power accountable are locked, then understand that democracy is in danger. The arrest of Bahubali Shah is a part of the same politics of fear, which has now become the identity of the Modi government.” In a post on X, Congress MP and Gujarat party chief Shaktisinh Gohil criticised the alleged detention of Bahubali and the raids by I-T and ED on Gujarat Samachar and other premises, saying: “The religion of the media is to fight for the truth. The BJP government keeps punishing the media that practises this religion... The Gujarat Samachar newspaper has always stood against power, no matter who is in power. However, Modi pulled out his favorite tool kit against Gujarat Samachar, who showed the BJP a mirror in the recent India-Pakistan ceasefire.”

Pointing out that the family was in mourning over Smrutiben’s death, Gohil said: “Bahubalibhai is a senior citizen and has health problems. I strongly condemn these excesses by the Modi government. Media doing their job is being brutally targeted across the country. The BJP government should know that every media is not Godi media and is not ready to sell its soul. I stand with Gujarat Samachar and all media speaking truth to power.” Congress MLA and working president Jignesh Mevani called the alleged detention “shameful” and expressed solidarity with the Gujarat Samachar Group. He said that the newspaper has always been critical of the state and Central governments. “This is an act of revenge,” said Mevani. Aam Aadmi Party convenor Arvind Kejriwal said: “The I-T and ED raids on Gujarat Samachar and GSTV in the last 48 hours, and then the arrest of their owner Bahubalibhai Shah – all this is not a coincidence. This is a sign of the BJP’s arrogance, which wants to silence every voice that speaks the truth, and asks questions. The people of the country and Gujarat will respond to this dictatorship very soon.”

Iconic Van Rani toy train set to chug along again in Mumbai’s Sanjay Gandhi National Park



GNS News Agency, May 21

The iconic Van Rani toy train in Mumbai’s Sanjay Gandhi National Park (SGNP) will be reopened to the public from June this year. The train runs on a narrow gauge track covering an area of 5.5 sq km known as the Krishnagiri Upvan where visitors get a chance to see animals in a mini zoo while experiencing the local biodiversity. The toy train began operations in 1970. Initially, it ran on a 2.7-km stretch on a diesel engine. The trains operated every 30 minutes and it required a minimum of 20 passengers. The service was suspended in 2021 after the tracks got damaged in a cyclone. The current revamp is estimated to cost Rs 45 crore.

The new trains will have four bogeys each. A state government official said there will be two different rolling stocks, with one having Vistadome coaches while the other stock will have an open seating area. The authorities said Vistadome coaches were chosen to ensure that visitors are able to enjoy the scenic biodiversity of the forests during the short ride. The new trains will run on electricity — unlike the old ones that ran on diesel — at a frequency of 30 minutes, with each stock running alternatively from the stations. The construction and restoration work, which is being carried out by the Rail India Technical and Economic Service (RITES), is in the final stages. The project is ex-

pected to see an inaugural run next month “Van Rani was a popular crowd puller in SGNP before it stopped operations, and technically the trains will be back on track after five years as the park was closed for visitors in 2020 post the Covid-19 pandemic. The new train is being modernised and designed in a way that it is more comfortable and spacious so that we are able to attract more visitors,” said Anita Patil, director of SGNP.

TSDCA seizes stocks of 'Herbal Fever Guard Syrup' in Adilabad for misleading claims

Hyderabad: The Telangana State Drug Control Administration (TSDCA) has seized stocks of ‘Herbal Fever Guard Syrup,’ an Ayurvedic medicine, that were circulating in the market with misleading claims on its labels that it treats all types of fevers.

The stocks of the ‘Herbal Fever Guard Syrup’ were detected by DCA officials at a medical store in Adilabad. The syrup was manufactured and marketed by International Herbal Corporation Pvt.Ltd., Sidcul, Haridwar, Uttarakhand. Further investigation shall be carried out and action shall be taken as per the law against all the offenders. Persons who make misleading advertisements regarding drugs for treatment of certain diseases and disorders are punishable under Drugs and Magic Remedies (Objectionable Advertisements) Act, 1954, DG, TSDCA, Shah Nawaz Qasim said. In a separate raid, the DCA teams on Wednesday, May 14, seized a clinic in Ahmedpur village, Gajwel, Siddipet district. The clinic was being operated by K Ramachandram, a quack who was practicing medicine without proper qualifications at his clinic. During the raid, the DCA officials detected 12 varieties of medicines, including antibiotics, analgesics, etc. worth Rs 20,000 stocked at the clinic without a drug license.

Punjab and Haryana High Court frees Phagwara money changer, calls drug case arrest illegal

GNS News Agency, May 21

The Punjab and Haryana High Court has ordered the immediate release of a forex money changer from Phagwara, ruling that his arrest in an alleged drug money case was illegal due to serious procedural lapses. In the judgment delivered earlier this week, Justice Mahabir Singh Sindhu sharply criticised the police for bypassing legal safeguards during the money changer's arrest and the search of his premises. The case stems from the First Information Report (FIR) registered on January 21, 2025, by the Punjab Police's Anti-Narcotics Task Force (ANTF) in Mohali. It initially targeted a drug-smuggling ring, leading to multiple arrests, and the seizure of heroin and cash. The money changer's name surfaced later, based on information received on March 17. The following day, police recovered ₹20,000, £10,000, 10,020 Canadian dollars, and ₹13.3 lakh in cash, along with a DVR and currency counting machine, from his residence and business. He was arrested on March 18 and remanded to police custody by a judicial magistrate in Amritsar.

The money changer challenged his arrest, calling it baseless and illegal. His counsel, Senior Advocate Bipan Ghai, argued that he was not named in the original FIR, had no link to the co-accused, and was not informed in writing about the grounds of arrest. The police, he said, also broke into his locked premises without justification or proper authorisation. In his detailed ruling, he noted that the police failed to serve the money changer the written grounds of arrest, a constitutional safeguard and a requirement under

Section 50 of the Code of Criminal Procedure or CrPC (now Section 47 of the BNSS). "It was imperative for the Investigating Agency to supply the 'grounds of arrest' to the petitioner, but they miserably failed to do so," Justice Sindhu wrote, calling it a breach of Article 22 of the Constitution. The court also ruled the search and seizure illegal, noting that the police broke open his premises without recording reasons or informing the magistrate, violating Section 185 of the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS), 2023. "From perusal of the entire police file, it is nowhere discernible that any reason(s) was/were recorded for breaking the lock of the premises... thus, there is complete negation of mandatory provisions," Justice Sindhu said. Justice Sindhu cited Supreme Court judgments, including State of Punjab vs Baldev Singh (1999), to assert that evidence from an illegal search cannot be used. He also rejected the state's argument of "substantial compliance," holding that legal safeguards must be strictly followed. Calling the arrest "non est in the eyes of law," the court quashed the magistrate's remand order dated March 19, and ordered the money changer's release, "if not required in any other case." Justice Sindhu dismissed the Punjab Government's claim that the accused was part of a drug cartel, saying judicial orders cannot validate an illegal arrest. Justice Sindhu also invoked the legal maxim Sublato fundamento cadit opus, which means once the foundation is removed, the superstructure falls. While granting relief to the money changer, the court clarified that its observations should not influence the merits of the ongoing investigation.

Delhi Zoo issues emergency advisory after bird flu confirmed in dead tigress at Gorakhpur zoo

GNS News Agency, May 21

The Delhi Zoo has issued an internal advisory directing staff to enforce "strictest biosecurity measures" as part of emergency preparedness after H5 avian influenza or bird flu was recently confirmed in a tigress that died at the Gorakhpur Zoo in Uttar Pradesh. The scare comes amid the summer holidays when the footfall is usually high. The internal memorandum was issued on Thursday by Dr Sanjeet Kumar, IFS, director of the Delhi Zoo: "In view of the recent incidence of avian influenza (H5) at Gorakhpur Zoo, UP all preventive measures for preparedness and surveillance of the avian influenza have to be carried out in order to keep the zoo animals, visitors and its staff safe and healthy," the advisory stated. It instructed that "the staff and workers engaged in the various sections of the zoo, particularly for management of animals scrupulously shall follow the preventive biosafety measures prescribed: Work in the zoo wearing uniform only. Do not take uniform, gumboots, and shoes home. Medicine should be regularly put in the footpath constructed at the entrance of the enclosures. While entering and exiting the wards, soles of the feet, including shoes, should be thoroughly dipped in the footbath. Hands should be washed thoroughly with soap before starting work, during work, and after completing work. A bed of lime or bleaching powder should be made in front of the entry and exit of the zoo and enclosures, and while entering and exiting, the soles of the feet, including shoes, should be kept properly on the bed. Birds and wild animals should be inspected 2-3 times a day and entries should be made in the beat book. Any notable incident or death of birds and wild animals should be immediately brought to the notice of senior officer. The leftover food of birds and wild animals in the zoo should be disposed of safely so that it is not eaten by other birds and animals found in the zoo, such as sparrows, crows, eagles, pigeons, rats, cats, etc. Ensure that the utensils, pitchers, trays, mugs, buckets, etc used by the birds and wild animals in the zoo are not used by other birds and animals found in the zoo, like sparrows, crows, eagles, pigeons, rats, cats, etc. The utensils containing food and water should be cleaned thoroughly every day. The garbage and waste material coming out daily from the enclosures of birds and wild animals in the zoo should be disposed of safely so that it is not eaten by other birds and animals found in the zoo, like sparrows, crows, eagles, pigeons, rats, cats, etc. All section officers must ensure strict compliance with the above safety rules in their respective sections."

Emphasising timely reporting of various animal health parameters, the memo said, "Any unusual mortality in poul-



try and/or any other species shall be reported immediately," adding that in the event of any symptoms resembling avian influenza among major feline species like lion, tiger, or leopard, the "veterinary officer must ensure the collection and sending samples to IVRI, Bareilly/ ICAR – NIHSAD, Bhopal following the due procedure."

Oversight responsibilities have been explicitly assigned. "The Joint Director, NZP will monitor the hygiene and other components of bio-safety measures prescribed and Veterinary Officer will monitor the overall health of the animals and take appropriate measures, and they will submit the weekly report," it stated. While the Delhi Zoo remains open to the public – unlike those in Uttar Pradesh which have been shut till May 20 – precautionary protocols have been heightened. Earlier this month, the death of a tigress named Shakti at Gorakhpur Zoo was followed by laboratory confirmation of the H5 strain of bird flu by the National Institute of High Security Animal Diseases (NIHSAD), Bhopal. Authorities are also investigating the deaths of a leopard and a wolf in the same zoo. Speaking to The Indian Express, Dr. Sanjeet Kumar said, "We are assessing the situation, and an advisory has been issued for the preventive biosecurity measures to be adopted by the sanitary and veterinary section. The zoo will remain open to the public." Earlier in the day, a senior zoo official had stated, "We are watching closely, and if any signs are observed, we will act accordingly. But for now, all is okay and the zoo is not being closed." The current advisory aligns with the Central Zoo Authority's (CZA) standing protocols, which are rooted in the National Action Plan on the Prevention, Control and Containment of Avian Influenza, last revised in 2021. Earlier this year, in response to a separate H5N1 detection at a rescue centre in Nagpur, the CZA had issued a circular advising all zoos to tighten surveillance, isolate symptomatic animals, and coordinate with institutions like ICAR-IVRI and NIHSAD for diagnosis and response.

Ahead of monsoon, BMC identifies 134 dilapidated buildings in Mumbai



GNS News Agency, May 21

Ahead of the monsoon season, the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) has identified 134 buildings as dilapidated this year, marking a significant dip in their number from the previous years. Of the 134 buildings that have been deemed unsafe by the civic body in Mumbai, while at least 57 have been vacated, 77 are still occupied. According to officials, nearly 56 of these dilapidated buildings are currently embroiled in court-related matters.

While 387 buildings were declared dilapidated and unfit for habitation in 2023, the number of dilapidated buildings in 2024 stood at 188. Senior civic body officials have attributed the dwindling number of dangerous buildings over the past three years to the increasing number of buildings being demolished and vacated.

Meanwhile, records show that of the total buildings, the highest number of dangerous buildings have been flagged in H/West ward, which includes Bandra and Khar West, and P/South ward (Goregaon), which has 15 dilapidated structures each. The second highest number of unsafe buildings has been identified in N ward, which encompasses Ghatkopar and K/E (Andheri East) wards, at 11 structures each, followed by 10 dilapidated buildings in the K/West ward (Andheri West) and eight structures in R/South ward, which encompasses the Kandivali West area. To curb the loss of life and minimise injuries, BMC identifies dilapidated buildings and releases a list of C1 category buildings, ahead of monsoon, stating that they are unfit for human habitation, and must be vacated immediately and demol-

Mumbai police special commissioner post scrapped, force to have sixth joint commissioner intelligence instead



GNS News Agency, May 21

Mumbai Police-Joint-Commissioner Currently, the Mumbai police have five joint commissioners who look after law and order, crime, administration, economic offences, and traffic. (File Photo) A day after The Indian Express reported that a new post of joint commissioner of police (intelligence) was to be created in Mumbai City police, the Maharashtra government on Friday issued an order for setting up the post. This will be the sixth joint commissioner in the city police. Currently, the Mumbai police have five joint commissioners who look after law and order, crime, administration, economic offences, and traffic. The order is-

sued by the state home department mentioned that Mumbai is the financial capital of the country, with several vital installations that need to be safeguarded, and a large number of VIPs who have a high threat perception. Besides, it is also important to ensure the safety of the Prime Minister and other union ministers who visit the city frequently, it said. Based on these reasons, the state home department approved the proposal to create a post for the joint commissioner of police, it said.

The order also mentioned that the post of special commissioner of police that was lying vacant after IPS officer Devan Bharti was made the police commissioner will be downgraded to the new joint commissioner post of Special Inspector General rank. This means there will be no new special commissioners with the Additional Director General (ADG) rank in the city police anymore. A senior officer had earlier told The Indian Express that in the aftermath of the Pahalgam strikes, there was a need felt to ramp up the intelligence network in the city, following which a decision was taken to create the post. Earlier, the additional commissioner (special branch), who gathered intelligence, reported to the joint commissioner (law & order). In the order, the government mentioned, will be downgraded to the Special Inspector General rank post and will be used to create the post of joint commissioner (intelligence).

Major bureaucratic reshuffle: 66 IAS and IPS officers transferred in Delhi and other Union Territories

GNS News Agency, May 21

As many as 66 Indian Administrative Service (IAS) and Indian Police Service (IPS) officers of the Agmut cadre were transferred from Delhi, Jammu and Kashmir, and other Union Territories by the Union Ministry of Home Affairs, according to an order issued Friday. Among the 66 bureaucrats, Delhi saw the highest number of transfers with 21 IAS and 23 IPS officers, who have been shifted from Delhi or transferred back to the Capital from other Union Territories. It is the first major bureaucratic reshuffle after the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) came to power in Delhi after 27 years.

Among the 21 IAS officers, 11 senior officers, including Ashish Chandra Verma, Additional Chief Secretary, Finance, have been transferred out of Delhi. Verma, a 1994-batch officer of the Arunachal Pradesh-Goa-Mizoram and Union Territories (Agmut) cadre, held the principal secretary level posts in several key departments like Finance, Revenue, Home, Irrigation, and others. The Indian Administrative Service officer was also the finance and divisional commissioner and ACS of the Revenue department.

During his stint in the national capital, especially as the finance secretary, he had frequent tussles with the previous Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) government. The AAP government had accused him several times of stopping funds and policies like Mahila Samman Rashi, funds to Delhi Jal Board (DJB), the one-time settlement scheme to exempt water bills, and others sent by departments and taking decisions bypassing the minister. The previous AAP government had also written to Lieutenant Governor Vinai Kumar Saxena, and the Union Ministry of Home Affairs demanding his suspension and transfer.

Anil Kumar Singh, an IAS officer of the 1995-batch AGMUT cadre who was posted as Urban Development Department secretary, has also been transferred to Jammu and Kashmir. Anil Kumar Singh (1995), Naveen S L (2012), Mahima Madan (2021), Ananth Dwivedi (2021), Shreya Singhal (2020), and Rishi Kumar (2021) have also been posted to Jammu and Kashmir from Delhi. While Department of Women and Child Development secretary Chanchal Yadav and transport special secretary Sachin Shinde have been transferred to Andaman and Nicobar Islands, Vinod P Kavie has been sent to Mizoram, and Krishna Mohan Uppu, Special Secretary (Home), to Puducherry. The Centre has also transferred Dilraj Kaur, an IAS officer of the 2000 batch, to Delhi from the Andaman and Nicobar Islands. She served as Public Works Department (PWD) secretary in Delhi, and also in the Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD). While Arun



Kumar Mishra, Health Secretary, Goa, has been transferred to Delhi, eight other IAS officers from Goa, Jammu and Kashmir, Arunachal Pradesh, and Puducherry have been brought to the national capital. S B Deepak Kumar, Principal Secretary (Health), was transferred to Lakshadweep as advisor to the Administrator, and Sandeep Kumar, the current advisor, has been shifted to Delhi. Among those in the list of 26 IPS officers transferred from Delhi is 2001 batch officer B S Jaiswal — Joint Commissioner of Police (Central Range) — who has been sent to Lakshadweep. Keshav Ram Chaurasia, Joint Commissioner, Delhi Police, has been shifted to Goa. The 2003 batch IPS officer held the charge of joint commissioner in the Economic Offences Wing in Delhi. Three 2004 batch IPS officers, Omvir Singh Bishnoi, Raj Kumar Singh, and Dheeraj Kumar, have been transferred back to Delhi from Goa, Chandigarh, and Mizoram, respectively. Pushpendra Kumar, a 2006 batch officer, has been transferred from Delhi to Chandigarh. Umesh Kumar, a 2009 batch IPS officer, was transferred from Jammu and Kashmir to Delhi, and Ashok Malik was sent to Mizoram from the Capital. Devesh Kumar Mahla, New Delhi District DCP and 2012 batch IPS officer, and Surendra Choudhary, South West District DCP of the 2013 batch, have been transferred to Arunachal Pradesh. Another 2013 batch IPS officer, Apoorva Gupta, who was DCP (Crime), has been transferred to Andaman and Nicobar. Sanjeev Kumar Yadav, a 2013 batch IPS officer, was transferred to Delhi from Jammu and Kashmir. Rohit Rajbir and Anant Mittal — 2015 batch IPS officers — have been transferred from Arunachal Pradesh to Delhi. Additional DCPs Anurag Dwivedi (2020 batch), Rishi Kumar (2021 batch), Nithya Radhakrishnan (2021 batch), and K M Priyanka (2021 batch) have been transferred from Delhi to Arunachal Pradesh, Jammu and Kashmir, Puducherry and Chandigarh, respectively.

Landlord, labourer suffocate to death while cleaning septic tank in Faridabad's Sikri

GNS News Agency, May 21

There have been 1,266 sewer/septic tank deaths all over India up to June 30, 2024, since 1993. (File Photo) The Indian Express had earlier reported that at least 94 people have died while cleaning sewers in Delhi NCR over the past 15 years. Two men were killed while cleaning the septic tank of a house without safety equipment in Faridabad's Sikri village Wednesday evening. The police identified the deceased as Anand, a labourer from Hodal, and the landlord, Mukesh, who sold eggs. They said the incident took place at around 4.30 pm in Harijan Mohalla.

Anand was cleaning the tank along with another labourer, Ravi, when they began to suffocate, officers said. When the landlord's family members noticed this, they informed Mukesh who entered the tank and managed to pull out Ravi, who was unconscious. However, as he tried to save Anand, they both succumbed. Mukesh's wife and a neighbour rushed



them to a hospital nearby where the doctors declared them dead, the police said. Ravi's condition is reportedly stable. Officers at the Sector 58 police station told The Indian Express on Friday that the inquest proceedings under section 194 of the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS) and the post-mortem were complete. A First Information Report (FIR) was not filed as no complaint was registered in connection with the deaths, they added. Indresh Kumar, former sarpanch of Sikri, said the landlord Mukesh hailed from a Daiit

community. "He had entered to try and save both the labourers who were cleaning the septic tank." In 75 of these incidents, for which records are available, only one case has led to justice for the victims in the form of a conviction in court, data obtained under the Right To Information (RTI) Act had found. Records show that only nine of the 38 cases filed in connection with these 75 sewer deaths were disposed of in court, accounting for a total of 19 lives. They include one conviction, acquittal in two cases, two

cases quashed by the high court, a case of compromise, one closure report, and two cases in which the Delhi Police said the accused could not be traced. For the 75 deaths, the only case since 2009 that led to a conviction (as of last year) involved a site supervisor who was found guilty and sentenced to six months' imprisonment for not providing oxygen masks and other safety equipment to the victim before sending him inside a sewer near Sunder Nagar on March 15 that year.

‘Madhya Pradesh police influenced investigation, shielded their own’: SC on ‘custodial torture, death’ case



GNS News Agency, May 21

The Supreme Court on Thursday transferred the probe into the alleged custodial torture and death of a man from a denotified tribe in Madhya Pradesh’s Guna last year from the state police to the CBI, while recording that it “is amply borne out” that the police “influenced the investigation right from the beginning”. As per the order, the transfer of probe was necessitated owing “to a clear inference that the investigation by the local police is not being carried out in a fair and transparent manner and there is an imminent possibility of the prosecution being subjugated by the accused if the investigation is left in the hands of the State police, who are apparently shielding their own fellow policemen owing to the camaraderie.”

The division bench of Justices Vikram Nath and Sandeep Mehta, disposing a plea for bail to Gangaram Pardhi, the uncle of Deva Pardhi, 25, who died after being arrested in Guna district on July 13, 2024, also granted him liberty to directly move the Madhya Pradesh High Court for bail “in all the cases in which he has been implicated” after the custodial death.Deva had been making last-minute preparations for his baraath when he and Gangaram were arrested in a case of alleged theft. Later that night, Deva’s family was informed that he had died. Deva’s family rejected the police claim that he had died of a heart attack. Last month, the Supreme Court too had expressed its doubts on the cause of death, and had slammed the state police for “shielding” its officers. The apex court also instructed the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) to immediately direct the registration of a complaint and “ensure fair, transparent and expeditious investigation into the custodial death of Deva Pardhi.” The bench also directed that the police officers found responsible for the custodial death must be arrested within a month and that the CBI probe should be concluded “within a period of 90 days from the date of the arrest of the accused.”The top court’s order on May 15 notes that besides the local police’s influence over the probe, “even the doctors, who conducted the autopsy... seem to have been pressurised/influenced.” It stated, “...despite taking note of the large number of injuries on the body of Deva Pardhi... the members of the Medical Board, which conducted post-mortem on his body, failed to express any opinion regarding the cause of his death. This omission seems to be deliberate rather than unintentional and appears to be a direct result of influence being exercised by the local police officials.”

“The involvement of the police officials in the custodial death of Deva Pardhi is clearly borne out from the statement of the sole eye-witness Gangaram Pardhi and stands further corroborated during the magisterial inquiry... It is only after the magisterial inquiry was conducted that the FIR came to be registered, wherein the offence of culpable homicide amounting to murder was omitted. Nearly eight

months have passed since the FIR was registered but till date, not a single accused has been arrested,” the bench reasoned. With Gangaram being the sole eyewitness in the alleged custodial torture and death of Deva, the bench recorded, that the facts of the case “clearly indicate that a deliberate attempt is being made to somehow or the other, implicate Gangaram Pardhi in multiple cases, one after the other, so as to keep him behind bars indefinitely, and break his spirit and the spirit of his family members thereby ensuring that... (he) is not only demoralised but is also prevented from depositing against the errant police officials.”

The bench further instructed the Madhya Pradesh High Court that while considering the Gangaram’s bail application, it “shall keep in mind the observations made above” and decide the plea expeditiously. The top court said that “it is the duty of the State to provide him protection on the anvil of the witness protection scheme,” adding that “the responsibility to provide safety and security to Gangaram Pardhi, either in prison or after being released on bail, shall be that of the Principal Secretary (Home), Government of Madhya Pradesh and the Director General of Police, Madhya Pradesh.”The high court had earlier acknowledged the apprehension of threat to life expressed by Gangaram and had directed to shift him from a jail in Guna to the Central Jail in Gwalior.

Story continues below this adOn June 2, 2024, one Bhagwan Singh from Bhindra village in Guna district lodged an FIR at Myana police station against unknown persons, alleging that substantial articles of silver and gold jewellery and cash were stolen from the safe of his house. A team of 30-40 police officers arrived at Deva’s haldi ceremony; his wedding was due on July 14. The police team are accused of assaulting Deva and his uncle Gangaram and manhandling family members, including women and children, who tried to oppose the police action. It was alleged by the family that both men were “subjected to intense third degree treatment including beating by ropes, putting chilly powder, petrol, salt and hot water on their bodies. Deva Pardhi was strung up by ropes and was hung upside down from the roof. His face was covered with a black cloth, which was tied to his ankle using a string. He was repeatedly doused with water in an attempt to suffocate him.”Deva was declared dead on arrival at a local hospital following this episode. The doctors conducting the autopsy reported “multiple contusions, abrasions, etc, on the body of the deceased.” The SC was later told that “an opinion was given by the doctors that the cause of death was vasovagal shock leading to heart attack.”His family tried to lodge the FIR immediately after the incident, but the “local police officials prevented them from doing so,” the court said.“It is only after the magisterial inquiry was conducted that the FIR came to be registered, wherein the offence of culpable homicide amounting to murder was omitted. Nearly eight months have passed since the FIR was registered, but till date, not a single accused has been arrested,” the court said. Payoshi Roy, the counsel representing the appellants, said that the “entire endeavour of local police officials is to pressure and coerce Gangaram Pardhi to give evidence in favour of the police officials.”Additional Solicitor General Aishwarya Bhati, representing the State, submitted that “two of the involved police officials have been shifted to the police lines.”However, she did “not dispute that other than transfer of the errant police officials, no realistic or firm measures whatsoever have been taken to bring the offenders to book.” She “urged that the State police is fairly investigating the matter.”

After combing forests for years, half of Karnataka’s anti-naxal force to fight communal trouble in urban jungles

GNS News Agency, May 21

After combing the forests for years to find armed Maoists, as many as half of the 670-member Anti-Naxal Force (ANF) of the Karnataka Police will now be deployed in urban areas in the state to tackle communal groups that foment violence between communities. The new anti-communal task force of the state police that has been proposed in the wake of a series of communal murders in the religiously polarised coastal belt of Karnataka will comprise half of the ANF, which has become redundant following the surrender of the last of the state’s armed Naxals in January, police sources said.

“I have asked the director general of police to send a proposal (for creation of the anti-communal force). We will examine it and approve,” Home Minister G Parameshwara said this week. Parameshwara proposed the creation of the anti-communal task force to prevent communal disturbances in the wake of the murder of right-wing gangster Suhas Shetty, 32, in Mangaluru on May 1. Shetty, who has eight crimes, including murders, against his name, was the main accused in the July 2022 murder of Mohammed Fazil, 23, in Surathkal near Mangaluru. Fazil’s murder was seen as a retaliation for the murder of BJP youth leader Praveen Nettaru by members of the now-banned Popular Front of India. The new anti-communal task force is expected to be tasked with tracking communal gangsters and groups. The force will operate across the state and will not be restricted to coastal Karnataka, where the communal divide is seen as a major social problem that is beyond the control of the police, sources said. In the past, communal murder cases in Karnataka, especially those of right-wing leaders, have been referred to the National Investigation Agency (NIA), allegedly following pressure from the BJP and allies.

There has been a demand by the BJP to hand over the Shetty murder case to the NIA, but the Karnataka Congress government has indicated the criminal record of the gangster to suggest that the case is linked to rivalries between gangsters, rather than terrorists. The NIA, which is apprehensive of the banned PFI continuing to operate in the coastal regions of Karnataka, has not obtained legal clearances as yet to question the people arrested by the Mangaluru police in the Suhas Shetty murder case. The proposal for the anti-communal task force will also essentially help the Karnataka Police protect jobs in the department and prevent the slashing of police budgets by the state financial department through the disbanding of the ANF, senior police officers said. “The new anti-communal force will be created by utilising half the personnel allotted to the ANF. The new unit will work primarily in urban areas in the state and not in the forests like the ANF. They will report to the state police chief instead of the internal security department as done earlier for the ANF. The modalities are still being worked out,” a senior officer said. “The main task of crime prevention and investigation will remain with the jurisdictional police, and the special force will be used in cases that



are communal in nature,” a source said. Parameshwara said this week that the anti-communal task force would also look at cases of moral policing and promotion of enmity between communities. “If it (moral policing) is only a social problem, the regular police will address it, but if it is communal in nature and can result in communal issues, then it will be entrusted to the anti-communal force,” Parameshwara said on May 7. Earlier, the Karnataka police department was hoping to retain the services of the entire 670-member ANF to ensure that the vacuum created by the end to the anti-Naxal operations is not filled by a new set of armed Maoist forces that move from regions in the north of India following strong measures taken by paramilitary and police forces. However, following pressures from within the government, Karnataka CM Siddaramaiah announced in his budget in March this year that the state ANF will be disbanded. “Six underground Naxals have surrendered before the Naxal surrender and rehabilitation programme committee. With this, Karnataka has become Naxal-free, and hence Anti-Naxal Force will be disbanded. The surrendered Naxals will be brought to the social mainstream, and to provide basic facilities in the Naxal-affected areas, a special package of Rs 10 crore will be formulated,” Siddaramaiah said in March.

The move to disband the ANF, however, was perceived as a reduction in the number of jobs in the police department, which would require fresh proposals and finance department clearances to replenish in the future. “It is easy to dismantle a force but difficult to create one with the kind of training and expertise of the ANF,” a senior police officer said. The Karnataka government spent ₹150 crore on salaries of the ANF from 2018 to early 2025, according to a legislature reply by the home minister. In the aftermath of Shetty’s murder, it was decided to propose the creation of an anti-communal task force using ANF members, police sources said. The move will reportedly not require any major government approvals, including budgetary clearance. Earlier this year, on January 8, six Naxals, Mundagaru Latha, 45, Sundari Kuthur, 40, Vanajakshi B, 55, Marappa Aroli alias Jayanna, 49, Jisha, 34, and Ramesh alias Vasanth, 38 surrendered before Siddaramaiah in Bengaluru.

‘Celebrating Crop Diversity’: Pune to host India’s debut in global botanical art exhibition project



GNS News Agency, May 21

India will be joining over 30 countries, including the US, the UK, Canada, Brazil, Australia, Germany, South Africa, Cuba, and Indonesia, in simultaneously hosting a botanical artworks’ exhibition titled ‘Celebrating Crop Diversity’. The exhibition highlights the biodiversity in crops that have been closely associated with the human species over thousands of years. In India, the exhibition will be held in Pune’s Rupa Rahul Bajaj Centre for Environment and Art (RRBCEA) in partnership with the Indian Botanical Art Society, running from May 17 to May 24 to coincide with Worldwide Day of Botanical Art on May 18. The exhibition in Pune will showcase 32 works by 18 artists from India and Sri Lanka. “The exhibition will be officially held on May 18, with each country deciding how many more days they want to extend it and what other programmes they would like to host.

At RRBCEA, we are hosting the exhibition from May 17 to 24. Apart from the exhibition, there will be workshops, demonstrations, and talks,” says Dr Dhanashree Paranjpe, head of RRBCEA. Highlighting the importance of botanical art, Prerna Gupta, an artist from Kanpur, says, “If I am a watercolour artist doing a painting of an apple, I would focus on the beauty of the apple or what emotions it inspires in me. But, if I am a botanical artist, I would adhere to a more scientific accuracy, focusing on shape, colour, form, and botanical details. If I am showing a dissection of the apple, I am going to show exactly how many seeds it has,

if there are any distinguishing features, and which variety of apple it is.”

Gupta, who began to create botanical art during Covid, is exhibiting works showing the wild Himalayan pomegranate and the ivy gourd, which is known as ‘tendu’ in Marathi. “Commercial pomegranate varieties often get a bacterial blight, so scientists decided to solve it by crossing them with the wild Himalayan pomegranate. This resulted in a new, more bacteria-resistant variety. Through my artwork, I want to show how important it is to conserve wild varieties because they are gene banks. At the moment, we may not know their importance as there are a lot of things still waiting to be discovered,” explains Gupta. Her work on the ivy gourd, which is widely eaten across India but also grows wild and is consumed by tribal communities, is an attempt to highlight wild plants that can provide us with nutritional support, and it is important to conserve them. Sri Lankan artist Maria Abeysekere says her botanical art is “a reflection of my deep connection with nature”. She captures the essence of local plant species through her plein air botanical artworks. Her passion for botanical art not only showcases the beauty of her surroundings but also serves as a celebration of the rich flora that surrounds her every day. This is the second Botanical Art Worldwide Project and the works fall under categories, such as Heritage Crops, featuring crops that are not used in modern, large-scale monoculture agriculture; Crop Wild Relatives, about plants that can be hybridised with cultivated crops to impart a new characteristic to the cultivated crop, or that are foraged wild plants; and ancient crops that have been cultivated for hundreds or thousands of years in the same form. “The exhibition will help create awareness around crop diversity that India has to offer, but in an artistic way. The artists, being from all over India, have tried to find unique or different crops in their region that they can represent through their art. So, in Pune, even if we don’t see these varieties, we will be able to see them through this botanical art exhibition. We will be aware that such beautiful varieties of crops exist in India and wonder why we don’t explore or know about them,” says Paranjpe.

Israeli strikes kill 20 people in Gaza as US President wraps up his Middle East visit

GNS News Agency, May 21

Deir Al-Balah (Gaza): Israeli strikes killed at least 20 people in Gaza on Friday morning, as US President Donald Trump wraps up his Middle East visit. An Associated Press journalist counted the bodies at the Indonesian Hospital in northern Gaza, where they were brought. Survivors said many people were still under the rubble.

The widespread attacks across northern Gaza come as Trump finishes his visit to Gulf states but not Israel. There had been widespread hope that Trump’s regional visit could usher in a ceasefire deal or renewal of humanitarian aid to Gaza. An Israeli blockade of the territory is now in its third month. The Israeli military had no immediate comment on the strikes. The strikes lasted hours into Friday morning, sending people fleeing from the Jabaliya refugee camp and the town of Beit Lahiya and followed days of similar attacks that killed more than 130 people, according to Gaza’s health ministry. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu vowed earlier in the week to push ahead with a promised escalation of force in Israel’s war in the Gaza Strip to pursue his aim of destroying the Hamas militant group, which governs Gaza. In comments released by Netanyahu’s office Tuesday, the Prime Minister said Israeli forces were days away from entering Gaza “with great strength to complete the mission ... It means destroying Hamas.” It was unclear if Friday’s bombardment was the start of the operation. The war began when Hamas-led militants killed 1,200 people in an Oct 7, 2023, intrusion into southern Israel. Israel’s retaliatory offensive has killed more than 53,000 Palestinians, many of them women and children, according to Gaza’s Health Ministry, which does not say how many were combatants. Almost 3,000 have been killed since Israel broke a ceasefire on March 18, the ministry said. Hamas still holds 58 of the roughly 250 hostages it took during its Oct 7 at-



tack on Israel, with 23 believed to still be alive, although Israeli authorities have expressed concern for the status of three of those. The attacks come as Israel enters its third month of blockading Gaza, preventing food, fuel, medicine and all other supplies from entering, worsening a humanitarian crisis. Israel says the blockade aims to pressure Hamas to release the hostages it still holds and that it won’t allow aid back in until a system is in place that gives it control over distribution. Earlier this week, a new humanitarian organisation that has US backing to take over aid delivery said it expects to begin operations before the end of the month, after what it describes as key agreements from Israeli officials. A statement from the group, called the Gaza Humanitarian Foundation, identified several US military veterans, former humanitarian coordinators and security contractors that it said would lead the delivery effort. Many in the humanitarian community, including the UN, said the system does not align with humanitarian principles and won’t be able to meet the needs of Palestinians in Gaza and won’t participate in it.

Kremlin says a Putin-Trump meeting is essential but needs advance preparation and must yield results



GNS News Agency, May 21

The Kremlin said on Friday (May 16, 2025) that a meeting between Russian President Vladimir Putin and U.S. President Donald Trump was essential but required con-

siderable advance preparation and had to yield results when it happened. Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov was commenting after Mr. Trump said he would meet Mr. Putin “as soon as we can set it up.”... Such a meeting is certainly necessary. It is necessary both primarily from the point of view of bilateral Russian-U.S. relations and from the point of view of having a serious conversation at the highest level about international affairs and on regional problems, including, of course, about the crisis over Ukraine,” Mr. Peskov said.

Russian and Ukrainian negotiators were in Istanbul on Friday (May 15, 2025) for what was billed as their first direct peace talks in more than three years, under pressure from U.S. President Donald Trump to end Europe’s deadliest conflict since World War Two. Commenting on the Istanbul talks, Mr. Peskov said that the Russian negotiating team was in constant communication with Moscow and that President Putin was receiving real-time updates.

India ramps up efforts for UN listing of LeT front The Resistance Front

GNS News Agency, May 21

United Nations: An Indian delegation met top officials of the UN Office of Counter-Terrorism (UNOCT) and Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate here even as New Delhi stepped up efforts to designate The Resistance Front, an LeT proxy, as a UN-listed terror outfit for its alleged involvement in the Pahalgam attack.

The Resistance Front (TRF), a front for Pakistan-based terrorist group Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT), had claimed responsibility of the Pahalgam attack. “An Indian technical team, which is in New York, is interacting today (Wednesday) with

the Monitoring Team of the 1267 Sanctions Committee and other partner countries in the UN. “They will also be meeting with the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism (UNOCT) and Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate (CTED),” sources said.

The development comes in the wake of the horrific April 22 terror attack in Pahalgam in Jammu and Kashmir and the retaliatory Operation Sindoor launched by India targeting terror infrastructure in Pakistan and Pakistan-occupied Kashmir.

Israeli strikes kill at least 70 people, including 22 children, in Gaza as Trump wraps up his Middle East visit



GNS News Agency, May 21

Israeli strikes killed at least 70 people, including almost two dozen children, in Gaza strip on Friday (May 16, 2025) morning, as U.S. President Donald Trump wraps up his Middle East visit, skipping Israel. At least 50 people, including 22 children, were killed in strikes around Jabaliya in northern Gaza alone, according to hospitals and Gaza's Health Ministry. At least 48 bodies were brought to the Indonesian Hospital and another 16 bodies were taken to Nasser Hospital, health officials said, as strikes overnight into Friday morning hit the outskirts of Deir al-Balah and the city of Khan Younis. The widespread attacks across northern Gaza come as Mr. Trump finishes his visit to Gulf states but not Israel. There had been widespread hope that Mr. Trump's regional visit could usher in a ceasefire deal or renewal of humanitarian aid to Gaza. An Israeli blockade of the territory is now in its third month.

The Israeli military had no immediate comment on the strikes, which lasted hours into Friday morning and sent people fleeing from the Jabaliya refugee camp and the town of Beit Lahiya. They followed days of similar attacks that

killed more than 130 people, according to Gaza's Health Ministry. After the strikes, dark smoke was seen rising over Jabaliya as people grabbed what they could of their belongings and fled on donkey carts, by car and foot. "The army entered upon us, bombing, killing. ... We got out of the house with difficulty, killing and death, we did not take anything," said Feisal Al-Attar, who was displaced from Beit Lahiya.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu vowed earlier in the week to push ahead with a promised escalation of force in Israel's war in the Gaza Strip to pursue his aim of destroying the Hamas militant group, which governs Gaza. In comments released by Mr. Netanyahu's office Tuesday (May 13, 2025), the Prime Minister said Israeli forces were days away from entering Gaza "with great strength to complete the mission ... It means destroying Hamas." An Israeli official said the strikes on Friday were preparatory actions in the lead-up to a larger operation and to send a message to Hamas that it will begin soon if there isn't an agreement to release hostages.

Israeli government spokesman David Mencer told The Associated Press on Friday that Israel's military is intensifying its operations as it has done since Hamas stopped releasing hostages. "Our objective is to get them home and get Hamas to relinquish power," he said. He said Israel will continue pressuring Hamas while negotiating, saying that it's getting results. The war began when Hamas-led militants killed 1,200 people in an October 7, 2023, intrusion into southern Israel. Israel's retaliatory offensive has killed more than 53,000 Palestinians, many of them women and children, according to Gaza's Health Ministry, which does not say how many were combatants. Almost 3,000 have been killed since Israel broke a ceasefire on March 18, the Ministry said. Hamas still holds 58 of the roughly 250 hostages it took during its October 7 attack on Israel, with 23 believed to still be alive, although Israeli authorities have expressed concern for the status of three of those.

U.N. cuts India's 2025 growth forecast to 6.3% from 6.6%, in line with slowing global growth

GNS News Agency, May 21

The United Nations has lowered its growth projections for India for this year and the next, to 6.3% and 6.4%, respectively. These are both 0.3 percentage points lower than its earlier projections. This is also in line with the slower growth projected for the global economy due to heightened trade tensions and with policy uncertainty. The U.N.'s mid-year update of its World Economic Situation and Prospects 2025 report released on Friday (May 16, 2025) has projected global growth to slow to 2.4% in calendar year 2025 and to 2.5% in 2026, both of which are lower by 0.4 percentage points than the projections made in January. For India, as well, the data is based on calendar years rather than financial years, which is what India uses. The report also noted that, despite uncertainties on account of trade and tariff discussions, India can remain reasonably resilient.

"Despite a projected moderation, India remains one of the fastest-growing large economies, supported by resilient consumption and government spending," the report noted. The report also noted that "robust services exports" will also support economic growth. This is in line with the latest government data as well. According to data released by the Ministry of Commerce and Industry on Thursday, while India's merchandise trade deficit widened in April, so did its services trade surplus — basically meaning that services exports were extending their lead over services imports. "While looming United States tariffs weigh on merchandise exports, currently exempt sectors—such as pharmaceuticals, electronics, semiconductors, energy, and copper—could limit the economic impact, though these exemptions may not be permanent," it added. The report further



said that unemployment in India "remains largely stable amid steady economic conditions", but highlighted persistent gender disparities in employment and the need for greater inclusivity in workforce participation. "In India, inflation is projected to slow from 4.9% in 2024 to 4.3% in 2025, staying within the central bank's target range," the report added. On global growth, the United Nations portrayed a dismal picture, saying that the global growth outlook "has deteriorated significantly" since the January 2025 forecast.

"Sweeping United States tariff announcements and counter-announcements, along with heightened policy uncertainty have eroded global growth prospects, already weaker than the pre-pandemic trend due to high debt levels, sluggish productivity growth and geopolitical tensions," it said. It further said that declining consumer and business confidence, increased financial market volatility, and potential disruptions in manufacturing and supply chains are weighing on economies worldwide.

UN launches an enquiry into Rohingya refugees being cast into the sea by Indian naval vessels

GNS News Agency, May 21

The United Nations has launched an inquiry after reports surfaced of Rohingya refugees being forced off an Indian naval vessel into the Andaman sea. The body has announced the appointment of a UN expert to inquire into the "unconscionable, unacceptable acts" and urged the Indian government to refrain from inhumane and life-threatening treatment of Rohingya refugees, including their repatriation into perilous conditions in Myanmar. "The idea that Rohingya refugees have been cast into the sea from naval vessels is nothing short of outrageous. I am seeking further information and testimony regarding these developments and implore the Indian government to provide a full accounting of what happened," said a statement by Tom Andrews, UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Myanmar. Mr. Andrews added that on March 3, he had sent a communication to the Government of India, raising concerns about the widespread, arbitrary and indefinite detention of refugees and asylum seekers, including Rohingya refugees, from Myanmar, as well as allegations of the refoulement of refugees to Myanmar. It called



on the Government of India to end the arbitrary detention of refugees from Myanmar and provide access to places of detention.

The Government of India must immediately and unequivocally repudiate unconscionable acts against Rohingya refugees, stop all deportations to Myanmar, and ensure that those responsible for these blatant violations of India's international obligations are held responsible," Mr. Andrews said.

What is Al-Ayyala, the traditional 'hair-flip' dance that welcomed Trump in Abu Dhabi?

GNS News Agency, May 21

During his recent visit to the United Arab Emirates (UAE), U.S. President Donald Trump was greeted with a traditional Al-Ayyala performance at the presidential palace, Qasr Al Watan. He was received by UAE President Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan. Mr. Trump was greeted by performers in customary attire, with women rhythmically flipping their hair and men moving in synchronised rows to the beat of drums. This cultural display featured women in white gowns rhythmically flipping their long hair in unison, accompanied by drumbeats, chants, and men wielding sword-like props, simulating a battle scene. The visit, part of a broader regional tour, underscored the UAE's emphasis on showcasing its heritage as a pillar of diplomacy and national identity.

What is Al-Ayyala and why is it significant?

Al-Ayyala is a traditional performing art practiced in the Sultanate of Oman and the United Arab Emirates. Recognized by UNESCO in 2014 as part of the Intangible Cul-

tural Heritage of Humanity, Al-Ayyala involves chanted poetry, drum music, and dance, simulating a battle scene. Two rows of about 20 men face each other, carrying thin bamboo sticks to signify spears or swords. Musicians play large and small drums, tambourines, and brass cymbals between the rows. In the UAE, girls wearing traditional dresses stand at the front, tossing their long hair from side to side. Al-Ayyala is traditionally performed during weddings, national holidays, and other festive occasions in Oman and the UAE. It serves as a symbol of national identity and unity, bringing together performers from diverse backgrounds and age groups. The lead performer, usually in an inherited role, is responsible for training other performers and ensuring the transmission of this cultural heritage to future generations. President Trump's visit to the UAE was part of his Middle East tour, which included stops in Saudi Arabia and Qatar. The United States and Saudi Arabia signed a defence agreement worth nearly \$142 billion. The agreement was part of a broader commitment by Saudi Arabia to invest \$600 billion in the US.

U.S. Supreme Court could block Trump's birthright citizenship order but limit nationwide injunctions



GNS News Agency, May 21

The U.S. Supreme Court seemed intent on Thursday (May 15, 2025) on maintaining a block on President Donald Trump's restrictions on birthright citizenship while looking for a way to scale back nationwide court orders. It was unclear what such a decision might look like, but a majority of the court expressed concerns about what would happen if the Trump administration were allowed, even temporarily, to deny citizenship to children born to people who are in the United States illegally. The justices heard arguments in the Trump administration's emergency appeals over lower court orders that have kept the citizenship restrictions on hold across the country. Nationwide injunctions have emerged as an important check on Mr. Trump's efforts to remake the government and a source of mounting frustration to the Republican president and his allies.

Judges have issued 40 nationwide injunctions since Mr. Trump began his second term in January, Solicitor General D. John Sauer told the court at the start of more than two hours of arguments. Birthright citizenship is among several issues, many related to immigration, that the administration has asked the court to address on an emergency basis. The justices also are considering the Trump administration's pleas to end humanitarian parole for more than 500,000 people from Cuba, Haiti, Nicaragua and Venezuela and to strip other temporary legal protections from another 350,000 Venezuelans. The administration remains locked in legal battles over its efforts to swiftly deport people accused of being gang members to a prison in El Salvador under an 18th century wartime law called the Alien Enemies Act. Mr. Trump signed an executive order on the first day of his second term that would deny citizenship to children who are born to people who are in the country illegally or temporarily.

The order conflicts with a Supreme Court decision from 1898 that held that the Citizenship Clause of the 14th Amendment made citizens of all children born on U.S. soil, with narrow exceptions that are not at issue in this case. States, immigrants and rights group sued almost immediately, and lower courts quickly barred enforcement of the order while the lawsuits proceed. The current fight is over the rules that apply while the lawsuits go forward. The court's liberal justices seemed firmly in support of the lower court rulings that found the changes to citizenship that Mr. Trump wants to make would upset the settled understanding of birthright citizenship that has existed for more than 125 years. Birthright citizenship is an odd case to use to scale

Thailand earthquake: Construction magnate surrenders on felony negligence charges over building collapse

GNS News Agency, May 21

A construction magnate and more than a dozen other people surrendered to police on charges of criminal negligence for the collapse of a Bangkok high-rise building during an earthquake on March 28. Premchai Karnasuta, the president of Italian-Thai Development Corporation Limited (ITD), the main Thai contractor for the building project, as well as designers and engineers, were among 17 charged with the felony of professional negligence causing death, Bangkok Deputy Police Chief Noppasin Poonsawat said. The accused have publicly denied wrongdoing.

Ninety-two people were confirmed dead in the rubble of the building that had been under construction and a few remain unaccounted for. The building, which was to become a new State Audit Office, was the only one in Thailand to collapse in the earthquake that was centered in neighbouring Myanmar. The search for victims' remains officially ended on Tuesday (May 13, 2025), though efforts to identify body parts through their DNA will continue.

Mr. Noppasin said at a news conference that evidence and testimony from experts suggested the building plan did not meet standards and codes. The Bangkok Post newspaper said police had also determined that the project showed "structural flaws in the core lift shaft and standard concrete and steel." Thai media have reported allegations of wrongdoing in the project almost every day since the building's collapse, many of them involving irregular documentation for the project. Their reports have highlighted the role of Italian-Thai's Chinese joint venture partner, the China Railway No. 10 company, which is involved in projects around the world. A Criminal Court issued arrest warrants for the 17 on Thursday (May 15, 2025). Mr. Noppasin said

back nationwide injunctions, Justice Elena Kagan said. "Every court has ruled against you," she told Sauer. If the government wins on today's arguments, it could still enforce the order against people who haven't sued, Kagan said. "All of those individuals are going to win. And the ones who can't afford to go to court, they're the ones who are going to lose," she said. Justice Ketanji Brown Jackson described the administration's approach as "catch me if you can," forcing everyone to file suit to get "the government to stop violating people's rights." Several conservative justices who might be open to limiting nationwide injunctions also wanted to know the practical effects of such a decision as well as how quickly the court could reach a final decision on the Trump executive order. Justice Brett Kavanaugh pressed Sauer with a series of questions about how the federal government might enforce Mr. Trump's order. "What do hospitals do with a newborn? What do states do with a newborn?" he said. Sauer said they wouldn't necessarily do anything different, but the government might figure out ways to reject documentation with "the wrong designation of citizenship." Kavanaugh continued to push for clearer answers, pointing out that the executive order gave the government only about 30 days to develop a policy. "You think they can get it together in time?" he said. The Trump administration, like the Biden administration before it, has complained that judges are overreaching by issuing orders that apply to everyone instead of just the parties before the court. Picking up on that theme, Justice Samuel Alito said he meant no disrespect to the nation's district judges when he opined that they sometimes suffer from an "occupational disease which is the disease of thinking that 'I am right and I can do whatever I want.'"

But Justice Sonia Sotomayor was among several justices who raised the confusing patchwork of rules that would result if the court orders were narrowed and new restrictions on citizenship could temporarily take effect in more than half the country. Some children might be "stateless," Sotomayor said, because they'd be denied citizenship in the U.S. as well as the countries their parents fled to avoid persecution. New Jersey Solicitor General Jeremy Feigenbaum, representing 22 states that sued, said citizenship could "turn on and off" for children crossing the Delaware River between Camden, New Jersey, where affected children would be citizens, and Philadelphia, where they wouldn't be. Pennsylvania is not part of the lawsuit. One possible solution for the court might be to find a way to replace nationwide injunctions with certification of a class action, a lawsuit in which individuals serve as representatives of a much larger group of similarly situated people. Such a case could be filed and acted upon quickly and might even apply nationwide. But under questioning from Justice Amy Coney Barrett and others, Sauer said the Trump administration could well oppose such a lawsuit or potentially try to slow down class actions. Supreme Court arguments over emergency appeals are rare. The justices almost always deal with the underlying substance of a dispute. But the administration didn't ask the court to take on the larger issue now and, if the court sides with the administration over nationwide injunctions, it's unclear how long inconsistent rules on citizenship would apply to children born in the United States.



15 turned themselves in at a police station in the morning, and the remaining two were expected to do so later on Friday (May 16, 2025). The epicenter of the quake was in central Myanmar, where it killed more than 3,700 people and caused major damage in Mandalay, the country's second biggest city, and the capital Naypyitaw. Premchai's case is his second major tangle with the law. In 2019, he was convicted of wildlife poaching and served about three years in prison.

He was found guilty of killing protected animals and illegal possession of weapons after park rangers found him and other members of a hunting party in the Thungyai Naresuan Wildlife Sanctuary in western Thailand in February 2018. They were found with guns and the carcasses nearby of a rare black panther, a kalij pheasant and a barking deer. The black panther, which is a member of the leopard species, had been butchered and its meat cooked up for soup.

Death toll in Gaza rises 120 as Hamas says aid entry 'minimum requirement' for talks

Palestinian rescuers reported 120 people killed on Thursday (May 15, 2025) in Israeli strikes on blockaded Gaza, where a U.S.-backed organisation said it intends to begin distributing aid by the end of the month. Aid to Gaza has been cut off since March 2, a tactic Israel has said is intended to force concessions from Hamas, but the group insisted on Thursday that the restoration of humanitarian assistance to the war-ravaged territory was "the minimum requirement" for talks. It also warned that Gaza was not "for sale" hours after U.S. President Donald Trump, on a visit to the region, again floated taking over the territory and turning it into "a freedom zone". Gaza's civil defence agency said the death toll from Israeli bombardment since dawn on Thursday had risen to 120. Israel's aid blockade preceded a resumption of military operations on March 18, ending a ceasefire that had largely halted hostilities since mid-January. For weeks, UN agencies have warned that supplies of everything from food and clean water to fuel and medicines are reaching new lows.

The World Health Organization said the last hospital in Gaza providing cancer and cardiac care had stopped

functioning after an Israeli attack on Tuesday left it "severely damaged and inaccessible".

UN special rapporteur for the Palestinian territories Francesca Albanese, accused Israel of "killing what's left of Humanity". AFPTV footage from the aftermath of a strike on Deir al-Balah in the centre of the territory showed flattened buildings and piles of concrete rubble. "We pray for this war to end, and we appeal to all international institutions to end the war because enough is enough," said Gaza resident Maher Ghanem, his arm in a sling. Following the latest deaths, Hamas called on the international community to hold Israel to account for what it described as a "barbaric escalation". Israel says its aid stoppage and military pressure are meant to force Hamas to free the remaining hostages seized during the October 2023 attack that triggered the war. But senior Hamas official Basem Naim said the entry of aid into Gaza was "the minimum requirement for a conducive and constructive negotiation environment". "Access to food, water, and medicine is a fundamental human right -- not a subject for negotiation," he added.

Is Bihar’s high replacement rate a consequence of poverty?



GNS News Agency, May 21

According to the Sample Registration System report for 2021 released by the Registrar General of India on May 7, the Total Fertility Rate (TFR), which is the average number of children that a woman is expected to have in her childbearing years, in India was 2.0 in 2021, the same as in 2020. While Delhi and West Bengal reported the lowest TFR of 1.4, Bihar reported the highest at 3.0. Is Bihar’s high replacement rate a consequence of poverty? Saswata Ghosh and Prasenjit Bose discuss the question in a conversation moderated by Shiv Sahay Singh . Edited excerpts:

What does a TFR rate of 3.0 mean for Bihar? Does it have any association with poverty?

Saswata Ghosh: The TFR has hovered around 3.0 for the last 6-7 years in Bihar. According to the Expert Committee on Population Projection, Bihar will achieve the replacement level of fertility (2.1) only in 2039. Bihar is the only laggard State in terms of the fertility transition.Bihar’s infant mortality rate has actually declined and stands at 27 per 1,000 live births from 42 in the past. Other indicators such as women’s educational attainment have improved as well, but the State’s TFR remains high. High TFR has some linkage with poverty. But poverty is not the only reason for it. In Bihar, there is a culture of high fertility. As per calculations made of unique level data of the National Family Health Survey of 2019-21, across the country, 67% of women said that the ideal number of children for them is two, whereas in Bihar, only 49.6% of women said so. There are a number of government reports, including NITI Aayog’s Multidimensional Poverty Index, which state that poverty in Bihar is also declining. But despite the improvement in the poverty rate, the fertility rate in Bihar continues to be high.

Prasenjit Bose: These are complex socio-economic questions and the multi-dimensional poverty estimates themselves are far from perfect. I agree with Saswata that cultural factors have an important causality in determining fertility rates. But I would also like to add that there are other economic factors in terms of urbanisation, employment opportunities, and livelihood opportunities, which are not really captured by the MDP (multidimensional poverty) estimates. Therefore, I would not read much into this divergence between TFR and MDP. It could be over simplistic in understanding a complex phenomenon. Ultimately both the estimates are moving in the same direction — poverty is coming down and so is the TFR.The SRS figures make a distinction between urban and rural TFR. Across the country, the urban TFR is 1.6 and the rural TFR is 2.2. Is there a wide gap between the TFR in the urban areas of Bihar, which stands at 2.3, and in the rural areas, pegged at 3.1?

SG: If we see the gap between the TFR of rural areas and urban areas across the country, it is 0.6 percentage points, whereas in Bihar, the gap is 0.8 points. There isn’t a big difference between 0.6 and 0.8. But what is startling is that the all-India urban TFR is 1.6, while in Bihar it is 2.3. That is puzzling. Why is the TFR so high in urban areas, where the affluent and educated sections of society live? Why is it above the replacement level of fertility?The demographer Ansley J. Coale had said that human fertility behaviour is a ‘calculus of conscious choice’. So if the fertility rate is higher than elsewhere, it is because of the conscious choice of the people. Even if the infant mortality rate has declined and there is higher use of contraception, if the fertility in urban areas continues to remain high, it is a conscious choice. Until and unless the people think that low fertility size is actually beneficial for them, the TFR will continue to be high in Bihar.

Do factors such as a preference for sons, the State being primarily an agricultural economy, and having a relatively small female workforce affect the TFR?

Mission (im)possible: how Tom Cruise is running to keep our dreams alive



’GNS News Agency, May 21

Tom Cruise is a bonafide movie star, probably the last of a dying breed. Whether he is gifting the famous white chocolate coconut Bundt cake in the holiday season to his loved ones, or standing on top of London’s BFI IMAX Cinema, or doing a charming Namaste, he grabs eyeballs and mind space. He works hard to keep the magic alive, doing his hair-raising stunts, producing, and otherwise being completely involved in his movies.While Cruise has been part of innumerable blockbusters, and a few franchises, it is theMission: Impossible movies that have cemented his place in Hollywood heaven. Mission: Impossible, released almost 30 years ago on May 22, 1996, was directed by the sultan of style, Brian De Palma. A reboot of the eponymous 1966 television series, Mission: Impossible was Cruise/ Wagner Productions’ first project.The film was enormous fun, blindingly successful, and laid the template for the movies that followed, from the music and mission briefs to the masks and Macguffins. Lalo Schifrin’s M:I theme, probably using Morse code as the starting point (the code for M.I. is two dashes followed by two dots, which could translate to the five-beat rhythm Schifrin used), provided the adrenalin rush.As technology evolved, so did the way the mission briefs were delivered to Ethan Hunt — from video cassettes to sunglasses and then going retro in an old fashioned phone box. Whatever the means of delivery, the message would “self destruct in five seconds”, calling for solid speed reading and comprehension skills.And then there were the stunts. In the first film as Cruise’s Hunt hung suspended inside the secure CIA building, we held our collective breath, dreading the bead of sweat will drop, which would set off all kinds

PB: Yes, significantly. In fact, poverty and lack of livelihood and income opportunities have a huge impact on cultural choices, including the number of children people have. Poor people tend to have a cultural preference not only for sons, but for more children. They want more labour, which will lead to more income. Poverty has been the reason why the fertility rate has historically been high everywhere. Cultural choices are intricately linked to the process of social and economic development. But in the case of Bihar, I would specifically point to a few economic factors. Despite being large, Bihar is among the least industrialised States. There is surplus labour and migration, which are related to the question of very high degrees of illiteracy and a dysfunctional primary education system.

The literacy rate in Bihar, particularly the female literacy rate, remains low. In the 2011 Census, female literacy was about 53%. Is there a direct correlation between female literacy and TFR or fertility?

SG: Chief Minister Nitish Kumar has consistently pointed out that if we educate women, the fertility rate will go down. He has announced many schemes for girl students, including providing bicycles for them. There is a positive correlation not only between education and TFR, but also between household affluence and higher educational attainment. Upper caste and somewhat affluent households generally send at least one son for higher education to better off regions. However, in affluent and landed households in rural areas, the parents prefer at least one son to stay back with them to take care of their property and support them. So, families ideally prefer two sons. If we look at the data more carefully, we will find that among those who say the ideal number of children is three, 88.2% want two sons. However, since the probability of having two sons successively is only about 26.4% according to a paper by Clark in 2000, a significant share of families ultimately end up with a large family size.

Professor Ghosh, in one of your papers, you had pointed out how mother-in-laws act as mediators between women of reproductive age and ASHA workers who visit them during pregnancy. Can you shed more light on this?

SG:Women are getting educated more and more. Several programmes in this regard are being implemented by the State government. Many of these women are first-generation learners. But they have low employability and their exposure to the outside world is limited. They have lower bargaining power and autonomy in the family, and social mobility. In our study, based on a primary survey of 2,250 women in six districts in Bihar, we found that women in the reproductive age group of 15-49 years were not allowed to directly interact with ASHA workers. These interactions were restricted by their mother-in-laws.

We have empirical evidence now that certain States in the north have a high fertility rate while the fertility rate is declining in the south. Where does this lead us to, particularly in the political context, with the question of delimitation looming large?

PB: I don’t think that this problem should be discussed only in the context of Bihar, but also other States in what we call the Hindi heartland — Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, and Rajasthan. These States now account for a disproportionately large share of the country’s overall population. We have a system of representative democracy where ‘one person, one vote, one value’ is a basic principle. As the delimitation debate opens up, which is likely to happen only after the next Census, we will come across a hugely disproportionate size of parliamentary and Assembly constituencies across the north and the south. We will come across parliamentary constituencies in States with a high TFR with a disproportionately large number of people (25 lakh to 30 lakh voters) being represented by a single MP, whereas the case will be different in States where the TFR is already low or is showing a falling trend. The question is whether they (the States with low/declining TFR) are going to pay the price for bringing down the TFR rate. Will they get rewarded or punished for social and economic progress and policy successes? Because the allocation of resources by the Finance Commission is based on the population size. The onus is on policymakers to bring about some course correction and bring in a convergent trend. If the divergent trend (between States with a high TFR and low TFR) continues, we are looking at a disaster which could pose serious questions for our democracy.

of alarms. There was the rodent in the shaft and Hunt saying “toast” to add the right timbre to the tension. And how about the meeting with the smiling arms dealer, Max (Vanessa Redgrave), on the TGV to exchange the ‘NOC’ list, which ends with a helicopter crashing in a tunnel with its propeller blade mere inches from Hunt’s throat?Better and better

John Woo’s Mission: Impossible 2 in 2000 came with the director’s trademark slo-mo, pigeons and flying coats and had a suitably ludicrous plot involving killer viruses and their antidotes, their names taken from Greek myth — Chimera and Bellerophon. J. J. Abrams made his directorial debut with Mission: Impossible III in 2006. The film was darker and grittier thanks to a brilliant Philip Seymour Hoffman as yet another arms dealer, Owen Davian.Brad Bird’s Mission: Impossible – Ghost Protocol came out in 2011 and will be mainly remembered for Anil Kapoor’s weird maharaja turn, sets in Vancouver dressed to look like Bengaluru and of course, Cruise’s antics on the Burj Khalifa, where “blue is glue and red is dead,” in the immortal words of Christopher McQuarrie, who has directed all the M:I films since.Mission: Impossible – Rogue Nation in 2015 saw the introduction of Rebecca Ferguson’s disavowed MI6 agent, Ilsa Faust. Mission: Impossible – Fallout (2018) revealed a duplicitous CIA agent in Henry Cavill’s August Walker.Hunt shares a moment with ex-wife Julia (Michelle Monaghan), while Max’s daughter, Alanna (Vanessa Kirby), continues the family business as the White Widow.Mission: Impossible – Dead Reckoning Part One (that is a mouthful) in 2023 was meant to be the first of a two-part conclusion to the adventures of Ethan Hunt and the IMF, but Cruise has said if Harrison Ford can play Indiana Jones in his 80s, there is no need to slow down Ethan Hunt on the basis of his age.Recent spy thrillers on streamers, including The Agency and The Day of the Jackal, or movies such as Steven Soderbergh’s Black Bag, walk a shadowy path of false identities and lies. The M:I brand of espionage thriller, on the other hand, has a lightness of touch, the masks notwithstanding. Hunt is working tirelessly to keep the world safe unlike Michael Fassbender’s Martian in The Agency, who has doubts of whether he wishes to save the country or the woman he loves.The Daniel Craig James Bond movies started off as a grittier take on Ian Fleming’s superspy but by the fifth film, No Time To Die (2021), .

The big cost of watching a film on the large screen in Bengaluru



GNS News Agency, May 21

Harish Mallya, an ardent film buff from Bengaluru, concedes that his theatre visits have come down post the COVID-19 pandemic period. An engineer and a curator of world cinema for the Bengaluru International Film Festival (BIFFes), Harish had the habit of watching a film every Friday without fail for decades.In the current situation, he highlights a development that reflects the falling demand for theatre viewing. “Earlier, I would book my seat in advance, thanks to the mad rush for tickets for marquee movies in the opening weekend. However, in the last couple of years, I have been able to get tickets at the box office of multiplexes even for the highly anticipated films across languages,” he says.

There is no denying that theatres are facing their biggest test today. Factors such as the advent of streaming platforms and high-priced tickets have changed the viewing habits of the average movie-goer. In 2024, PVR Inox Ltd. shut down 85 underperforming screens. The following year, the multiplex chain decided to close 70 more properties. Similarly, single screens continue to suffer, with the total count in Karnataka coming down to 500 active screens post pandemic from 650 earlier.Bollywood star Aamir Khan delved into the issue at the recently held World Audio Visual and Entertainment Summit (WAVES) in Mumbai. Aamir, one of the canniest box-office minds, suffered a failure with his previous film Laal Singh Chaddha (2022). As he awaits his next, Sitaare Zameen Par, the actor sounded alarmed about the prospect of theatrical releases in the coming days.

“For the size of the country and the number of people living here, we have few theatres. I think we have 10,000 screens. Only 2% of the nation’s population watches movies in theatres. In the U.S., which has one-third of India’s population, there are 40,000 screens. China is ahead with 90,000 screens. There are districts and vast areas in India which don’t have single-screen theatres. Whatever issues we have faced over the decades are about having more screens. According to me, this is what we should be investing in,” Aamir said at the event.Movie-watching, especially in multiplexes, is a costly experience. Bengaluru has remained infamous for the high-priced tickets. In this context, the State government’s proposal to cap the film ticket price at ₹200 came as a ray of hope for film buffs. The March 7, 2025, announcement reminded people of a similar call from Chief Minister Siddaramaiah in his previous term, in 2017. The Multiplex Association of India (MAI) appealed against the government’s decision in court and brought a stay on the order at the time.The government seems to have kept the issue in “suspended animation”, says author and film critic S. Shyam Prasad. “The Chief Minister has aligned with the public sentiment, but I don’t think market forces will allow him to implement the price cap. He has just made a populist statement,” he says.

Incidentally, just two months after proposing the price cap in 2017, Siddaramaiah spent ₹1,050 to watch Baahubali 2: The Conclusion at a multiplex.An executive from a popular multiplex chain, on condition of anonymity, reveals that tickets for big films range from ₹700-₹800 in the opening weekend. The price may go up to ₹1,500 in premium screens such as Gold Class or Insignia. Bengaluru multiplexes had grabbed the eyeballs for exorbitant rates for big-star films such as KGF: Chapter 2 (maximum rate of ₹2,500), RRR (2,000), and Ponniyin Selvan (1,200).The makers of such magnum opuses vouch for the special pricing of tickets as seen in the case of Pushpa 2: The Rule.In December 2024, actorAllu Arjun thanked the Andhra Pradesh government for approving the ticket price hike and called it a “progressive decision”. The Andhra Pradesh government permitted theatre owners to revise ticket rates for the first 10 days for other films, such as S.S. Rajamouli’s RRR (2022) and the Ram Charan-S. Shankar film Game Changer (2025).

“Producers want to recover the money in four days or so. The opening figures matter a lot to them. They want to earn ₹100 crore to ₹150 crore on the first day. Nobody is interested in running a movie for the long term,” Gautam Dutta, CEO, revenue and Operations, PVR INOX, had said during the release of Pushpa 2: The Rule.While Tamil Nadu and Kerala have fixed ticket rates not exceeding ₹200, the Andhra Pradesh government has catered to the requests of makers of big-budget films to alter the ticket prices in the first week. This move could be problematic, as not all big films elicit positive reactions. The interest in a movie might fizzle out due to poor buzz, as family audiences might hesitate to come to cinemas unless the movie is worth experiencing on the big screen.In such cases, producers and dis-

tributors suffer losses, says M.R. Rajaram, vice-president, Karnataka Film Exhibitors Federation. “Multiplexes, which deal in the percentage sharing system with the makers, are the biggest gainers from the price hike of tickets. They play a strong role in altering the costs,” he says, adding that single screens do not raise the ticket fare by more than ₹100 for A-lister films.Kannada filmmaker Karthik Gowda, founder of the production house KRG Studios, has been pushing for dynamic ticket pricing for the last two years. “A film will open with a specific price, and if it gets a good response, the ticket price will increase. We at KRG Studios are discussing this with the exhibitors,” Karthik had proposed in 2023.

Yogi G. Raj, co-founder of KRG Studios, says it is the way forward. “We distributed Daredevil Musthafa,a content-oriented Kannada film from newcomers. We charged just ₹1 for the premiere. Those who came to the show loved the film and spread the word. You should treat each film differently and increase the price based on people’s response,” he says.To please a price-sensitive audience, the Multiplex Association of India organises National Cinema Day frequently. On that day, tickets are priced at ₹99 for all shows. PVR INOX has also introduced a movie pass called PVR Passport, with which you can watch four films a month for ₹349.

Despite these changes, many people continue to watch their favourite films in the comfort of their homes as they find OTT subscriptions affordable. Amazon Prime Video offers an annual subscription at ₹1,499, while Netflix provides a monthly subscription at ₹649 with an option to share the account with four people. JioHotstar offers an ad-free annual subscription at ₹1,499. The amount is much lower for mobile subscriptions across platforms.A file photo of a multiplex in Bengaluru. Apart from the ticket rates, the steep prices of popcorn and other food and beverages at multiplexes have often angered the public.A file photo of a multiplex in Bengaluru. Apart from the ticket rates, the steep prices of popcorn and other food and beverages at multiplexes have often angered the public.

Apart from the ticket rates, the steep prices of popcorn and other food and beverages at multiplexes have often angered the public. “Multiplexes are selling social status instead of promoting cinema,” says Rajaram of the Karnataka Film Exhibitors Federation. A regular-sized popcorn tub costs ₹350 to ₹400, while the maximum price is around ₹600 at a multiplex.PVR Inox Ltd. continues to face the heat from audiences over the pricing of refreshments. Journalist Triidip K. Mandal posted on X (formerly Twitter) explaining why people prefer OTT platforms over theatres. “₹460 for 55 gm of cheese popcorn, ₹360 for 600 ml of Pepsi. Total ₹820 at PVR Cinemas, Noida. The expenditure is equal to the annual subscription of OTT platforms. No wonder people don’t go to the cinemas anymore. Movie watching with family has just become unaffordable,” he wrote.His post went viral on social media in 2023, forcing PVR Inox to introduce the ‘Bestseller@99’ offer, through which people can buy refreshments at ₹99 from Monday to Thursday for shows till 6 p.m. However, the offer comes with restrictions that vary from city to city.On the opening weekend of a big film, a family of four might spend ₹3,000 to ₹4,000 at a multiplex, including for snacks. In 2023, the Supreme Court ruled that “multiplexes are private properties, and the owners can set the terms and conditions for entry”, leading to a ban on people carrying food to theatres. “Consumers are a small fish against big sharks like the multiplexes. The MAI makes crores annually. It’s impossible to go against it in court,” notes Shyam.“Many from the State government and MLAs are stakeholders in multiplex properties. If the revenue from multiplexes comes down, it will affect them. So, I doubt the ticket price-capping proposal will get official in Karnataka,” says Rajaram.Recently, Bollywood filmmaker Karan Johar reopened the debate by speaking about people staying away from theatres. “Since a movie outing costs as much as ₹10,000, families do not spend that much on films, reducing their trips to the theatre,” he said at an interaction.

In a public statement, MAI president Kamal Gianchandani countered Karan’s observations. “In 2023, the average ticket price (ATP) across all cinemas in India was ₹130. The country’s largest cinema chain, PVR INOX, reported an ATP of ₹258 for the fiscal year 2023-24. Additionally, the average spend per head on F&B at PVR INOX during this period stood at ₹132. So, the total average expenditure for a family of four adds up to ₹1,560, significantly different from the ₹10,000 figure carried in the media reports.”He added that a film’s fate depends on “content and appeal” rather than pricing. “Any evaluation of pricing in the cinema industry must account for the broader economics of the movie business, which involves multiple stakeholders, including producers, distributors, and exhibitors. Each of these players contributes to the final cost to consumers, with prices ultimately shaped by the market forces of demand and supply. If lowering prices could optimise revenue for everyone involved, cinema operators would naturally make those adjustments without needing to be told,” his statement read.The exorbitant rates do not matter to people who watch films occasionally, says Rajaram. “For them, it’s just an outing, and they will be willing to spend. The regular cinegoer feels he is getting ripped off by the theatres. It’s a daylight robbery of film buffs,” he says.

Just 5 min exposure to junk food ads can coax kids to consume more calories daily

New Delhi: Just five minutes of advertising of junk foods — essentially high in saturated fats, sugar, and/or salt (HFSS) — is enough to coax children and adolescents to consume significantly more calories during the day, according to a study. The study showed that 7-15-year-olds with just five minutes of ad exposure, regardless of the type of media advertising, can consume on average 130 kcs per day extra, which is equivalent to the calories in two slices of bread.“Our findings offer crucial novel information on the extent, nature, and impact of unhealthy food marketing via different types of media on young people’s eating behaviour,” said lead author Professor Emma Boyland from the University of Liverpool in the UK.“Even

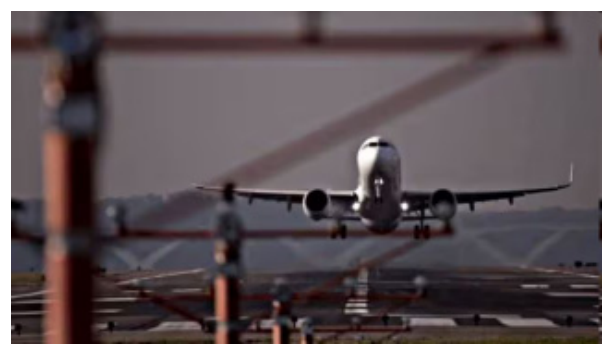


short exposure to the marketing of foods high in fat, salt, and sugar can drive excess calorie consumption and potentially weight gain, particularly in young people

who are more susceptible to advertising and whose eating patterns influence their lifelong health,” Boyland added. The study, based on a randomised crossover

trial of 240 volunteers between the ages of 7 and 15 years, is being presented at the European Congress on Obesity (ECO) in Malaga, Spain.

Turkey-based Çelebi’s stock price crashes nearly 20% in 2 days; company says will pursue ‘administrative and legal remedies’ to reverse India’s decision



Turkey-based airport ground handling major Çelebi Aviation Holding’s shares have lost almost 20 per cent value on Thursday and Friday in the wake of India’s decision to revoke the security clearance of the company’s India arms, effectively bringing its India operations to a sudden halt. Meanwhile, the Istanbul-headquartered company told investors that it will “pursue all administrative and legal remedies” to reverse the Indian government’s decision. Underscoring the importance of its India business, the company said that a third of its consolidated revenue in 2024 came from its Indian subsidiaries. Amid the backlash in India over Turkey’s support for Pakistan in the in the India-Pakistan conflict, India’s aviation security regulator Bureau of Civil Aviation Security (BCAS) on Thursday revoked the security clearance of an Indian arm—Çelebi Airport Services India—of Çelebi on grounds related to “national security” with immediate effect. The revocation also applies to other associate entities of Çelebi in India. Defending itself, Çelebi Airport Services India said that it is “truly an Indian enterprise” led and managed by Indian professionals, and is “not a Turkish organisation by any standard”.

Following the revocation of security clearance by BCAS, the company’s shares tanked 10 per cent on Borsa Istanbul (Istanbul Stock Exchange) on Thursday and closed at 2,224 Turkish Lira (TL). Then on Friday morning, the Çelebi scrip crashed by another 10 per cent to 2,002 TL. Trading had to be suspended more than once as the stock crashed. The scrip had been under pressure for the past few days, given the growing dissatisfaction with Turkey in India for the former’s support for Islamabad in last week’s military conflagration between India and Pakistan. “Our Company will pursue all administrative and legal remedies to

clarify these unfounded allegations and to reverse the imposed orders,” Çelebi said in a regulatory filing on Thursday. On Friday, following the unilateral termination by various Indian airports of their contracts with Çelebi’s India subsidiaries, the company said that it will pursue administrative and legal remedies to seek the annulment of the contract terminations. “Since the beginning of our operations, our subsidiaries have never engaged in any activity that violates India’s national security interests or relevant legislation. We believe the revocation of security clearances based on unjust and false allegations by administrative authorities is inappropriate,” Çelebi said in regulatory filings. It also said that as the largest foreign investor in India’s ground handling and air cargo sector since 2009, the company has provided employment to over 10,000 Indians and invested over \$250 million in the country.

According to Çelebi’s regulatory filings, in its consolidated revenue of around \$585 million in 2024, the company’s five Indian arms—Çelebi Airport Services India, Çelebi GH India, Çelebi Nas Airport Services India, Çelebi Delhi Cargo Terminal Management India, and Çelebi GS Chennai cumulatively accounted for a 33.8 per cent share, which comes out to over \$195 million. Çelebi operated at nine Indian airports—Mumbai, Delhi, Kochi, Kannur, Bengaluru, Hyderabad, Ahmedabad, Chennai, and Goa (Mopa)—and its operations at these airports were distributed among the five subsidiaries, the biggest being Çelebi Airport Services India that was operating at six Indian airports. The airports and airlines that were working with Çelebi are turning to the other major ground handling players in India’s aviation sector like AI Airport Services, Air India SATS Airport Services, and the Bird group. Ground handling refers to operations that are critical for flights to be prepared and operated. These include passenger handling and check-in, baggage handling, cargo handling and management, aircraft servicing and maintenance, ramp services, and catering. In a media statement, Çelebi Airport Services India Thursday said that it is a globally operated aviation services company with no political links or affiliation, and is majority-owned by international institutional investors. The company also termed as “factually incorrect” the allegations about its ownership that have been doing rounds on social media. These include the claim that Sümeyye Erdogan Bayraktar—daughter of Turkey’s President Recep Tayyip Erdogan—is a part owner in Çelebi. The company categorically rejected this claim.

Why govt equity in Vi could ‘lose value,’ as telco raises survival fears

ViVi is among the three privately-owned telecom operators in the country, with the government seemingly intent on keeping India’s telecom ecosystem a three-horse race. If it is not able to secure relief from massive government dues, this could be Vodafone Idea’s last operational day in the country, the telecom operator has told the Supreme Court. That would mean that the government’s 49 per cent equity in the company could also “lose (its) value”.

Seeking a waiver on interest, penalty, and interest on penalty — together worth over Rs 45,000 crore — on its Rs 83,400 crore pending adjusted gross revenue (AGR), the company said that the staggering dues were preventing it from raising additional funding. This, despite the government converting an additional Rs 36,950 crore worth of the company’s dues into equity in March. Vi is among the three privately-owned telecom operators in the country, with the government seemingly intent on keeping India’s telecom ecosystem a three-horse race. However, Vi’s precarious financial situation raises concerns about its longevity in the market. In its petition filed in the Supreme Court, seeking a waiver on its dues, Vi said, “without bank funding, (Vodafone Idea) will not be able to operate beyond FY 2025-26, as it does not have the ability to pay AGR instalment of approx. Rs. 18,000 crore as per DoT demands due in March 2026”. The company said that without this funding, its planned investments will not happen and any hopes of an improvement in its operational performance would be dashed.

“More importantly, the funds raised by (Vodafone Idea) will be utilised soon and the entire capex cycle will come to a halt. In such a case, the entire fund raising done over last 12 months and investments made so far by the company, as also the equity stake of the Government including the recent conversion, will lose value,” Vodafone Idea warned in its petition. “It is impossible for the promoters or any shareholder to invest any more monies in the company. Since the (company) is unable to raise debt in view of precarious financials, if it is compelled to pay amount of Rs. 18,000 crore per year towards AGR dues for next 6 years, the



Petitioner will not be able to survive and will face extreme financial stress,” Vodafone Idea added.

Vodafone Idea finds itself at this juncture despite receiving a boost from the government earlier this year. The Indian government now owns close to 49 per cent of the beleaguered telecom company, after it received another lifeline from the Centre, which converted an additional Rs 36,950 crore worth of the company’s dues into equity in March. Before this infusion, the government held nearly 23 per cent in the company. The government is now the single-largest shareholder in the telecom firm. Due to current legal obligations, the government had acquired these additional shares at a premium of more than 47 per cent at the time.

This was the second lifeline that the government has offered to the struggling telco. As part of its 2021 relief package for the company, the government in February 2023 had approved the conversion of Rs 6,133 crore of Vi’s interest dues into equity. As on December 2024, Vodafone Idea’s total debt was around Rs 2.3 lakh crore. Of this, Rs 77,000 crore was AGR (adjusted gross revenue) liability and Rs 1.4 lakh crore is the spectrum liability. The equity conversion was done for the company to be able to pay part of its spectrum dues to the government. Without the move, the company’s would have to pay around Rs 40,000 crore as a yearly instalment after the moratorium expires in September this year.

receipt of bids for the tender. Similarly, Wildlife Clearance is also mandated to be completed before the receipt of bids. The process of forest clearance will begin on approval of alignment and will be completed before the issue of Letter of Award (LoA). For Land Acquisition, often the most complex and time-consuming part of the project, the new milestones specify precise timings for key stages of the process under the National Highways Act, 1956. The notification under Section 3A of the Act, which signifies the intention to acquire land, must be issued within 60 days of the approval of the alignment of the highway project. The notification under section 3D of the act, which is declaration of acquisition, for over 90 percent of the Right of Way (ROW) length or the length of the land reserved for the project should be issued before receipt of bids. Similarly, the issue of award under Section 3G of the Act, which determines the compensation for the acquired land, must be completed for over 90 percent of the ROW length before the issue of the Letter of Award (LOA). The directive further mandates that possession of 90 percent of the land reserved for the project must be available to the project authorities post award under Section 3G or the National Highways Act, 1956, on or before the appointed date of the project. This ensures that the contractor has access to most of the site from the very beginning of the construction period. “Assessment of value and payment for structures should be considered as an integral part of the compensation payment on land acquisition for the purpose of the above milestones,” reads the letter. Apart from environmental and land acquisition approvals, the directive also addresses the timely clearances of other activities. General Arrangement Drawings (GAD) clearance from Railways and the Inland Waterways Authority of India (IWAI),

Why cabin crew ask you to keep the seat in an upright position during takeoff and landing



Cabin crew insist on upright seat positions during take-off and landing. But have you ever wondered why? Experts suggest that, like every other important rule followed in airlines, this simple act of ensuring that the seat is pushed back in a fully vertical, unreclined position is also paramount for passenger safety during critical phases of a flight.

While the simplest reason is that it provides better support for the passenger’s back, Colonel Rajgopalan, founder, Aviation Training India, said considering that take-off and landing are the most critical phases of any flight, an upright seat allows you to “brace or react” if needed in case of turbulence or an emergency. “A reclined seat could increase the risk of injury to yourself and the passenger behind you,” added Rajgopalan. An upright position means the

seat is locked in place, ensuring the passenger is fully protected and positioned correctly in case of an emergency impact.

Notably, this is part of the safety briefing authorised by the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) Manual on Information and Instructions for Passenger Safety, which mandates airlines through the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) in India to follow these regulations. “In addition to instructing passengers to keep the window blinds open and keep the tray tables stowed, these safety procedures include keeping seat backs in the upright position. As per ICAO guidelines, both verbal and visual demonstrations are essential to enhance passenger safety and improve their response and survivability during emergencies,” said Dhairyashil Vandeekar, an aviation expert and analyst. According to Colonel Rajgopalan, an upright seat provides a more stable base for your body, reducing the risk of injury. “The upright position also allows you to quickly and easily brace yourself for potential impact or be ready to assist with evacuation if needed, with clearer aisles,” he added. Notably, in the unlikely event of a crash, “a reclined seat could cause your head to hit the back of the seat in front, potentially causing more severe injury than if your seat were upright”.

‘Still taking it all in...’: Nitanshi Goel makes heads turn with her red carpet debut at Cannes 2025, her pearl parandi steals the spotlight

Nitanshi Goel, of Laapata Ladies fame, made her Cannes debut last night in a JADE by Monica and Karishma ensemble. The Bollywood newbie chose a custom black gown that intertwines signature kasab embroidery with delicate gold macrame detailing. “Her custom ensemble weaves together our signature kasab embroidery and delicate macrame detailing, bringing together heritage and whimsy in perfect harmony,” said Monica Shah from JADE, adding that the outfit drew inspiration from “spring florals under the moonlight.”

Kasab embroidery, a form of zardosi embroidery, refers to the intricate traditional art of weaving metallic threads — usually in gold or silver — into fabrics such as cotton, silk, velvet, or brocade for a finer finish. Designers are adopting this traditional technique into their modern designs to nod to India’s rich heritage, craftsmanship, and timeless elegance, the brand added on Instagram. For her first look at the Festival, the actor paid tribute to Bollywood icons in another custom outfit by the designer duo. Styled by Shrey and Urja, she wore a white pre-draped sari, a backless blouse featuring a pearl border, and a sheer gauzy dupatta. The ensemble features delicate bow embroidery, an age-old resist-dyeing technique that brings paisley motifs to life, and cascading floral accents. However, the highlight of her look was a custom pearl parandi designed by Be Abhika, which featured black-and-white images of Bollywood veterans stuck to pearl strings.

“A tribute to Madhubala, Nargis, Meena Kumari, Nutan, Waheeda Rehman, Asha Parekh, Vyjayanthimala, Hema Malini, Rekha, and Sridevi and the timeless icons who defined Indian cinema,” the stylist duo shared on their social media. Madhulika Ancharia, co-founder, who was part of the entire process with the styling team, told indianexpress.com that courageous creativity, Indian identity, and self-expression—these three values shaped the custom pearl parandi created for Nitanshi Goel’s Cannes debut. “Inspired by the timeless grace of classic Bollywood icons, we crafted this piece in just three days as a tribute to legacy, reimagined



for the global stage,” she shared. Netizens, as always, could not get enough of her look and replied to her pictures with comments like: ‘Ohho dekho phool khili ha,’ ‘Beautiful girl spread her glamour and making us proud,’ and ‘You have such remarkable talent, you truly deserve to be in many more movies.’ In other news, Jacqueline Fernandes also recorded her presence at the French Riviera, representing India at the Red Sea Film Festival at Cannes. She was first seen in a long cotton shirt dress styled with an upcycled silver set, featuring traditional jewellery reimagined as both top and skirt. Handcrafted by skilled karigars in Kolkata using old chains and heirloom silver, the look pays homage to India’s tribal roots while embracing a contemporary edge. Every drape, every detail is a tribute to slow, conscious craftsmanship. “Power-packed panel of ‘Women in Cinema’.” We discussed our moments of challenges joy and dreams together. It’s amazing how cinema can unite us all ?? Wearing @akok.in,” the Gentlemen actor captioned her Instagram post while sharing snippets of her stunning look. Fernandez looked resplendent in a ruby red velvet corset gown for the “Women in Cinema” panel celebrating women’s cinematic contributions. Puffed up sleeves, a chic updo, and a diamond necklace added to her charm and elegance. She was also spotted wearing a strapless shimmering gold dress on the red carpet.

Oral pills vs body butters: Which magnesium supplement gives more bang for your buck?

Magnesium is no longer confined to oral supplements; it is now available as capsules or powders. This essential mineral, required for muscle relaxation, nerve functioning, and better sleep, has found its way into body care products like creams, roll-ons, mists, and deodorants. This is changing how we think about bedtime wellness. But does topical magnesium actually work as well as oral supplements? We spoke to industry experts to explore the science, the shift in consumer habits, and what each form of magnesium really offer

Why magnesium matters Atul Rajani, Founder of Be, said that magnesium-based supplements combine the mineral with potent, science-backed ingredients, each blend tailored to regulate the nervous system, ease nighttime restlessness, and promote deeper, more restorative sleep. “While topical bodycare may offer temporary relief, supplements work holistically, addressing the root of imbalances rather than just the symptoms,” Rajani told indianexpress.com.

“At its core, magnesium fuels over 600 biochemical reactions in the body,” said Rajani, adding, “It supports everything from blood sugar regulation, bone strengthening, heart health, energy production, muscle recovery, and enhanced mood and mental clarity.” However, people are shifting from oral pills to soothing lotions to lull them to sleep at night. According to Dr Ameesha Mahajan, cosmetic dermatologist and founder of Eden Skin Clinic, the shift from oral to topical magnesium is driven by growing gut issues and the unpredictable absorption rate of pills. “Transdermal magnesium — absorbed via the skin — is gentler and more targeted,” she explained. Palak Sehgal, founder of Kasaya, agreed that the move isn’t about abandoning capsules entirely but diversifying how people get their magnesium. She points to three main reasons for the shift: Transdermal convenience and fewer gut issues: Topical creams sidestep the laxative effect some users feel with high oral doses. Also, there is no one-size-fits-all proper dose concentration.

Self-care rituals habits: A nightly leg massage with magnesium cream satisfies the same “wind-down” need as popping a sleep gummy, but feels more luxurious and present. Beauty-wellness convergence: Stretch-mark repair, muscle recovery and sleep-support can come from magnesium rich skin care as well. Sehgal’s brand, for instance, includes body oils packed with magnesium-rich ingredients like pumpkin seed oil, amaranth, flaxseed and guava hydrosol to support skin health and boost collagen. Riya Gupta, founder of Babi Beauty Cosmetics, told indianexpress.com that the trend stems from a broader cultural shift. “Customers seek skincare that doubles as self care. People want rituals, not routines. Slathering on a magnesium lotion feels



like wellness in action, even if the science hasn’t fully caught up,” she said. Gupta spilled a truth most won’t say — transdermal magnesium has limited absorption, without proper delivery systems. “Most products don’t include delivery enhancers, yet they make bold claims,” she said. Technologies like liposomal encapsulation or microchannel systems can improve effectiveness, especially when combined with activities like MSM or adaptogens, especially for post-exercise recovery or stress relief.

Dr Saurabh Arora, managing director, Auriga Research Private Ltd, is also sceptical about the efficacy of topical magnesium supplements. “There is only one animal study which has shown some help in muscle cramps when you take magnesium through the skin,” said the director of the analytical testing laboratory. He also said, “What many call ‘magnesium oil’ is actually a saturated solution of magnesium chloride that feels oily due to its concentration.” What health experts say Dr Mikki Singh, medical director and founder at Bodycraft Clinics, cited early research showing magnesium may penetrate the skin via hair follicles, potentially increasing skin hydration and metabolic activity or reducing inflammation. “Some studies suggest it can treat conditions like diaper rash or mild pain, but more research is needed,” she said. Dr Mahajan said skin, the largest organ of the human body, is capable of absorbing minerals when received in the form of oil or lotion. “While anecdotal evidence is strong — users often report better sleep, reduced muscle cramps, and less stress — clinical research is limited. Transdermal magnesium shows promise, especially in people who can’t tolerate oral supplements, but we need more robust studies to confirm its absorption levels and efficacy,” she said. Dr Pooja Solanki, consultant dermatologist at Apollo Hospitals, Ahmedabad, supported topical magnesium in some instances, especially in patients with poor gut absorption. “It offers faster relief and fewer side effects,” she said, adding that it can be helpful for skin issues like acne and atopic dermatitis.

Neeraj Chopra ready to fly at Doha Diamond League: “Feel really good, haven’t missed any throwing session”



GNS News Agency, May 21

As he switched between exuding charm and show-casing diplomacy — drawing chuckles as he sheepishly narrated his awkwardness on ad-shoot sets and deftly handling the Arshad Nadeem bouncer hurled at him — only one thing Neeraj Chopra declared mattered: that, the first time in months, he was fully fit. “(Earlier) I had some problems in my groin,” Chopra said in Doha ahead of the Diamond League curtain-raiser for men’s javelin throw. “This time, I never missed any (throwing) session. So, I feel very confident.”

To understand how big a deal this — not missing a throwing session — is for Chopra, it is important to go nine months back in time. Moments after winning the Paris Olympics silver medal last August, he was concerned that the persisting groin injury did not allow him to explore his full range. “I haven’t been able to throw from the full runway. Maximum athletes will have 40-50 throws in one session. With me, who knows, maybe in two or three weeks, I’ll have one session. I have the fear of getting injured,” an anguished Chopra had said. Fast forward to Thursday — the eve of his first major competition this year — there were no creases on an injury-free Chopra’s forehead. “I feel really good. The last throwing sessions were really great. I am ready,” he said. “I am very excited to open my season in Doha.” The excitement was also because Friday will mark the official beginning of a new partnership — it will be the Indian’s first competition with javelin legend Jan Zelezny, the current world record holder, as his coach.

The bigger picture, of course, is whether Zelezny can not just help Chopra remain consistent — the Indian has not finished outside the top two at any event since the 2021 Tokyo Olympics — but also build on it. And though he was spared the question on Thursday about crossing the 90m-barrier — something Zelezny did for fun during his playing days — it remains Chopra’s big challenge. More so because Olympic champion Arshad Nadeem continues to give the impression of someone who’ll wake up from his sleep

and hurl the javelin long into the 90s. Nadeem and Chopra may not cross paths before the World Championships in September. But for defending champion Chopra, it’ll be comforting to breach the hallowed mark at least once before. Chopra has insisted he has a ‘big throw’ in him, but the injury has been holding him back. And Zelezny already seems to have had an impact off the field on the injury front. Chopra hasn’t directly related the two, but earlier this year, he travelled to Prague, where he consulted a doctor Zelezny recommended to heal his groin injury. The Czech has also been striving to make Chopra, who already boasts of a monster mentality, even stronger mentally.

Chopra, who reflected fondly on his time with Klaus Bartonietz, the German who guided him to the top of the world, said it took him a while to get used to Zelezny’s coaching methods. “In the beginning, it was really hard for me because normally when I trained with Klaus, we trained like today we do throwing, tomorrow lifting... But with Jan, in the morning we do throwing, afternoon lifting. So, it was a new experience for me,” Chopra said. “In the beginning, it was hard but after a few weeks, I really liked it. Now, I did some really great sessions. Everything is going well. He changed few little things in technique. He not just helped me in training but also with other things like how we can compete with a strong mindset,” Chopra said. That will be put to the test immediately on Friday. Despite Nadeem’s absence in Doha, the field is stacked with champion throwers, with each one of the world’s top seven throwers deciding to show up. There’s Anderson Peters, the former world champ and Paris Olympics bronze winner. Jakub Vadlejch, the Czech who’s been coached by Zelezny in the past, will be there too. And so will Kenya’s Julius Yego, Germany’s Julian Weber, and Keshorn Walcott of Trinidad and Tobago. And there’s more Indian interest as Kishore Jena will make his international comeback after an ankle surgery that kept him out for six months.

Chopra has frequently competed against all of them and on most occasions, come out on top. What could be closely observed on Friday is how he does it — if, in the new season, he showcases some new tricks. Chopra’s pre-season preparation has been carefully kept under wraps. Apart from the occasional video that surfaces on the web; either a training throw he himself posts or the one throw from a low-key competition in Potchefstroom, his training base in South Africa, that made it to everyone’s social media timeline. That throw, with minimal effort, travelled 84.52m. That was a teaser that raised expectations of something bigger when he gets into competition mode. That time is here, and Doha seldom disappoints. “So many javelin throwers throw their personal bests in Doha,” Chopra said. “It’s a great season-opener for throwers, everyone gives their best.” A fit-again Chopra would be hoping for just that.

‘Quite chaotic’: RCB director of cricket Mo Bobat opens up about time before IPL suspension

GNS News Agency, May 21

IPL Mo Bobat RCB Play interrupted due to light failure during match 58 of the Indian Premier League season 18 (IPL 2025) between Punjab Kings and Delhi Capitals held at the Himachal Pradesh Cricket Association Stadium, Dharamshala on the 8th May 2025

Royal Challengers Bengaluru Director of Cricket Mo Bobat revealed recently what was the situation in the RCB camp after the IPL match between Delhi Capitals and Punjab Kings was abandoned on May 8 due to the military conflicts between India and Pakistan. RCB were scheduled to play Lucknow Super Giants at the Ekana next day but the tournament was suspended for 1 week on the same day. “Yes, quite chaotic. Tried to stay quite calm and tried to get as much information from the BCCI as possible and try to communicate with clarity. It was a pretty eventful evening. We practiced the day before the Lucknow game. And, then, actually on the bus on the way back, a lot of the guys were watching the game on their phones, the Punjab vs Delhi Capitals game,” Bobat told RCB Bold Diaries.

“And then we saw the floodlights had gone out and the players had come off the field. We were not too sure what was going on, and only when we got back to the hotel we kind of got a proper sense of what was happening,” he added. Bobat said that the team found out that the IPL was suspended the next day but his initial thought was that the league would be called off entirely. “So that evening a lot of rumours, a lot of chat and the next morning we found out



that our game wasn’t taking place and the competition had been suspended for a period. Our initial impression was that the competition would be called off for a period of time. You don’t expect a conflict like that to resolve itself, as it did.” He said RCB was mindful of the fact that the players, both Indian and overseas, would want to return to the safety of their homes, given the deteriorating situation. We were quite keen to send the players home because actually (it was) a good chance for them to have a break. So for the Indian players, that’s relatively straightforward,” he said. “With the overseas players, myself and (head coach) Andy (Flower) sat them down and spoke to them all and said, ‘Look, what is your preference?’ and a lot of them said ‘look we’d like to go home because it’s a period of uncertainty but were very committed, and if we need to come back we’ll come back,’ he added.



do not put the team first then there is no use. That is why we call it a team, because eleven people are playing, not one person or two people are playing, eleven people are playing, so it is a team, whatever is the cost of the team, try to do that,” Rohit added. However, as it turned it, the pitch in Sydney was too much in favour of the bowlers with the ball seaming around and uneven bounce because of the grass left. The wicket only got quicker as the game went on. “That was a 30-40 run game. And that’s exactly what I told him. The pitch was so spicy in Sydney. Whatever kind of form he was in, he’s a match-winner,” said Shastri. “If he had gone, sensed the situation, sensed the condition, and smashed it for even 35-40 at the top, you never know. That series would have been level. But that’s each one to his own,” he added. “Other people have different styles. This would have been my style and I let him know it. It’s sitting in my heart for a long time. I had to get it out. And I told him that.”

Ravi Shastri says if he were coach of India team Rohit Sharma ‘would have never not played’ for final Test at Sydney in BGT

GNS News Agency, May 21

With the scoreline 2-1 and India having a chance to level the series at Sydney in the Border-Gavaskar Trophy, the skipper of the side, Rohit Sharma, decided to step down and gave the reins to Jasprit Bumrah. Going into the game, Rohit was in poor form and as a captain, too results have not gone his way as he lost two Tests (Adelaide and Melbourne) of the three as captain after the side won the first Test in Perth. Despite the poor performances, former Indian coach Ravi Shastri backed Rohit. “If I were a coach, you would have never not played that last Test match. You would have played that last Test match because the series wasn’t over,” Shastri said on the ICC review. “And I’m not someone who threw in the towel with the scoreline 2-1. If your mindset is you feel you are... that’s not the stage, you leave a team.”

“The chat that I had with the coach and captain was very simple, I am not making runs. So basically, I am not in form, it is an important match, we need players in form, the boys in our batting are not in form, so you cannot carry too many out-of-form players in the team. So it was difficult for me to make this decision, but if everything is put in front of us, then this decision was sensible. I will not think too much ahead, what the team needed at this time, this was the only thought, and there was no other thought apart from that,” Rohit said at the time, speaking to Star Sports.

“I have come from such a long distance, I have not come here to sit outside or to not play the match. I have to play and make the team win and from the first day when I came to the dressing room in 2007 till now, I have been thinking that I have to make the team win. But sometimes you have to understand what is the need of the team, if you

‘I’ve never experienced anything like this dressing room’: Hansi Flick credits team bond for Barcelona’s La Liga title win



GNS News Agency, May 21

Barcelona manager Hansi Flick led his side to a 2-0 win over Espanyol on Thursday for the club’s 28th La Liga title, calling it the “most honest title.” After lifting the Super Cup and the Copa del Rey, the German has closed out an amazing campaign with a domestic treble. Unbeaten since late December in domestic competition, Barcelona beat Real Madrid to win the Spanish Super Cup in January and then the Copa del Rey. In his very first season on the blaugrana bench, Flick also took Barca to the semi-final of the Champions League, where they lost to Inter Milan in a hard-fought two-legged game by 7-6. Nonetheless, after the terrible

2023-24 season, the former German national and Bayern Munich coach led Barca to greater heights this season. Flick credited the team atmosphere for Barca’s achievements this year. He said, “The family we’ve created. Everyone works with passion and knows their role is important. That has helped me enormously in reaching our goals.” More than that, “the dressing-room atmosphere... I’ve never experienced anything like it. Everyone looks out for one another, and that’s unique ... Now, it’s time to celebrate. We wanted to respect Espanyol’s fans, so we celebrated in the locker room, as we should. Tomorrow, at the victory parade, I’ll stay a bit in the background. When I see people happy and smiling, I’m happy. Let everyone enjoy the parade. It’s my first one here. I only had one with the German national team, and I’m really looking forward to it.” “A lot of work is being done, with a lot of passion and a great mentality... It’s really nice to see this family we have created. How we take care of each other. It’s unique, I’m delighted,” he added. Flick also heaped praises on teenage sensation Lamine Yamal, who opened the scoring against Espanyol with a superb strike in the second half, but insisted that Barcelona are much more than just the 17-year-old winger. “It’s Barcelona’s La Liga. It’s not about one player, of course Lamine has been important, but we are a team and that’s the most important thing. The team as a whole,” Flick said.

When Virat Kohli was giving RCB captaincy to me, I was a bit worried about how to take it, says Rajat Patidar

GNS News Agency, May 21

So far, Royal Challengers Bengaluru have been well led by Rajat Patidar in the Indian Premier League 2025. But there was a bit of a dilemma ahead of the season with Faf du Plessis moving on from the franchise, and who would take the reins. Eventually, the responsibility fell to Patidar, who has led the team well and has made some tactically astute moves along the way.

Patidar also recalled how completely clueless he was when he received the captaincy plaque from his idol Virat Kohli. “When he was giving it to me, I was a bit worried about how to take it. I was completely blank about what to do. He told me to hold it. I held it. After that, I was looking at him like, what should I do? “Then he said a couple of words like, ‘you deserve it, you earned it’. So I felt a little bit okay. I mean, when he said this to me then I became normal in that situation. I learn from him as much as possible. So I think that was a special moment... the way he introduced me to so many fans.”

“I had a lot of questions like, there are so many (big players) in the team. Kohli is such a big player. how will you do it under him? I know how supportive he is about this (captaincy change),” Patidar recalled speaking on the RCB podcast. “I knew I had his full support. Like I said, this is a learning for me, it’s an opportunity for me. So, I will learn as much as I can from him. Because no one has the experience and ideas that he has in every role — be it batting, as an individual and as a captain,” said Patidar.

Patidar also recalled how the franchise had promised to buy him for the 2022 IPL after a productive domestic



season, but did not. “I had got a message (ahead of the mega auction for IPL 2022) that you should be ready... that we will pick you. I had a little hope that I would get another chance (to play for RCB). But I wasn’t picked in the mega auction. I was a little sad.” However, Patidar would join RCB midway through the season and even score the famous ton against Lucknow Super Giants in the eliminator in Kolkata that season. “I (had) started playing in my local matches in Indore (after not getting picked in the auction). Then, I got a call that ‘we are picking you as a replacement for Luvnith Sisodia’, who was injured. To tell you frankly, I didn’t want to come as a replacement because I knew that I wouldn’t get a chance to play there, and I always feel that I don’t want to sit there (in the dugout). “I wasn’t angry. It was like, if they didn’t pick me (during the auction), then I won’t get it (get to play). I was angry for a while but then I was normal,” Patidar said.

FIDE Women’s Grand Prix 2024-25 Leaderboard: Zhu Jiner, Goryachkina finish top two, qualify for Women’s Candidates 2026

GNS News Agency, May 21

FIDE Women’s Grand Prix 2024-25 Final Leaderboard: China’s Zhu Jiner finished joint top before Ukraine’s Anna Muzychuk was declared the winner of the FIDE Women’s Grand Prix Austria leg due to better tiebreaks on Thursday. However, that didn’t stop the Chinese from topping the leaderboard after all six legs and qualifying for the Women’s Candidates 2026. Zhu has had identical finishes in all three events at Nicosia (Cyprus), Pune (India) and Grossblooming (Austria), where she failed to win the event after finishing on joint top. In Nicosia and Austria, it was the Ukrainian Muzychuk who ended up winning the event and in Pune, it was local challenger Koneru Humpy who denied Zhu from winning the India leg.

But with a total of 352.5 points via three joint top finishes, which fetched her 117.5 per event, she became the first player to qualify for Candidates. Joining her is Russia’s Aleksandra Goryachkina, who won the Shymkent (Kazakhstan) leg and collected a total of 308.34 points to finish second. Muzychuk was the unluckiest among the 25 players in the field. After winning two events — the Nicosia and the Grossblooming — she finished third and missed out on a Candidates spot by just 1.67 points behind Goryachkina. Among Indians, Humpy had the best finish.



The Pune leg winner was fourth in the leaderboard with 279.17 points, while Divya Deshmukh (180) was seventh, Harika Dronavalli 11th (171.67) and R. Vaishali was 12th (155). Humpy started her Women’s Grand Prix campaign with a fifth-place finish at Shymkent leg before bagging a silver medal at Monaco leg. She needed an outright first-place finish in Pune to compete for the top two spots, but Zhu didn’t let that happen. After the Women’s World Cup 2025, the Grand Prix series was the second-most high-profile tournament in this cycle, with two Candidates spots at stake.

Mitchell Starc opts out of season remainder, set to lose part of Delhi Capitals contract money

IPL 2025: Mitchell Starc will lose a part of his Delhi Capitals money for opting out of the season remainder. (BCCI) IPL 2025: Mitchell Starc will lose a part of his Delhi Capitals money for opting out of the season remainder. (BCCI) Australia pacer Mitchell Starc has made the decision to not return for the remainder of the IPL 2025 season with Delhi Capitals after the tournament was recently halted for a week due to the India-Pakistan conflict.

Starc was featuring for the Capitals in the match against Punjab Kings at the HPCA Stadium in Dharamshala when Pakistani drone attacks at the border not far from the ground, forced a blackout at the stadium. The players were immediately escorted out of the stadium before being sent to New Delhi by train the next day. According to AAP, Starc was hesitant to return to the country for the completion of the league following the volatile situation between India and Pakistan. The veteran left-arm quick will now have a much smoother training space for the ICC World Test Championship final for Australia, set to begin at Lord’s on June 11. Starc’s compatriots Pat Cummins and Travis Head will return to complete their league-stage commitments with SunRisers Hyderabad. Meanwhile, pacer Josh Hazlewood

will assess his injury concern before confirming his potential to the Royal Challengers Bengaluru roster. Starc’s absence will leave a huge dent on Delhi’s Playoffs bid, even when they have added left-arm seamer Mustafizur Rahman as a replacement for Jake-Fraser McGurk, who had also decided against a return to India. Starc’s wife and Australia captain Alyssa Healy had recently described the situation in Dharamshala last week as “terrifying”. “There was a lot of anxiety around the Australian group because we didn’t have a whole heap of information as to what was going on,” Healy said on the Willow Talk podcast. “That’s probably been the really interesting and probably the scariest part of this whole situation, the misinformation.” Quite close to what’s being fought over, but we were assured everything was fine, ‘everything is OK, it’s miles away, the game will go ahead and everything will be fine’. AAP reported that Starc could lose a part of his IPL contract income due to his decision to skip the remainder of the season. “It means if the Capitals make the finals and feature in three playoff matches, more than a third of his \$A2.1 million contract could be taken from him. Even if his club fails to reach the finals, Starc could be out of pocket approximately \$450,000,” the report stated.

Paresh Rawal confirms he is not a part of Hera Pheri 3 anymore; fans say, ‘Can’t have Hera Pheri without Babu bhaiya’



The Hera Pheri movie series is one of the most well-known Indian films from the comedy genre, and the trio of Akshay Kumar, Suniel Shetty and Paresh Rawal ended up working better than anyone could have ever expected. In 2022, an announcement was made that the third instalment was in the works and all three actors were on board, but according to recent reports Paresh Rawal has decided to sever his ties with the film, an announcement which has caused quite a stir among fans.

Media publication Bollywood Hungama asked the actor about whether he is leaving the film, and Rawal re-

sponded in the affirmative and said, “Yes, it’s a fact.” Among legal issues, scheduling problems and casting troubles, this is probably the biggest hurdle the movie is facing right now. Paresh’s character of Babu Rao made a sizable impact on the minds of the fans and served as a bridge between the fearful Shyam (Suniel Shetty) and the comically manipulative Raju (Akshay Kumar).

The same publication mentioned the reason behind Rawal’s decision and reported that, “There were creative differences between the makers and Paresh Rawal. As a result, the actor decided to step down from the film.” Earlier Akshay Kumar had also quit the film due to similar issues, but the Baby actor seemed to land on the same page as the makers and returned. When Akshay confirmed his return to the film, director Anees Bazmee expressed his surprise over the actor’s decision and stated the reason for declining to direct the film. He told Bollywood Hungama, “I met the producer Firoz Nadiadwala several times. He didn’t have much of a story, let alone a script. Unhone jo mujhe idea bataya woh kuch jamme nahi (the idea he threw at me didn’t gel with me). Maina na keh diya (I said no).” No matter how loved Rawal’s role as Babu Rao is, the actor has talked about his reservations regarding it in the past as well and has admitted that the role typecast him in the industry. While speaking to Lallantop, the actor said, “My Hera Pheri role is a gale ka fanda. I went to Vishal Bhardwaj in 2007 after in 2006 Phir Hera Pheri released. I told him, ‘I want a release from the image that has been set by this film.’ The actor even mentioned that he went to director R. Balki with the same request and told him that ‘the role of Babu Rao suffocates him.’

‘Where’s Dilip?’: As Farah Khan shares her latest directorial with Shah Rukh Khan, fans want to know where her cook is.

Farah Khan’s cook Dilip has been getting a lot of attention lately, since he started appearing in the filmmaker’s vlogs on YouTube. About a month ago, she had revealed a huge surprise that he will be featuring in an advertisement with none other than Shah Rukh Khan. In a subsequent episode, she added that Dilip has also been directed by her in the promo with SRK. However, the superstar’s latest ad which released today, on May 16, didn’t feature Dilip in it. While some drooled over SRK’s charm in the video, several fans also questioned Dilip’s absence.

Shah Rukh anchored a cookie brand’s latest initiative ‘Fantasy Zaroori Hai’ with a beautiful long Hindi poem. It was written by National Award-winning lyricist and play-back singer Swanand Kirkire. His poetic side won millions of hearts, with some wondering why Farah’s cook Dilip wasn’t a part of the commercial, despite revealing he has shot for one. The advertisement has been directed by Farah Khan, as she also shared it on her social media. Taking to her Instagram handle, she posted the ad video and wrote, “Shah Rukh, maine toh itna hi poocha tha ki fantasy ke baare me tumhara kya khayal hai. Tum ne toh Fantasy pe movie hi bana di.”

Netizens flooded the comments section asking about Dilip in the clip. A fan wrote, “Where’s Dilip?” “Har bar aisa lag raha tha Dilip ki entry hogi jaisa ki aapane kaha tha Shahrukh sar ke sath Dilip ka add shoot hua Hai,” a person wrote. Another fan commented, “I thought Dilip entry maareng bich me – Aapne toh kaha tha ki SRK x Dilip dekhne milega.” In a vlog earlier, the Tees Maar Khan director had revealed that her cook Dilip had replaced her and shot an advertisement with Shah Rukh Khan. In addi-



tion, she had also shared the Dilwale actor’s reaction to it in another vlog. Recalling her conversation with SRK, she said, “He (Dilip) called me and said, ‘Please come and teach me.’ So Shah Rukh told me, ‘Mera time dekh kya chal raha hai, main tere cook ke saath ad kar raha hoon’ (Look at what times I’m going through — I’m shooting with your cook). I told him, ‘Mera time soch, tere ko chhod ke usko direct kar rahi hoon’ (Think about my times — I’m directing your cook instead of you).”

Huma Qureshi opens up about pay disparity on OTT: ‘Maharani is possibly the most-watched show, but do I get paid as much as my male counterparts?’



Huma Qureshi has firmly cemented her place in the digital entertainment space with her standout performance in the critically acclaimed OTT series Maharani. Her portrayal of Rani Bharti resonated deeply with audiences, helping the show gain massive popularity. In a recent conversation with India Today, she opened up about how the OTT boom has transformed careers for actors like her — and also spotlighted a critical issue plaguing the industry: pay disparity.

“Maharani is possibly the most watched show and the most loved show,” Huma said. “But do I get paid as much as my male counterparts who are doing an OTT show? Far from it. So that’s still a space one needs to negotiate. And it’s very unfortunate. But it is a reality.” She didn’t shy away from pointing out the stark pay gap between male and female leads, even in cases where the female actor carries the show. “I am the number one on the show. But I’m saying, if I’m comparing another show with any male-led show, they would be paid far more. I keep hearing about male actors getting ₹45 crores, and I’m like, why?”

When asked why such disparities persist, Huma said,

“There is no reason given. It’s just how things are.” However, she remains optimistic that things can change if the conversation continues. “I think all of us collectively are talking about it. And all of us, I think, are rejecting substandard content. And I’m talking more about relevant stories that need to be told.” While she acknowledged the opportunities that OTT platforms have created for talents like Jaideep Ahlawat, Shefali Shah, and herself, she also expressed concern that the space is becoming too generic. She stressed the need for reinvention in storytelling to keep the medium fresh and meaningful.

Anil Kapoor addresses differences in the nation over ‘Operation Sindoor’

Mumbai: Veteran Bollywood star Anil Kapoor has expressed pride in India’s unity and resilience, emphasizing that despite internal differences, the nation stands together in support of its armed forces. Anil took to his Instagram stories, where he honoured the Indian military’s bravery and asserts that India responds strongly to any threat.

He wrote: “What needed to be done—was done. Which family does not have differences within their members, but when it comes to the nation, we stand as one. Always have, always will.” Grateful to our armed forces for standing tall and striking back with valor. India doesn’t forget. India doesn’t forgive. Jai Hind....Jai Hind ki Sena!” Operation Sindoor is the code name for the precise and strategic retaliatory strikes carried out by Indian armed forces on May 7, targeting nine key terror installations across Pakistan and Pakistan-occupied Kashmir. In other news, on May 2, Anil’s mother Nirmal Kapoor passed away at the age of 90. She passed away at the age of 90 due to age-related issues. Nirmal breathed her last at 5.45 pm at Mumbai’s Kokilaben Dhirubhai Ambani Hospital. Facing trouble with her health,

Lovely movie review: Stellar visuals can’t save Dileesh Karunakaran and Mathew Thomas’ thinly written 3D fantasy



Lovely movie review: A movie about a housefly and a human being who establish communication and eventually share an adorable bond. As soon as one hears this logline, it’s almost impossible not to assume that we’re talking about director SS Rajamouli’s blockbuster Telugu fantasy actioner Eega (2012). But no, this actually forms the crux of director Dileesh Karunakaran’s (formerly known as Dileesh Nair) 3D fantasy film Lovely, with Mathew Thomas in the lead. Unlike Eega, which blended action and romance too — featuring the male protagonist (Nani) reincarnated as a housefly to avenge his death and protect his lover (Samantha) from the villain (Kiccha Sudeepa) — Lovely is envisioned as a feel-good drama. While the Eega (fly) in the Rajamouli directorial was, in essence, a human being at heart, Lovely is, as Mathew Thomas mentioned during one of his interviews, “a cute, next-door kind of (actual) housefly”. However, even though the movie is conceived as a feel-good story, does it actually leave the audience feeling good after watching it? Yep, that’s the question. Soon after joining the Kerala State Electricity Board (KSEB) as an LD Clerk through compassionate appointment, following the death of his father while in service, Bonny Baby (Mathew) finds himself embroiled in controversy after he mistakenly offers a packet of condoms to a female stranger. He is soon booked under Section 354 and remanded to judicial custody, after which he is lodged in the sub-jail. During his heartbroken days there, Bonny meets a fly, and to the shock of both, he can understand what she’s saying. Though sceptical at first, Bonny gradually grows emotionally attached to the fun-loving, bubbly fly, whom he names Lovely — his only solace in the loneliness of prison. While his family works from the outside to secure his bail, Bonny and Lovely become close friends, and she even reveals why she has never attempted to leave the jail and live in the outside world. However, Bonny is eventually released on bail, severing their bond and leaving him devastated. Will they find their way back to each other? That forms the remainder of the story. Lovely is, simply put, one of those films where nearly every member of the technical crew has done an excellent job, but their efforts are ultimately wasted due to subpar writing. While Dileesh is also credited as the writer of Lovely, it’s hard not to question why he’s listed in that role for a film where the writing feels almost nonexistent. Or was it the makers’ way of emphasising that no one but him was responsible for this wafer-thin narrative, where a string of pointless scenes are stitched together in the editing room despite them clearly lacking any cohesive flow? What’s unfortunate is that, regardless of the efforts of others, not a single moment in Lovely stands out for its writing, and the contrived dialogues only make matters worse.

Guru Randhawa collaborates with French Montana for Shanaya Kapoor’s music video debut, fans say ‘Yeh hui na baat’



After collaborating with American rapper Pitbull for the song “Slowly Slowly” and British singer Jay Sean for “Surma Surma,” Guru Randhawa has released a party song in collaboration with Moroccan-American rapper French Montana. The song titled “Vibe” features Shanaya Kapoor, marking her debut in the music video space. Shanaya is the daughter of actor Sanjay Kapoor and cousin of actors Sonam Kapoor, Janhvi Kapoor and Arjun Kapoor.

Presented by T-Series, the song blends Punjabi rhythms with bold rap verses. The track also stood out for its East-meets-West fusion, with French Montana experimenting with Punjabi lyrics and surprising fans with his Bhangra moves alongside Randhawa in the music video. In the song, Shanaya Kapoor and Guru Randhawa can be seen enjoying at a casino in Las Vegas. Released on Friday, “Vibe” drew an enthusiastic response from fans, who celebrated the high-energy track and Guru Randhawa’s return as a singer in the comments section. A fan wrote, “Guru is Back in music Industry.” Another fan wrote, “Bro proved ‘Duniya jhukti hai , bs jhukane wala chahiye.” Oth-

From the very beginning, we’re presented with scenes that not only fail to gel with one another but also make no effort to engage viewers or draw them into the story or its characters. The film even fails to make us care about Bonny, which prevents any emotional investment in him, his dreams of migrating to a “top-tier” country like Canada or his reality of taking up a government job here out of necessity. Even when he lands in trouble, the lack of emotional depth and the poor character development leave the audience detached, wondering why we should care at all.

Even after the arrival of Lovely and with a zillion possibilities to elevate the script, Dileesh delivers only silly, outdated and painfully undercooked scenes, one after the other. In fact, this also makes us question how and why Bonny and Lovely became so close in the first place. Not only are their conversations too plain, but beyond the initial “wow” factor that he could have felt while meeting a talking fly, the film offers nothing meaningful to justify Bonny finding a best friend in Lovely. From lectures on arapauma fish, Canada, and the characteristics of houseflies to the age-old “Gandhi also went to prison” joke, random characters appearing out of nowhere, and already established ones being completely neglected, the script only worsens as the movie progresses. As if hammering the final nail into the script’s coffin, Dileesh even includes a sickening sequence towards the end in which Bonny contemplates molesting the woman who filed the complaint against him, just so he can return to jail and meet the housefly again. Although Dileesh’s vision as a director — a role he returns to after over a decade since Tamaar Padaar (2014) — isn’t quite as poor as his writing, he makes a significant misstep right at the beginning that severely detracts from the viewing experience. Instead of leaving the events open to interpretation as fantasy, the film opens with an unnecessary disclaimer, “you are about to enter someone else’s dream,” and this gratuitous explanation nips any sense of intrigue in the bud. As the film unfolds, even though whimsical, fantastical and dreamy sequences like the song “Bubble Poomottukal” showcase flashes of his imaginative vision, the execution of the more mundane and dramatic moments falls miserably flat, undermining the entire narrative. If there’s anything as clueless and misguided as Dileesh’s writing, it’s Mathew’s performance. His portrayal of Bonny’s lost-in-thought, dissociative moments makes one wonder whether he was attempting something unconventional that backfired or if he simply chose not to act. Even during his supposedly ‘adorable’ chats with Lovely, his performance feels stiff and artificial. The rest of the cast fares no better, with none of the performances standing out. Nonetheless, Sivaangi Krishnakumar’s voice acting for the fly is commendable, even though the dialogues are weak. Despite the film’s innumerable narrative flaws, the technical crew deserves immense credit for their exceptional work. Director Aashiq Abu, as a cinematographer, delivers outstanding and jaw-dropping visuals. Equally impressive is CGI director Aneesh Kutti’s work and Kiran Das’ editing elevates the visuals significantly. Not just that the fly appears believable, but the way it’s integrated into the frames, making us almost sense its presence without any jarring or dizzying camera movements, is no small feat, especially for a 3D film. In fact, the makers could have easily made Lovely a 2D film and it would still have offered the same visual experience, thanks to the strength of the technical craftsmanship. Vishnu Vijay and Bijibal’s music is also good, but unfortunately, it isn’t enough to compensate for the film’s narrative shortcomings.

ers commented, “Yeh hui na baat,” and “Once again T-Series have to bring back the singer.” Apart from mentioning Guru Randhawa, many also praised Shanaya Kapoor as they wrote, “Shanaya ka attitude full queen mode that,” “Shanaya ka vibe cute + bold!” and “Shanaya moves and expressions and Guru’s vibe (fire emoji).”

Guru Randhawa’s song in association with T-Series has come months after the singer hinted at a tiff with the music label. In January, the singer had responded to an X post that read, “TSeries is trying to block Guru from working independently or with another label! Shame on you.” Replying to this, Guru wrote, “Big people face big problems. The issue will get resolved in few days and we will come back stronger than ever.” In the same post, the Punjabi actor-singer also opened up about the gap in his career and shared, “This year will be full of music and movies. Just gearing up. I hardly speak about all these issues but ya its time to address and let you all know what’s happening at the backene from past 1.5 year. But yess hopefully it will get resolved and things will be sorted in a nicer way. Till then spread love, God is the greatest.”