

INDIAN CHRONICLE

Southwest Monsoon arrives early in Telangana, Heavy rains likely through the week

Hyderabad: The Southwest Monsoons have entered Telangana State on Tuesday, almost two weeks in advance. The early onset and rapid advance of Southwest Monsoons are expected to translate into heavy to very heavy rains all through this week till Saturday, May 31, IMD-Hyderabad in its forecast on Tuesday indicated.

The Indian Meteorological Department (IMD)-New Delhi in its update on advancement of Southwest Monsoons, released on Tuesday evening, said "Southwest Monsoon has further advanced into some more parts of central Arabian Sea, more parts of Maharashtra including Mumbai, Karnataka including Bengaluru, remaining parts of Tamil Nadu, some parts of Telangana State and Andhra Pradesh today on May 26".

Op Sindoor reflects India's resolve: PM



GNS News Agency, May 26

New Delhi: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday said that Operation Sindoor was not just a military mission, but "the face of a changing India" that reflects the country's resolve, courage, and growing strength on the global stage.Addressing the nation through his monthly radio programme Mann Ki Baat, the Prime Minister said, "Today the entire country is united against terrorism, filled with anger and determination."Modi hailed Operation Sindoor as a turning point in the global fight against terror, describing it as a symbol of India's growing strength and clarity of purpose. "Operation Sindoor has infused new confidence and energy into the global

fight against terrorism," he said.

Modi lauded as "extraordinary" the precision with which Indian forces attacked the terrorist infrastructure across the border. He emphasised that the operation was not a one-off military action, but a reflection of a changing and resolute India. "Operation Sindoor is the picture of our resolve, courage, and a changing India," he said, and delved on the impact of the operation that resonated deeply across the country.The operation's success was followed by a series of gestures in tribute to the armed forces, ranging from patriotic poems on social media to paintings by children and massive Tiranga Yatras. "In many cities, youth volunteered for civil defence, wrote poems, sang songs of resolve, and children made paintings carrying powerful messages," Modi said.The PM talked about a recent visit to Bikaner where he was gifted paintings made by children. "In cities like Katihar and Kushinagar, families named their newborns 'Sindoor' in honour of the operation," he said.The PM credited India's home-grown defence capabilities for the mission's success, following the spirit of 'Atmanirbhar Bharat'. "This was the ultimate bravery of our soldiers, backed by the power of weapons, equipment, and technology made in India," he said. Modi noted a renewed energy across the country towards the 'Vocal for Local' campaign post-Operation Sindoor, saying the mission had not just inspired patriotism but also strengthened the spirit of self-reliance.

NITI Aayog rolls out 6-point road map for transforming India's medium enterprises

GNS News Agency, May 26

New Delhi: The NITI Aayog on Monday released a report offering a comprehensive six-point road map for transforming India's medium enterprises into future growth engines of the economy.The report highlights that medium enterprises comprise a mere 0.3 per cent of the country's MSMEs but account for 40 per cent of the sector's exports, and outlines targeted interventions to unlock their full potential.The report delves into the structural skew in the MSME sector, which contributes approximately 29 per cent to India's GDP, accounts for 40 per cent of exports, and employs over 60 per cent of the workforce.

Despite its critical role, the composition of the sector is disproportionately weighted: 97 per cent of registered MSMEs are micro enterprises, 2.7 per cent are small, and only 0.3 per cent are medium enterprises, the report states.The report underscores key challenges faced by medium enterprises, including constrained access to tailored financial products, limited adoption of advanced technologies, inadequate R&D support, lack of sectoral testing infrastructure, and a mismatch between training programmes and enterprise needs. These limitations hinder their ability to scale and innovate.To address these issues, the report outlines a comprehensive policy framework with targeted interventions across six priority areas. These include introduction of a working capital financing scheme linked to enterprise turnover, a Rs 5 crore credit card facility at market rates, and expedited fund disbursement mechanisms through retail banks, overseen by the Ministry of MSME.Upgradation of existing Technology Centres into sector-specific and regionally-customised India SME 4.0 Competence Centres to promote the adoption of Industry 4.0 solutions.Establishment of a dedicated R&D cell within the Ministry of MSME, leveraging the Self-Reliant India Fund for cluster-based projects of national significance.Development of sector-focussed testing and



certification facilities to ease compliance and enhance product quality. Alignment of skilling programmes with enterprise-specific needs by region and sector, and integration of medium enterprise-centric modules into existing Entrepreneurship and Skill Development Programmes (ESDP).Creation of a dedicated sub-portal within the Udyam platform featuring scheme discovery tools, compliance support, and AI-based assistance to help enterprises navigate resources effectively.The report emphasises that unlocking the potential of medium enterprises requires a shift toward inclusive policy design and collaborative governance. With strategic support in finance, technology, infrastructure, skilling, and information access, medium enterprises can emerge as the drivers of innovation, employment, and export growth. This transformation is pivotal to realising the vision of 'Viksit Bharat @2047'.The report, titled 'Designing a Policy for Medium Enterprises,' was launched by Suman Bery, Vice Chairman, NITI Aayog in the presence of V K Saraswat, Member, NITI Aayog and Arvind Virmani, Member, NITI Aayog.

Tension at Sircilla MLA's camp office over Chief Minister's portrait



GNS News Agency, May 26

Rajanna Sircilla: Tension prevailed at the Sircilla MLA's camp office on Monday when Congress activists attempted to place a photograph of Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy inside BRS legislator KT Rama Rao's office.Police used mild force to bring the situation under control and pacify both Congress and BRS workers. A few individuals sustained minor injuries during the lathi charge.The issue of protocol violation has been a controversy in the constituency for quite some time now. A BRS worker posted a message in a local WhatsApp group, warning officials to halt their programmes until the photograph of local MLA K.T. Rama Rao was printed on the official programme flex banners.In response, a Congress activist challenged the warning by declaring the intention to place the Chief Minister's photograph inside the MLA's camp office. Following this, ruling party workers arrived at the MLA's office carrying portraits of Revanth

Reddy. Upon learning of this, BRS activists also gathered at the scene. Both groups raised slogans against each other.Anticipating unrest, senior police officials deployed a large force at the site. Officers attempted to prevent both groups from clashing. As the situation escalated, police used mild force to disperse the crowd. Later, both BRS and Congress workers were taken to the police station.

NPDCL worker's family gets Rs 1 crore as insurance

GNS News Agency, May 26

Hyderabad: Deputy Chief Minister Bhatti Vikramarka Mallu on Monday handed over a cheque for Rs 1 crore as accident insurance to the family of Jogun Naresh, who lost his life in an accident while on duty under NPDCL. His wife Ramesh Shrimati was offered a compassionate appointment letter in the Electricity Department as well.Speaking on the occasion at Praja Bhavan on Monday, Bhatti Vikramarka said that no government had provided such insurance coverage."Providing both accident insurance and a compassionate appointment reflects the government's vision, action, and humane approach," he said, adding that the accident insurance scheme was first introduced in Singareni and later extended to the Electricity Department.



Over 24,000 throng Nehru Zoological Park, Hyderabad on May 25

Hyderabad: In view of ongoing summer vacation for educational institutions and perfect weather conditions in the city, people thronged the Nehru Zoological Park Hyderabad here on Sunday. The zoo recorded 24,000 visitors on a single day.Anticipating a large number of visitors, the zoo management made adequate arrangements, including deputing more security personnel at different locations, additional booking counters, battery operated vehicles and drinking water units etc.Special animal talk shows and reptile awareness shows have also been conducted to promote wildlife conservation awareness among the visitors. The talks emphasised on the importance of protecting animals and their habitats, promoting the idea that wildlife is essential for a healthy planet.

S C Collegium recommends appointment of 3 judges to the top court



GNS News Agency, May 26

New Delhi: The Supreme Court Collegium, headed by Chief Justice of India (CJI) B.R. Gavai, on Monday forwarded its recommendations to the Centre in relation to the appointment of three judges to the top court.Reportedly, the names of Justice N.V. Anjaria, the incumbent Chief Justice of Karnataka High Court; Justice Vijay Bishnoi, presently functioning as Chief Justice of the Gauhati High Court; and Justice Atul S. Chandurkar of the Bombay High Court have been cleared by the apex

court Collegium.

At present, the Supreme Court is functioning at a strength of 31 judges, 3 short of its sanctioned strength of 34 judges.Further, another vacancy would soon arise on the retirement of Justice Bela M. Trivedi on June 9.

Justice Anjaria was elevated as Additional Judge of the Gujarat High Court in November 2011, and in September 2023, he was confirmed as a permanent Judge. He took oath as the Chief Justice of the Karnataka High Court on February 25 last year.Justice Bishnoi, the present Chief Justice of the Gauhati High Court, was appointed as Additional Judge of the Rajasthan High Court in January 2013 and took oath as a permanent Judge of the Rajasthan High Court in January 2015.Born on April 7, 1965, Justice Chandurkar was elevated as an Additional Judge of the Bombay High Court in June 2013. As per the existing Memorandum of Procedure (MoP), the CJI, along with the four senior-most SC judges, commonly known as the Collegium, forwards its recommendation to the Centre to fill up the vacancies in the top court.After receipt of the proposal, the Union Minister of Law and Justice will put up the recommendation to the Prime Minister, who will advise the President in the matter of appointment. As soon as the warrant of appointment is signed by the President, the Department of Justice will announce the appointment and issue the necessary notification in the official gazette.

‘No one should meddle with India’: HM Amit Shah on Operation Sindoor

GNS News Agency, May 26

Nanded: Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Monday said that Operation Sindoor has not only sent a message to Pakistan but to the entire world, forever, that no one should meddle with India's army, people, and borders, otherwise, they will have to face the consequences.At a Shankhnad rally, the Home Minister said that Prime Minister Narendra Modi has made it clear that if anyone attacks the innocent citizens, a bullet will be answered with a cannon.

"This operation was named Operation Sindoor for sending a message to the entire world that the vermilion on the foreheads of our mothers, sisters, and daughters is not cheap. If anyone dares to harm their vermilion, they will have to answer with their blood," he said.

Shah said that on April 22, Pakistan-supported terrorists committed a cowardly act, targeting and killing innocent travellers in front of their families after questioning their religion."PM Modi had said in Patna that no matter where you hide, you will be found and reduced to dust. Pakistan forgot that PM Modi's government has been here for 11 years now. Terrorists attacked Uri, we conducted a surgical strike. They attacked Pulwama, we carried out an air strike. They attacked Pehalgam, we executed Operation Sindoor and razed their main bases to the ground. Hundreds of terrorists were obliterated in our airstrike," he added.

Shah further said that on May 7 at 1:04 AM, the Indian



armed forces destroyed nine terrorist locations in 22 minutes and also blew up their headquarters."On May 8, Pakistan carried out attacks with drones and missiles. But our air defence system was so robust that not a single missile, not a single drone of theirs could touch Indian soil; they were all neutralised in the air," he said.He added that we have to build a Viksit Bharat by 2047, but also create an India that no one dares to attempt any misadventure against."While Operation Sindoor was underway, Operation Black Forest was also in progress. Our CRPF, Chhattisgarh Police, and BSF have successfully destroyed many Maoists. So far, numerous Maoists have been killed, and many more have surrendered. Let me assure you that by 31 March 2026, we will be a Maoist-free nation," said the Union Home Minister.

Modi backs caste census



GNS News Agency, May 26

New Delhi: Prime Minister Narendra Modi asserted on Sunday that caste enumeration is a step towards his government's model to bring the marginalised and those left behind in every field into the mainstream of development, sources said.Addressing a conclave of NDA Chief Ministers, Modi said the success of Operation Sindoor was also a reaffirmation of the achievements the country has made in its push towards self-reliance, underscoring the accuracy and precision of indigenous defence technology.

Briefing reporters, BJP president J P Nadda said the ruling National Democratic Alliance does not believe in caste politics, but caste enumeration will help those left behind in different fields to develop.A resolution praising the valour of the armed forces and the brave leadership of Modi was passed at a meeting of NDA Chief Ministers and deputy CMs here on Sunday.The resolution was proposed by Rajasthan Chief Minister Bhajanlal Sharma and seconded by Shiv Sena leader and Maharashtra Deputy CM Eknath Shinde.The resolution said Operation Sindoor has boosted the self-confidence of Indians, sources said.

Praising Modi's leadership, it said he has always supported the armed forces and that Operation Sindoor has given a befitting reply to terrorists and their sponsors.Prime Minister Modi, and Union ministers Amit Shah, Rajnath Singh and J P Nadda, who is BJP president too, attended the one-day conclave in which nearly 19 Chief Ministers and as many deputy CMs were present.Haryana Chief Minister

Nayab Saini proposed the resolution on the caste enumeration.

The first anniversary of the Modi government in its third term and good governance issues were also discussed during the meeting.A significant part of deliberations at this conclave was devoted to best practices by different NDA state governments.Several Chief Ministers made presentations on the signature schemes of their states.The meeting also paid tributes to the people killed in the April 22 Pahalgam terror attack.

Active cases climb to 1,009 from 257 last week

GNS News Agency, May 26

India on Monday (May 26, 2025) reported a total of 1,009 active COVID-19 cases in the country. The number stood at 257 on May 19 with Kerala, Tamil Nadu and Maharashtra reporting a spike in cases.According to the Health Ministry COVID variants, NB.1.8.1 and LF.7, were found in India recently. One case of NB.1.8.1 was reported in Tamil Nadu in April, while four cases of LF.7 were detected in May. The World Health Organisation (WHO) has classified both LF.7 and NB.1.8 subvariants as Variants Under Monitoring (VUMs), not as Variants of Concern (VOCs) or Variants of Interest (VOIs). These variants are reportedly behind the surge in COVID-19 cases in China and other parts of Asia.The Health Ministry reviewed the COVID-19 cases late last week and said that cases have been reported mainly from States like Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Maharashtra, Karnataka etc."It may be noted that there is a robust pan India system for surveillance of respiratory illnesses including Covid-19 through the Integrated Disease Surveillance Programme (IDSP) and ICMR's pan India respiratory virus sentinel surveillance network. It is observed that most of these cases are mild and under home care," it said following the meeting.Of the 1,009 active cases, 430 are from Kerala, which added 335 cases since May 19. Maharashtra stands second in the tally with 209 cases, 153 of which have been reported since last week, along with four deaths. Delhi added 99 cases, taking its count to 104.

Indian Chronicle

English Daily

Maximum City, Minimum Accountability

Every time Mumbai faces a deluge, bringing the metropolis to a standstill, news anchors from television studios invoke a patronising expression — ‘Mumbai spirit’ — to describe how its citizens show resilience and bounce back to normal life. But, the question is whether they have any other choice. What can they probably do other than show the so-called ‘Mumbai spirit’? The right question that needs to be asked, in times of such repeated crises, is why the administration and political leadership fail every single time in mitigating the suffering of the people. A sense of déjà vu grips Mumbaiers every time heavy rains batter the city and cripple normal life. It is no different this time. A familiar set of unresolved problems — water logging, overflowing drains, flooding of roads and railway tracks and total collapse of the public transport system — comes back to haunt the residents of the country’s financial capital. Clearly, the authorities of the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) have not learnt any lessons from the past and were found wanting to deal with the present crisis too. Torrential rains have been lashing several parts of Maharashtra, including Mumbai, with the India Meteorological Department (IMD) issuing an ‘orange’ alert for the metropolis, forecasting heavy to very heavy rainfall coupled with thunderstorms. The IMD records show that at 295 mm, the Colaba observatory has now recorded the highest rainfall during May, shattering a 107-year-old record for the month — the previous record being 279.4 mm reported in May 1918. Several parts of the city reported severe waterlogging, prompting a political war of words. The flooding has once again exposed the ill-preparedness of the administration and the shoddy drainage works in the city.

Student Leader Submits Memorandum to Minister Sridhar Babu.



“PS Ashokan”Indian Chronicle“Manthani May 26.”“Manthani, May 26:”Bejanki Digambar, a prominent student leader from Manthani, submitted a formal memorandum to Telangana IT and Industries Minister Sri Duddilla Sridhar Babu on Monday, urging government intervention to strengthen higher education and healthcare infrastructure in the region.”“In the memorandum, Digambar highlighted the need for a government postgraduate (PG) college in Manthani to cater to the aspirations of local students pursuing higher education. He emphasized that Manthani, a town with a strong academic tradition, deserves enhanced educational facilities to support its student population.”“Additionally, he appealed for the establishment of the Sreepada Rao Institute of Medical College (SIMC) in Manthani, with the objective of making quality medical education and affordable healthcare accessible to the economically disadvantaged sections of society.”“Minister Sridhar Babu gave a positive response to the representation and assured that the issues raised would be given due consideration.

Experience the thrill of Niagara Falls in Visakhapatnam

GNS News Agency, May 26

A slice of North America’s natural wonder has made its way to RK Beach, as the Niagara Falls-themed exhibition at the Andhra University Grounds draws in crowds. Towering at 30 feet high and stretching 180 feet across, the artificial waterfall is the centrepiece of the month-long exhibition, offering visitors a chance to experience the thrill and majesty of the iconic falls right here in Visakhapatnam. Made at a cost of ₹40 lakhs, the elaborate set took nearly a month to construct. “We use about four lakh litres of water every day, out of which 50,000 litres are recycled,” says Raja Reddy, proprietor of the exhibition. The flowing water, which falls into a four-feet-deep area, creates a continuous sprinkling and foam effect. On windy days, the foam gets carried into the air, adding to the excitement and offering a sensory experience to those standing nearby. The set has become a popular selfie point too. The waterfall isn’t the only spectacle. A curated Mermaid Show featuring certified free divers from the Philippines has added a special touch to the exhibition. Dressed in mermaid costumes, the performers enchant audiences with their graceful underwater moves, capturing the imaginations of children and adults alike. In addition to this, a beautifully designed Kashmir set, complete with artificial snow, pine trees and scenic backdrops, offers a picturesque selfie spot for visitors. For thrill-seekers, the exhibition offers a variety of amusement rides that range from the heart-pounding to family-friendly. There are about 23 rides, including the Dropping Tower, Double Ranger, and Double Disc. “Some of the rides use special equipment imported from Italy, which ensures both safety and enhanced performance,” says Rajay. More than 60 CCTV cameras have been installed to monitor crowd movement and ensure a safe environment for all visitors.

Dr. Gowd’s Dental Hospitals Celebrates the Launch of Bespoke Dental Smiles



Hyderabad, :In a landmark celebration for dental care in India, Dr. Gowd’s Dental Hospitals proudly inaugurated Bespoke Dental Smiles – International Wing on May 25, 2025. This cutting-edge dental center, located in HiTech City, Hyderabad, is poised to redefine excellence in cosmetic and implant dentistry. The inauguration ceremony featured distinguished guests, including Mr. Etela Rajender, Member of Parliament, Mr. R. Krishnaiah, MP, Rajya Sabha, and Nawab Raunaq Yar Khan, 9th Nizam of Asaf Jahi Dynasty, who highlighted the significance of this initiative in advancing healthcare in the region.

Bespoke Dental Smiles is led by an elite team of dental specialists dedicated to providing exceptional patient care. Dr. M. S. Gowd, the founder and a respected figure in South Indian dentistry, brings over 50 years of unparalleled experience and innovation to the center. Dr. Vikas Gowd, recognized as Outstanding Dentist of the Year 2025 and a respected authority in dental implants, smile makeovers, and comprehensive oral rehabilitations, emphasized the center’s commitment to patient care during his speech: “We are excited to combine advanced technology with personalized

treatment plans to ensure our patients receive the highest standard of care.” Likewise, Dr. Kirti Gowd, awarded Best Orthodontist in Hyderabad, shared her insight on the center’s mission: “At Bespoke Dental Smiles, we strive to transform smiles using the latest orthodontic techniques, making our services accessible and comfortable for all.”

During this momentous event, Mr. Etela Rajender expressed his admiration for the Gowd legacy, stating, “Dr. M.S. Gowd has established a distinguished mark in the field of dentistry. His son has now continued this legacy by founding a state-of-the-art, world-class dental hospital in the heart of the city at HiTech, equipped with the latest advancements in dental technology.” Adding to this, R. Krishnaiah remarked, “Hyderabad continues to solidify its standing as a premier medical hub, emerging as one of the fastest-growing and most advanced cities in India. It now stands second only to the United States in offering world-class medical care. Among the notable contributors to this growth is Vikas Gowd, a promising leader who is following in his visionary father’s footsteps. His dedication and commitment to the field are truly commendable.”

Telangana Sets Target to Generate 3,000 MW Solar Power through Cooperative Societies.“



“PS Ashokan”Indian Chronicle“Manthani May 26.”“Gunja Padugu, Manthani, May 26 – In a major step towards sustainable energy and rural empowerment, the Telangana Government has announced its plan to generate 3,000 megawatts (MW) of solar power through agricultural cooperative societies and women’s self-help groups under the centrally sponsored PM-KUSUM scheme.”“State Minister for IT, Industries, and Legislative Affairs, Mr. Duddilla Sridhar Babu, formally launched the initiative by distributing project sanction letters for solar installations at the Primary Agricultural Cooperative Society (PACS) office in Gunja Padugu village, Manthani Mandal. The project, with an estimated investment of ₹2.90 crore, marks the beginning of solar energy expansion across cooperative institutions in the district.”“Speaking at the event, Minister Sridhar Babu stated that Telangana is the first state in the country to approve solar power projects for four PACS under the PM-KUSUM scheme, which aims to promote solar energy adoption in the agricultural sector. He commended the district administration, particularly the District Collector, for their proactive role in securing the necessary approvals and mobilizing resources.”“The selected PACS for the first phase include those in Manthani, Appannapet, Kalva Srirampur, and Dharmaram. The Karimnagar District Cooperative Central Bank has sanctioned ₹3 crore in loans for these projects, and each society is expected to earn an annual income of ₹50 lakh through solar power generation.”“The government is working to strengthen co-operative institutions not just as service centers, but as self-reliant entities capable of generating sustainable income,” the Minister said. “Through solar projects, petrol bunkers, and rice mills, we are transforming these societies into vibrant economic units.”“The Minister added that the state government is preparing plans to extend similar solar projects to all 131 PACS in the district. This initiative is aligned with the broader goal of addressing growing power demands while simultaneously empowering grassroots institutions and creating income opportunities, especially for women.”“He further highlighted that agricultural cooperative societies in the undivided Karimnagar district handle financial transactions worth over ₹7,300 crore annually. “Solar energy will add a new dimension to their operational capacity,” he said.”“Referring to broader welfare measures, the Minister reiterated the government’s commitment to farmer-centric schemes, including ₹2 lakh crop loan waivers, Rythu Bharosa, equipment subsidies, and bonuses for fine varieties of paddy. “Despite increased power consumption, the government has ensured uninterrupted electricity supply across sectors, and 200 units of free power are being pro-

vided to eligible poor households,” he noted.”“District Collector Sri Koya Sri Harsha, who also addressed the gathering, confirmed that four PACS have been selected in the first phase. Required land has been identified, and approvals were secured in coordination with Northern Power Distribution Company of Telangana (NPDC). Financial assistance is being extended by NABARD at a minimal interest rate of 1%.”“Each solar unit is projected to generate an annual income of ₹50 to ₹70 lakh, significantly enhancing the financial stability of the respective societies,” the Collector said. He added that the government aims to replicate the model across all mandals through women’s self-help groups and cooperatives.”“The event was attended by Siricilla Library Corporation Chairman Sri Nagula Satyanarayana Goud, RDO Suresh, local officials, public representatives, and community leaders.

Konda Reddi tribal families to get houses under PM Janman scheme

GNS News Agency, May 26

Kothagudem: ITDA Bhadrachalam authorities have planned to construct houses for the Konda Reddi tribal community under the PM Janman scheme.ITDA Project Officer B Rahul directed the concerned MPDOs to prepare and submit proposals for the construction of Indramma houses under the PM Janman scheme for the tribal families living in the remote and dense forest areas under the ITDA.The PO held a meeting with the MPDOs of Dammamet and Aswaraopet mandals, along with the panchayat secretaries of Konda Reddi villages.He in-

structed the officials to conduct a door-to-door survey of seven Konda Reddi habitations in Aswaraopet mandal, as well as tribal families in Pusukunta village in Dammamet mandal, through the mobile app, and to complete the survey at the earliest.

Metal Prices Expected to Fluctuate on the LME between \$9000 and \$10200 – Motilal Oswal Financial Services Ltd

Hyderabad: According to a report by Motilal Oswal Financial Services, base metals have been caught in between supply surplus forecasts for most metals, weakening PMI figures, and constant updates on negotiations between US-China, keeping market participants on edge and uncertain about the future path.

The US has been imposing tariffs continuously on its trade partners, while keeping rates high for Chinese imports—with tariffs on certain goods ranging up to 245%. However, China has been at the forefront of protecting its country’s interests and is fighting back against the constant ‘singling out’ by the US. After making progress with the UK, the Trump administration also took notable de-escalation measures with China to ease the economic hardship that both countries are beginning to experience.

Copper has been witnessing high volatility—briefly touching levels above \$10,000 in March, then collapsing to around \$8,000 within a week, and rebounding to \$9,500. Following the news of Trump signing an executive order directing the Department of Commerce to investigate whether copper imports threaten national security, potentially leading to a 25% tariff on these imports, a price disparity between LME and COMEX prices emerged. This created arbitrage opportunities, prompting speculative shipments and frontloading of planned deliveries to avoid potential tariffs.

Supply Forecasts

The recent ICSG estimates, global copper market is anticipated to witness a considerable surplus over the next two years. The Group expects a global copper surplus of 289,000 tonnes in 2025—more than double the 138,000 tonnes recorded last year, and significantly higher than previous estimates of 194,000 tonnes. The growing surplus is attributed to increased mine supply and smelting capacity.

Uncertainties around international trade policy are expected to impact the global economic outlook and reduce copper demand. Refined copper consumption is now projected to grow only 2.4% this year (down from earlier projections of 2.7% and 2.8% in 2024), and to further slow to 1.8% in 2026—largely driven by a drop in Chinese usage, from 2% this year to just 0.8% next year.

Congress posts two video clips in which PM is seen attacking the principal Opposition party’s demand for a caste census



After Prime Minister Narendra Modi hailed the decision to conduct caste enumeration along with the decennial Census, asserting that it would bring the marginalised into the mainstream of development, the Congress on Monday (May 26, 2025) posted earlier videos of the Prime Minister attacking the principal Opposition party for making such a demand.Taking to social media platform X, Congress’s communications chief Jairam Ramesh shared two video clips of Mr. Modi targeting the Opposition’s pitch for a caste census. On April 30, 2025, in the period between the Pahalgam terror attacks and the launch of Operation Sindoor, the Modi Govt unexpectedly and suddenly announced a caste census. Yesterday, the PM expectedly took full credit for it in the NDA CMs meeting.

“On April 30, 2025, in the period between the Pahalgam terror attacks and the launch of Operation Sindoor, the Modi government unexpectedly and suddenly announced a caste census. Yesterday, the PM expectedly took full credit for it in the NDA [National Democratic Alliance] CMs meeting. But just listen to what the PM had said - 1. On October 2, 2023, when the findings of the Bihar caste survey were released. 2. On April 28, 2024, when asked about the INC’s [Indian National Congress] demands for a caste census,” Mr. Ramesh said along with the two video clips.

In the first clip PM. Modi, addressing a public rally, is seen saying: “They [the Opposition] used to divide the society on the basis of caste and continue to commit that sin even now.”The second clip is that of an interview in which, when the PM is asked about the Congress’s demand for a caste census, he says: “It is part of the urban Naxal mindset.”On Sunday (May 25, 2025), addressing a conclave of NDA Chief Ministers and Deputy CMs, the Prime Minister had asserted enumeration was a step towards bringing those “left behind” into the mainstream of development since the government believes in the empowerment of the marginalised, and not “caste politics”.

Keep public away from spot of fire: Telangana Fire Department

Hyderabad: The Fire Department has requested the police to barricade the area wherever fire breaks out to prevent public interference in their work.

“We have faced problems from the public during fire fighting. While we are busy trying to control the blaze, some unauthorised person comes and gives us directions on how to combat the fire,” said an official.

There have been instances when people had snatched away pipes from the fire fighters and tried to douse the fire. “We are trained people, and aware of the techniques of fire fighting. Civilians should not disturb us during our work,” another fire official requested.The firemen requested the police to keep the crowds away from the spot of fire and barricade the area to allow fire fighting vehicles and equipment to reach the spot quickly.

Devotee Transport for Pushkaralu Begins from Manthani Under Minister's Initiative



“PS Ashokan”Indian Chronicle“Manthani May 26.”“In alignment with the instructions of the Hon'ble Minister for IT, Industries, and Legislative Affairs, Sri Duddilla Sridhar Babu, a free bus service has been arranged from Manthani town to facilitate the transportation of pilgrims to the Triveni Sangam at Kaleshwaram during the ongoing Saraswathi Pushkaralu. The initiative was formally launched on Sunday by Sri Kotha Srinivas, Chairman of the Single Window Committee, who flagged off the first bus.”“As part of the Minister's spiritual outreach, sacred Teertha Prasadam was distributed to devotees near Tadicherla. In a symbolic ges-

ture of service, Sri Kotha Srinivas also offered bananas to the pilgrims en route to Kaleshwaram.”

“The launch event witnessed the participation of several local leaders and volunteers, including Sri Chatlapalli Santosh, Sri Edla Shravan, Sri Sadula Sreekanth, Sri Nikhil Arelli Varun, Sri Bhudidha Ramesh, Sri Challa Mahender, Sri Avula Santosh, Sri Chatlapalli Madhu, and Sri Ussen Bhi.”“This initiative underscores the government's commitment to supporting religious events and ensuring the convenience and safety of devotees during significant spiritual occasions.

Acute Shortage of Buses at Manthani RTC Depot

— Commuters from Several Villages Grappling with Transportation Woes



PS AshokanIndian ChronicleManthani May,26.Owing to a significant shortage of buses at the Manthani RTC depot, residents of several remote villages are facing severe commuting hardships. On Monday, a delegation met the Hon'ble Minister for IT and Industries, Mr. Duddilla Sridhar Babu, at his camp office in Manthani and submitted a formal representation detailing the issue.

The minister perused the petition attentively and was

apprised of the pressing concerns. It was brought to his notice that the insufficient number of ordinary buses at the Manthani depot is causing immense inconvenience, particularly to passengers traveling to interior villages. Overcrowding in the existing fleet has become a serious concern, especially affecting senior citizens and students, who are compelled to endure uncomfortable and unsafe travel conditions.

The delegation also highlighted that a large portion of the current fleet is obsolete and no longer roadworthy. They earnestly appealed for the immediate allocation of 30 additional “Palle Velugu” buses — 10 to replace worn-out vehicles, 10 to ease the burden of overcrowding, and another 10 to provide much-needed connectivity to underserved villages in the Manthani constituency.

The Hon'ble Minister gave the matter his undivided attention and assured the delegation that he would take proactive measures to address the situation by arranging for the necessary number of buses.Among those who took part in the representation were Mr. Rapelli Rajayya, Secretary of the Manthani Depot Staff and Workers' Federation; Mr. Budida Ganesh, Member of the CITU Peddapalli District Committee; and Mr. Arla Sandeep, President of the SFI Peddapalli District Unit.On behalf of SWF-CITU, heartfelt gratitude was expressed to the minister for his patient hearing and positive assurance.

District Collector Jitesh V. Patil inaugurated training classes for licensed surveyors“



““Bhukya Ranjith naik”Indian Chronicle”Bhadrachalam,May 26:““On Monday morning, District Collector Jitesh V. Patil launched the licensed surveyors' training program organized at Kothagudem University of Mining College. Speaking on the occasion, he stated that 426 candidates selected as licensed surveyors for land surveying in the registration process under the Bhubharathi Act would begin their training classes today. He advised the selected candidates to make the most of the training and excel. He emphasized that this training program would be highly beneficial for the proper implementation of the government's new land records act. He added that the candidates would receive training for a total of 50 working days.As part of the training, candidates will be divided into two batches, with theory classes held in the morning and practical field survey training in the afternoon. Original certificates related to the educational qualifications of the candidates attending the training classes were verified at special counters. Subsequently, the Collector provided the candidates with survey-related kits, including chains, cross-staffs, calculators, scales, pencils, notebooks, and study materials. He stated that licenses would be issued to the trained surveyors upon completion of the training. The event was attended by Khammam district's Joint Mining College AD Srinivas, Inspector D. Srinivas, and staff from the Mining College, among others.On Monday morning, District Collector Jitesh V. Patil launched the licensed surveyors' training program organized at Kothagudem University of Mining College. Speaking on the occasion, he stated that 426 candidates selected as licensed surveyors for land surveying in the registration process under the Bhubharathi Act would begin their training classes today. He advised the selected candidates to make the most of the training and excel. He emphasized that this training program would be highly beneficial for the proper implementation of the government's new land records act. He added that the candidates would receive training for a total of 50 working days.As part of the training, candidates will be divided into two batches, with theory classes held in the morning and practical field survey training in the afternoon. Original certificates related to the educational qualifications of the candidates attending the training classes were verified at spe-



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Covid-19 is not severe this time in Telanagana

GNS News Agency, May 26Hyderabad: Even as multiple States have reported 1,009 active Covid-19 cases and seven fatalities, senior health officials in Telangana State on Tuesday reassured the public that there is no need to panic, stating that the new Covid-19 cases are the result of seasonal transition and are not severe.Following the rise of Covid-19 infections in other Indian States, the Public Health department in Telangana State on Monday maintained that the situation is not so that grave as to warrant the launch of a mass Covid-19 testing and surveillance and drive.”

At this juncture, we are waiting and monitoring the situation closely. While new Covid-19 cases are getting reported in other Indian States, so far the situation is under control. Even the positive cases are not that severe. We are, however, closely monitoring the situation. There is also no special advisory from the union Health Ministry over surveillance and testing of new infections,” said Director of Public Health (DPH) Dr B Ravinder Nayak to Telangana Today.On Monday, the Director-General, Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR), Dr Rajiv Behl, said that despite the rise of Covid-19 infections, there is nothing to worry about, as the cases are so far nor severe.The top ICMR scientist said that there might be a need to increase vigilance and preparedness in case of a surge in cases. The seriousness of the situation will depend on how quickly Covid-19 infections are increasing, the DG said.

Extensive Tour by Ministry of Rural Development Team in the District



“Bhukya Ranjith naik”Indian Chronicle”Bhadrachalam,May 26:““A central team from the Ministry of Rural Development (MORD), comprising Rakesh Kumar, Under Secretary (Budget), and Amit Kumar, Section Officer, conducted an extensive tour of Chandrugonda Mandal in the district. On the first day of their four-day district visit, the team members paid a courtesy call to District Collector Jitesh V. Patil.During the meeting, the Collector briefed the team members on various development programs and schemes being implemented in the district. Subsequently, the MORD team inspected the Jal Shakti Kendra established at the IDOC office. They also held a meeting with officials from various departments at the DRDA office, inquiring about the programs being undertaken in the district. The team then embarked on an extensive tour of Tippanapalli and Ravikampadu villages within



Chandrugonda Mandal. During their visit to Tippanapalli Gram Panchayat office, they interacted with Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) wage earners, self-help group (SHG) women, and National Social Assistance Program (NSAP) pensioners. They also inspected a pickle-making unit set up under the PMFME scheme by SHG women in their homes. The team expressed satisfaction after inspecting the nursery, avenue plantations, and the Kishan Shed and poultry shed constructed under MGNREGA within the Gram Panchayat limits and at the primary school.”“Later, in Ravikampadu Gram Panchayat, the team inspected drumstick cultivation, cattle sheds, Brhat Palle Prakruti Vanalu (large village natural forests), nurseries, and coconut ridge plantations, all undertaken under MGNREGA, and provided appropriate suggestions.

District SP Rohit Raj Makes Surprise Visit to Tekulapalli Police Station“



““Bhukya Ranjith naik”Indian Chronicle”Bhadrachalam,May 26:““On Monday, District SP Rohit Raj made an unannounced visit to the Tekulapalli Police Station. He inspected the police station premises and subsequently issued several instructions to the police officers and staff present. He advised them to maintain cleanliness around the police station at all times and to act responsibly to ensure justice for victims who come to the station with various problems. He warned that disciplinary action would be taken against anyone found negligent in their duties. Following this, he inquired about the details of several cases registered within the police station's jurisdiction. He urged everyone to work towards the swift resolution of pending cases. He also listened to the problems faced by the officers and staff working at the police station. Later, he spoke with victims who had come to the police station, understanding their issues, and instructed the officers present to immediately initiate investigations and work towards resolving their problems.Tekulapalli CI Suresh and other staff members participated in the event.

BRS leaders condemn police action against farmers protesting against paddy procurement delay



GNS News Agency, May 26

Hyderabad: Former Ministers and senior BRS leaders T. Harish Rao and S. Niranjan Reddy lashed out at the Congress government in Telangana for betraying the farmers of Telangana and condemned police brutality against protesters demanding paddy procurement.In a statement, Harish Rao expressed outrage over the alleged manhandling of farmers in Amanagallu in Rangareddy district, the home turf of Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy. The farmers were protesting over delayed paddy procurement and de-

manded that the government expedite it in the wake of rains.”This is the condition of farmers in the Chief Minister's own district. Instead of offering support, the government unleashed police force on them. This is the Congress's track record after one and a half years in power,” he said.

He charged the government with holding a grudge against farmers and intentionally denying them investment support, insurance coverage, and timely crop procurement. “Under the Congress rule, all that farmers get is handcuffs and fist punches,” he added.Former Minister S. Niranjan Reddy also condemned the police for dragging away farmers ruthlessly, though they were only seeking the government to purchase their produce. “The Yasangi season has ended, the monsoon is approaching, yet the paddy remains unsold in warehouses.

Farmers are waiting for months. This government neither waives loans nor fulfils its promises, and instead, beats farmers for asking what is rightfully theirs,” he said.Demanding an unconditional apology from the Congress government, Niranjan Reddy urged immediate State-wide procurement and the release of the promised bonus of ₹500 per quintal. “This is not Indiramma Rajyam; this is a regime that harasses the farmer,” he said

New archaeological discoveries emerge in Siddipet's Kondapaka

GNS News Agency, May 26

Hyderabad: The archaeological explorations by teams of Kotha Telangana Charitra Brundam in Kondapaka, Siddipet are leading to the emergence of new significant discoveries.Siddipet district's Kondapaka is renowned for its prehistoric archaeological sites, Rashtrakuta sculptures, Kakatiya inscriptions, and temples. As explorations continue, numerous historical artifacts are surfacing like springwater.Since yesterday, the team led by archaeologist Ahobilam Karunakar from the Kotha TelanganacharitraBrundam has been excavating on the Patigadda mound in Kondapaka.In addition to their previous finds, they have newly discovered three Neolithic axes and a Satavahana-era terracotta torso of a royal figure wearing a breastplate.In the same area where handfuls of color-



ful glass beads, an ivory dice, Neolithic axes, a double-edged stone axe, terracotta figurine fragments, and iron slag were found, new archaeological treasures have been unearthed.

Banned Pusa-44 finds its way to paddy fields in Punjab — with help from Haryana



GNS News Agency, May 26

Despite a ban by the Punjab government on Pusa-44, the longest-duration paddy variety, farmers in Punjab are readying its nursery after obtaining seeds from neighbouring Haryana. One such farmer from Patiala, Ranjit Singh, says, “We know it is not allowed, but our livelihood depends on it. The yield is 5–6 quintals higher than that of the short-duration varieties, and millers happily take this variety. What else can we do?”

Ranjit said he procured the seeds from Karnal in Haryana through known contacts. “It is not banned in that state. If you know someone, you can get it. You just have to avoid getting caught while bringing it into Punjab.” The Punjab government in April banned the sale of Pusa-44 and hybrid paddy varieties. Some farmers have challenged the ban on hybrid seeds. Ranjit said he used to grow hybrid seeds, but could not get them from Haryana because several dealers were selling full kits that included seed and multiple costly sprays. “The kits were expensive, so I decided to go with Pusa-44, which offers nearly the same yield. Its seed is much cheaper in comparison. I bought Pusa-44 seed at Rs 120 per kg, and for one acre, I need about Rs 480 worth of seed. My nursery is now 10 days old, and I plan to transplant it into the field by June 8 or 9.”

Another farmer, Major Singh from Ludhiana, too procured Pusa-44 seed from Haryana, as most dealers in Punjab are not selling it. “Those who still have some stock, sell it only to people they know well,” he added. Farmers like Jatinder Singh from Sangrur, Jeet Singh from Barnala, and several others echoed similar sentiments, citing high yield, strong grain quality, and preference from millers as reasons for continuing with Pusa-44. Pusa-44, a long-duration paddy variety released by the Indian Agricultural Research Institute in 1993, was once extensively grown across Punjab. Its popularity was driven by yields of 32–36 quintals per acre and strong demand from rice millers. However, its long maturity period of over 155 days requires seven to

eight more irrigation cycles than short-duration varieties. This leads to a huge burden on groundwater, narrows the window between harvesting and wheat sowing, and contributes significantly to stubble burning — a major factor in North India’s worsening air pollution. To address this, the Punjab government banned Pusa-44 cultivation in November 2023 and promoted short-duration, water-efficient alternatives like PR 126 and PR 121. But enforcing the ban has proven to be a major challenge. Many wholesalers and retailers continue to prepare and sell paddy seed in Karnal, a known seed hub. Sellers there admitted that Pusa-44 seeds are still sold over the counter.

“We don’t advertise it, but farmers, especially from Punjab, know about it. They are willing to pay a premium. Some local farmers even grow the seed specifically for them,” said Balwinder Singh, a seed producer. Another seller added that private growers are filling the gap while large companies have officially stopped producing Pusa-44. “It is not hard to find. Farmers from Punjab often visit during the off-season, collect small quantities, and distribute them informally.” While some seeds are packed in labelled bags, farmers often request plain packaging to avoid regulatory scrutiny in Punjab, they said. Officials from the Punjab Agriculture Department admitted that enforcement of the ban remains inconsistent. “Our teams conduct regular inspections, but tracking informal seed networks is difficult. When seeds are exchanged between farmers or brought in from Haryana in small quantities, it is hard to trace,” said an official in Chandigarh. They also acknowledged that the issue goes beyond enforcement. “As long as market economics favour Pusa-44, farmers will continue finding ways to cultivate it.” A senior agricultural economist from Punjab Agricultural University (PAU) emphasised the need for a deeper, more practical solution. “If farmers prefer hybrid paddy varieties due to better returns, they should be allowed to grow all recommended hybrids. At the end of the day, it is an economic decision. Farmers are doing the math, and when they are getting free power for irrigation of longer duration varieties with high yield, why wouldn’t they go for higher-yielding varieties?” He added that if millers are concerned about hybrids giving lower outturn (processing yield), the government should step in — either by offering incentives to millers or by adjusting the acceptable outturn percentage. “While the short-term benefits of growing Pusa-44 are clear to farmers, the long-term environmental costs — stubble burning, excessive water use, and worsening air quality — threaten Punjab’s agricultural sustainability. Until policies better reflect on-ground realities and economic drivers, farmers will continue to turn to banned seeds for better harvests,” another expert from the Punjab Agriculture Department said on the condition of anonymity.

Chandigarh cops deploy laser guns at night too

GNS News Agency, May 26

laser speed guns, traffic laws, car speeding, Chandigarh According to the police, laser speed guns are crucial tools for detecting vehicles exceeding speed limits with high accuracy, even in low visibility conditions. Now driving your vehicle at high speed even during night hours will attract a traffic challan, as to enhance road safety and enforce traffic regulations effectively, the Chandigarh Traffic Police has introduced the use of laser speed guns during nighttime. The traffic police has initiated the night hour challaning on Monday and four vehicles were issued fines for exceeding speed limits in the city. There will be surprise checks all across the city too by the traffic policemen in a bid to ensure that vehicles don’t cross the speed limits. SSP (Traffic) Sumer Pratap Singh said, “this initiative is particularly significant as it addresses the growing concern of speeding during nighttime, when violators often assume that enforcement is lax and no challans will be issued”. According to the police, laser speed guns are crucial tools for detecting vehicles exceeding speed limits with high accuracy, even in low visibility conditions. By deploying these devices at night, the Chandigarh Traffic Police aims to curb reckless driving and reduce the risk of accidents that commonly occur due to high-speed vehicles during these

Arvind Kejriwal makes rare Delhi appearance, launches AAP’s student outfit ASAP

GNS News Agency, May 26

Arvind Kejriwal, Aam Aadmi Party AAP, AAP, AAP student outfit, Association of Students for Alternative Politics, delhi news, India news, Indian express, current affairs While ASAP is still being given shape, Kejriwal said that apart from contesting elections, it would set up cultural and discussion groups in colleges across the country to engage students on the subject of mainstream versus alternative politics. In a rare public appearance in Delhi since losing power three months ago, Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) chief Arvind Kejriwal on Tuesday relaunched the party’s students’ wing, renaming it ASAP, or the Association of Students for Alternative Politics. This comes days after the 16 AAP councillors in Delhi quit the party and floated a new political outfit. “Mainstream politicians are pushing your children into religious conflicts, while they send their kids to elite foreign universities. Winning elections through misuse of power, manipulating electoral rolls is their mainstream politics, while winning hearts and elections is our alternative politics,” Kejriwal said at the event at the Constitution Club of India in Delhi that was attended by students from the national capital, Punjab, Haryana, and Gujarat, all dressed in yellow shirts. The former Delhi Chief Minister also launched ASAP’s logo: a fountain-pen nib with flames shooting out at the end, making it look almost like a rocket.

For Kejriwal and former Deputy CM Manish Sisodia, this was the third public appearance in Delhi in as many months. Since losing power in Delhi, the AAP has been focusing on Punjab, the only state where it remains in power, and most of the party’s top leadership has been camping there. Kejriwal said the root of most of today’s problems was mainstream politics, and ASAP’s goal was to restore the dignity of politics and inspire the youth towards reformation. “That same old model is what we call mainstream politics, and it is the root of all of India’s problems. Every issue in our lives is touched by politics. Whether electricity reaches your home, whether it’s affordable or not, whether government jobs are available or not, everything is political. That’s why the youth must join politics, engage with it, and take responsibility for it,” the AAP leader said, blaming the BJP and the Congress for perpetuating these old political paradigms. While ASAP is still being given shape, Kejriwal said that apart from contesting elections, it would

After uproar over property tax hike, MCD to roll back waste collection fee



GNS News Agency, May 26

mcd Commercial and residential properties saw a surge in property taxes in April after the MCD levied an additional user charge for solid waste management during tax collection. The Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) is set to roll back the user charge levied on garbage collection and bring an amnesty scheme to settle old house tax dues, BJP leaders announced Tuesday. Commercial and residential properties saw a surge in property taxes in April after the MCD levied an additional user charge for solid waste management during tax collection. According to the Delhi BJP’s statement, unit president Virendra Sachdeva had suggested that payment of property tax and user surcharge be separated, to which the Mayor has agreed. Mayor Raja Iqbal said a private member resolution will be introduced in the MCD meeting on Wednesday to ensure that no such charge is imposed in the future. The Mayor announced a

‘Dr Death’ arrested: Convicted serial killer, who dumped bodies in crocodile-infested canal’, traced to Rajasthan

GNS News Agency, May 26

A serial killer, known on police files as ‘Doctor Death’, was arrested by the Delhi Police Crime Branch from Rajasthan on Monday evening — over a year after he jumped parole and absconded in August 2023. Police said Dr Devender Sharma, convicted in multiple murder cases and allegedly behind 50 gruesome killings, remained elusive for over a year and a half before he was finally caught — hiding in plain sight as a priest in an ashram — in Dausa.

Sharma, a 67-year-old Ayurvedic doctor from Aligarh, was sentenced to life in seven cases of kidnapping and murdering taxi drivers between 2002 and 2004. In 2023, he was serving his sentence in Tihar Jail when he was granted parole and vanished. Before his arrest, Sharma practiced medicine at the Janta Clinic in Bandikui in Rajasthan for 11 years. In 1994, he was scammed of Rs 11 lakh — his entire life savings — after he attempted to open a gas dealership, said police. Police said Sharma returned home to Aligarh, where he operated a fake gas agency. He began targeting truck drivers — killing them to steal gas cylinders they were transporting from different suppliers to Aligarh, said police. The bodies would be disposed of in rivers. Between 1998 and 2004, police said he became involved in an illegal kidney transplant racket, facilitating more than 125 transplants across Delhi, Haryana, and Rajasthan with the help of another doctor and other middlemen. He admitted to earning Rs 5 to 7 lakh per transplant as an intermediary who arranged kidney donors, said police. Between 2002 and 2004, police said Sharma — who had a gang by now — was responsible for the abduction and murder of numerous taxi drivers. His modus operandi, police said, involved hiring taxis from Delhi. He then killed the driver and dumped the body in the crocodile-infested Hazra Canal in Kasganj. The stolen taxis were then sold in the grey market for Rs 20,000 to Rs 25,000 each. Sharma was arrested and charged with the murders of 21 taxi drivers, although he later admitted to killing more than 50 people, said police. As the police could never recover the bodies of the victims, Sharma would be given life imprisonment for the murders of only seven victims.

Now, Delhiites can get Rs 30,000 for installing a solar panel on their rooftop. Here are the details

GNS News Agency, May 26

The Delhi Cabinet on Tuesday approved providing Rs 30,000 subsidy on the installation of 3 kW rooftop solar panels (Rs 10,000 per kW) under the PM Surya Ghar scheme — the world’s largest domestic rooftop solar initiative — increasing the total subsidy available to Rs 1.08 lakh. The Delhi government has introduced ‘PM Surya Ghar: Muft Bijli Yojana State Top-Up’ scheme to enhance the effectiveness and reach of the initiative. Under the PM Surya Ghar scheme, the Centre provides Rs 78,000 subsidy for installing rooftop solar panels.

The BJP government has allocated Rs 50 crore to install rooftop solar systems on 2.3 lakh residential units over the next three years. Chief Minister Rekha Gupta stressed that the new subsidy allows consumers to access solar power solutions at zero initial cost while saving Rs 4,200 on their monthly electricity bills on average. She added that the government is partnering with financial institutions to offer easy loan options for the remaining installation cost of around Rs 90,000. To control pollution, the government approved a sanitation and dust control plan proposed by PWD. Under this, advanced cleaning machines will be procured for use on PWD roads. These included 250 water sprinkler machines integrated with anti-smog guns, 70 mechanical road sweeping machines integrated with 210 water sprinkler machines and anti-smog guns, 18 dump vehicles, and 18 water tankers.

These machines are expected to be fully operational before the onset of winter, said the CM Office in a state-

TGSRTC launches bus service from Vemulawada to Mumbai


GNS News Agency, May 26

Rajanna-Sircilla: TGSRTC has launched a bus service facility to Mumbai from Vemulawada temple town.


In the wake of requests from local people, the RTC decided to operate buses to Mumbai from Vemulawada. Two Lahari sleeper coach A/C buses will offer the service now. One bus, which will start from Vemulawada at 12.30 pm, will reach Mumbai the next day at 4.45 am. Another

House Tax Amnesty Scheme, where residents only need to pay property tax for the last five years, with no interest or penalties, and will receive an NOC (No Objection Certificate) upon payment.

The user charges were based on the central government’s Solid Waste Management Bye-Laws, 2017, which were enforced through three separate gazette notifications — one for each erstwhile municipal corporation — and published by the Delhi government on January 15, 2018. Even as the notification had been approved, the MCD had not collected the fee in the last seven years. While the AAP had brought these user charges to light by accusing the BJP of imposing them, the BJP had pointed fingers at the AAP — which was at the helm of the MCD at the time — for the imposition of the new tax. “The user charge was imposed by the AAP without any consultation, which is the main reason for the opposition,” Sachdeva said. He added that many citizens, especially in low-income colonies, are struggling to pay their outstanding property taxes. In response, AAP’s Delhi convenor Saurabh Bharadwaj accused the MCD Commissioner of imposing these charges at the BJP’s behest. “The AAP government in the MCD passed a proposal to waive house tax... it was waived for 100 sq yd properties and halved up to 500 sq yd. But the Centre-appointed Commissioner didn’t implement it; he instead imposed user charges.” AAP’s Leader of Opposition Ankush Narang said, “Even today, most households pay private collectors to get their garbage lifted. With no proper collection system in place, on what basis were these user charges being collected?”



According to the police, his wife and children abandoned him after his crimes were revealed. In January 2020, Sharma was released from Jaipur Central jail on parole based on good behaviour. He never returned. A few months later, while gathering information on “wanted criminals in the area”, a Delhi Police Inspector got information that Sharma was living in Baprola with his second wife. He had started a property dealership but was soon caught trying to sell a disputed building in Connaught Place. He was arrested and put in Tihar Jail this time. Once again, Sharma was granted parole for two months; he escaped in June 2023. DCP (Crime) Aditya Gautam said, “A police team conducted discreet inquiries in Aligarh, Jaipur, and Delhi. They worked relentlessly and patiently, gathering information for six months across all possible hiding places — including Jaipur, Delhi, Aligarh, Agra, and Prayagraj. Their efforts led to the successful location of the convict in Dausa in Rajasthan, where he was hiding in an ashram, posing as a priest. The team camped there and met the accused, pretending to be a follower, and kept a watch to make sure that he was indeed Dr Devender. Upon apprehension, the accused admitted to his criminal past and said he had jumped parole, intending to never return to jail.” Sharma is involved in 27 cases, including murder, kidnapping, and robbery. The fugitive has now been handed over to jail authorities for further legal proceedings, said police.



Gupta added that the Environment Department will provide the necessary budget to the PWD for the deployment of the machines. These machines will be used exclusively for dust cleaning on roads and can be deployed across Delhi as needed, the statement further said. Also, the Cabinet approved the proposal of the Directorate of Education to reinstate the name of the scheme, namely ‘Lal Bahadur Shastri Scholarship to Meritorious Students,’ in place of ‘Chief Minister Scholarship for Meritorious Students’.

In 2019-20, the scheme was discontinued and restructured under a new name by the previous AAP government. Under the scheme, government school students from classes 7 to 12, who have secured 80% or more marks in the previous academic year, are awarded a scholarship of Rs 2,500 per annum.

bus will start from Mumbai at 1 pm and reach Vemulawada next day at 5 pm. Rs 2,000 is the sleeper fare for adults while it is Rs 1,600 for children. Meanwhile, the seat fare is Rs 1,500 and Rs 1,230 for adults and children respectively. Besides 22 ordinary seats, 20 sleepers are available in each bus.

Transport Minister Ponnampalagan Prabhakar flagged off the service on Tuesday.

Allow us to reduce EWS obligation: Indraprastha Apollo Hospital moves plea before SC



GNS News Agency, May 26

Indraprastha Apollo HospitalThe SC had warned the hospital on March 25 that it would direct AIIMS to take over its management if it failed to fulfill its land lease commitment (Archive)

The Indraprastha Apollo Hospital in Delhi has moved an intervention application before the Supreme Court, requesting that it be allowed to reduce its EWS (Economically Weaker Sections) obligation to 10% in the In-Patient Department (IPD) and 25 % in the Out-Patient Department (OPD).If this proposal is accepted, the hospital would no longer be bound to maintain 200 EWS beds. Instead, it would be required to provide around 70 such beds, marking a significant shift in its obligation to serve the economically weaker sections.At present, while 33% of the IPD and 40% of the OPD of the hospital cater to the EWS, medicines and consumables are not provided free of cost to these patients, though they receive free treatment.In an affidavit submitted to the SC on May 14, Indraprastha Medical Corporation Limited (IMCL), which runs the hospital, submitted that the shift to 10% of the IPD and 25% of the OPD catering to EWS patients, along with providing completely free treatment, medicines and consumables, “would be meaningful and

actually beneficial to the economically weaker sections and poor patients”.

This comes after the SC had warned the hospital on March 25 that it would direct the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) to take over its management if it failed to fulfill its land lease commitment given to the state government to provide free treatment to poor patients.The affidavit, meanwhile, submitted said that the Delhi government has received over Rs 87 crore till date as dividends from the hospital, and its original equity investment of Rs 23.83 crore has appreciated to about Rs 900 crore.At 26%, the Delhi government has the largest stake in the hospital, which was handed over 15 acres of land on lease at a token rent of Re 1 per month. Institutions like hospitals and schools, which get land from the government on concessional rates, are obligated as per terms of their lease to provide free services to those from the EWS.Further, the hospital said that while it had expressed willingness to purchase the land given on lease by the government, due to DDA policies, the land could not be allocated directly to a private company. The land was then allotted to Delhi government, which in turn was leased to IMCL.The IMCL also said that despite the recommendations of the Qureshi Committee, it remained bound by the terms of the lease deed, which imposed a higher and more onerous obligations of 33% free IPD and 40% OPD.

In 2001, a report by a committee set up by the Delhi government, led by Justice A S Qureshi (retd), had recommended 25% OPD and 10% indoor services for EWS patients in private hospitals and nursing homes that had received land on concessional rates.The IMCL also said that the obligation to provide 33% free IPD and 40% free OPD services resulted in a disproportionate burden on it. This happened because of the loss of exemption from customs duty and other benefits, it added.As per the court’s instructions, the hospital submitted the existing bed strength and records of OPD and IPD patients for the last five years.

Retreat ceremony resumes; BSF lets farmers access fields across fence

GNS News Agency, May 26

The Border Security Force (BSF) has, after a gap of over 25 days, lifted restrictions on farmers accessing their agricultural land located across the barbed-wire fence along the India-Pakistan border in Punjab. The border force also allowed the public to view the beating retreat ceremony at the Attari, Hussainiwalla and Sadki borders with Pakistan, 12 days after it was stopped following Operation Sindoor by India in response to the Pahalgam attack.

The BSF had initially said the Tuesday’s ceremony was open only for media persons and that the public can participate from Wednesday. However, it allowed the public too at the ceremony at Wagah after a large number of visitors congregated there.During the flag lowering ceremony, there were no handshakes between the BSF troops and Pakistani Rangers and the international gates on both sides remained shut during the flag-lowering process. The BSF on May 8 had stopped public entry ton the event at the three locations, citing “public safety”.The flag, however, was being lowered each day by the troops irrespective of the public presence. The flag is lowered every evening by BSF troops in synchronisation with Pakistan Rangers at the three border points.Meanwhile, farmers are yet to resume work in their fields despite the relaxation coming into effect Monday.

Nearly 21,600 acres of land belonging to farmers from 220 villages lie between the barbed-wire fence and the international border, within Indian territory. These lands fall in the six border districts— Ferozepur, Fazilka, Tarn Taran, Gurdaspur, Pathankot, and Amritsar. The six districts to-



gether share 553 km border with Pakistan.Vanjar Singh, a farmer from Gatti Rajoke block in Ferozepur, said, “After the Pahalgam terrorist attack on April 22 and the capture of a BSF jawan by Pakistan Rangers on April 23 in the Mamdot sector, we were asked to finish wheat harvesting quickly. From the end of April, we were unofficially barred from going across the fence and afterwards, the border conflict happened.”Parkash Singh from Tindiwala village said, “We managed to complete the harvesting, but couldn’t collect the straw, which is vital cattle fodder. Now the question is whether the BSF will give us enough time to do so, especially with paddy transplantation approaching from June 1.”In summer, the BSF permits movement across the fence between 8 am and 5 pm under strict security oversight. BSF protocol requires two kisan guards to accompany each tractor crossing the fence. This limits how many farmers can access their fields daily, leading to concerns that some may be forced to burn the stubble given the time constraint.

Murshidabad violence: High Court-appointed panel says local police were inactive, absent

GNS News Agency, May 26

Murshidabad violence, Murshidabad violence case, violence in Murshidabad, Murshidabad, Calcutta High Court, Indian express news, current affairs“Residents of Samserganj, Hizaltala, Shiulitala, (and) Digri came masking their faces. Local councillor, namely Mehoob Alam, came with the miscreants on April 11. The MLA was also present on Friday (April 11). He saw the vandalism and went away, but the violence continued on April 12, Saturday,” the report said.

The three-member committee formed by the Calcutta High Court to look into last month’s violence in Murshidabad has said in its report that police were “completely inactive”.The report also mentioned local Trinamool Congress leader Mehoob Alam. “The attacks were directed by the local councillor Mehboob Alam. The local police were completely inactive and absent,” the report said of the violence that took place on April 11.

The Calcutta High Court had last month directed the formation of a three-member committee to oversee the rehabilitation of those affected by the violence that broke out in Murshidabad between April 8 and 12 following protests against the Waqf Amendment Bill. The committee comprises Joginder Singh, Registrar, National Human Rights Commission; Satya Arnab Ghosal, member secretary, West Bengal Legal Services Authority; and Saugata Chakraborty, Registrar, WBSJ.The committee’s report said that miscreants destroyed a waterbottle shop and looted the cash box containing Rs 12,000-13,000. A shopping mall located in ward no 12 was also completely looted and closed, and 29 shops were affected in Ghoshpara, the report said.“Residents of Samserganj, Hizaltala, Shiulitala, (and) Digri came masking their faces. Local councillor, namely Mehoob Alam, came with the miscreants on April 11. The MLA was also present on Friday (April 11). He saw the vandalism and went away, but the violence continued on April 12, Saturday,” the report said.

TMC spokesperson Joy Prakash Majumdar told The Indian Express, “We do not know anything about such a report. So, I would not like to make any comment.”The Calcutta High Court had on Friday directed the TMC government in the state to “remunerate and restore” all parties whose lives and properties were affected during the clashes in Murshidabad. The court was hearing a PIL in connection with the violence that broke out between April 8 and 12 in the Jangipur subdivision of Murshidabad, leading to the deaths of three persons, including a father-son duo.A Division Bench of Justices Soumen Sen and Raja Basu Chowdhury said, “Compensating the victims by giving each of them Rs 1.20 lakh under the scheme ‘Banglar Bari’ may not do justice to all as the damaged and destroyed houses,



differing in size and constructional features...” The Bench, in its order, also urged the state to consider appeals by local residents for a permanent Border Security Force (BSF) camp in the area and asked the Special Investigation Team (SIT) to “continue investigating the issue to bring the perpetrators to justice”.

Telangana government to offer marriage incentive to differently abled



GNS News Agency, May 26

Hyderabad: The State government has decided to extend the Rs 1 lakh marriage incentive award for marriage between two differently-abled persons. The cash benefit will be offered in the name of the wife and GO Ms 7 was issued to this effect on Monday.

In the past, the incentive was awarded if only one person was differently abled. Now, it has been decided to award for marriage between two differently-abled persons.

‘Veiled misogyny’: V-Cs, academics slam Ashoka University professor’s comments



GNS News Agency, May 26

Over 200 academics, including at least 20 current and former Vice-Chancellors and educational institution heads, have signed a formal ‘Statement of Objection’, condemning Ashoka University professor Ali Khan Mahmudabad for his recent comments following Operation Sindoor.The statement released earlier this week, alleges that the professor’s remarks seek to “destabilise communal harmony, undermine institutional integrity and erode gender equity”. It “urged the Supreme Court to take serious cognizane of the broader socio-legal implications of prof Mahumadabad’s statement”. Among the prominent signatories are JNU Vice Chancellor Prof Santishree Dhulipudi Pandit, Gujarat University V-C Dr Neerja Gupta, Central University of Rajasthan V-C Prof Anand Bhlerao, University of Ladakh V-C Prof Saket Kushwaha, and Central University of Punjab VC Prof R P Tiwari.Officials at JNU confirmed to The Indian Express that V-C Pandit had endorsed the statement.The statement describes Mahmudabad’s observations as “veiled misogyny cloaked in pseudo-academic inquiry” and particularly objects to his comment on Colonel Sofiya Qureshi’s presence at the post-operation press briefing.

“By framing her presence as performative or tokenistic,

First time in India, science breaks down walls between researchers, ordinary people

GNS News Agency, May 26

As with every good talk, this one began with an anecdote that was also a joke. It involved a scientist, a frog trained to jump on command, a cruel experiment that is repeated on many other frogs and a final, eye-opening conclusion — that frogs without legs are deaf. Shradha Bhurkude from IISER Pune was quick to clarify to a packed house at the Orange Art and Book Cafe in Aundh that this was a fictional narrative. What came next, however, were true stories, as far as science knows, about real-life events that led to the end of dinosaurs. Dinosaur doomsday unfolded through games, storytelling, banter, humour and scientific sleuthing.

Bhurkude’s session inaugurated a one-of-a-kind event, Pint of Science festival, on a thundering, rainy Monday in Pune. Pint of Science is a concept that breaks down the wall between the people of science, such as researchers, and the rest of the population. The event is the concept of Dr Michael Motskin and Dr Praveen Paul, research scientists at the Imperial College London. In 2012, they invited people affected by Parkinson’s and Alzheimer’s, among others, into their labs to tell them about their research. A year later, the first Pint of Science festival opened in a pub, creating an informal space for some of the biggest names in science to “explain their ground-breaking work to lovers of science and beer”. In the past 10 years, it has reached 27 countries. Now, for the first time, it is in India, with Pune, Delhi and Bengaluru being the selected cities. In Pune, the second venue is Doolally Taproom in KOPA Mall. The force behind bringing Pint of Science to India is Debarati Chatterjee, a theoretical astrophysicist at IUCCA who is an expert on analytical and numerical description of compact stars (neutron stars and white dwarfs).

“We have a wide spectrum, covering everything from astrophysics to neuroscience to AI to astrobiology and chemistry. I was really happy to get in touch with very well-known speakers in so many disciplines and came to know so much breakthrough work that is happening. I was really happy that there are so many women scientists who have

[he] attempts to delegitimize her role... This is regressive, gender-disempowering, and contrary to both legal norms and societal progress,” it reads.It goes on to state: “The subtext of his rhetoric operates on a reductionist logic that casts women — notably those in uniformed service — not as autonomous agents of State action, but as symbolic instruments co-opted to legitimize purportedly communal agendas... Such speech, in the current context, not only impugns the integrity of national institutions but also fosters cynicism regarding the genuine and commendable contributions of individuals such as Colonel Qureshi.”Gujarat University V-C Dr Gupta, who is one of the signatories, told The Indian Express, “A teacher is an institution in himself. Whatever he says publicly should be said very carefully because it goes deep down into the psyche of the student. I come from a family with a defence background and I think it is the responsibility of a teacher to understand this — they should not make such comments, especially when the nation is going through a tough time.”

A wide coalition of academics, students and teacher organisations, meanwhile, has rallied behind Mahmudabad, condemning what they call a “state-led crackdown on academic freedom”.At a press briefing held Tuesday at the Press Club of India, members of the Joint Teachers’ Organisations denounced his arrest by the Haryana Police.Surajit Mazumdar from the JNU Teachers’ Association said, “The actions against Dr. Khan represent not just an attack on his freedom of expression but on the right of the public at large to engage in informed discussion and debate as a means of learning and taking the nation to heights.”Anita Rampal, former Dean at Delhi University, emphasised that Mahmudabad’s classrooms “fostered an ecosystem of trust, respect, and love”, and demanded that all charges against him be dropped.Student union leaders including Insha, president of Ashoka University’s student body, and Nitish Kumar, president of JNUSU, spoke in Prof Khan’s support.



come forward to support this outreach which will inspire a lot of young people,” says Chatterjee.Hamsa Padmanabhan from the University of Geneva took the audience, which included several Class VI students, through “Lessons from the Earth’s deadliest extinctions”. “During its 4.5 billion-year-old history, our planet has been witness to at least five major extinctions. Of these, the most destructive one was called the Permian Triassic Mass Extinction, which took place around 252 million years ago and destroyed about 96 per cent of all marine and 70 per cent of all terrestrial species. But how did such a large-scale wipeout take place?” she said. As she spoke about how “a sharp rise in carbon dioxide levels in the millennia leading up to the extinction, possibly triggered a global warming runaway and made conditions hostile for life”, it was only a matter of time before it became evident that humans had learned nothing from the past.Sneha Rode went from Earth to Mars and back and forth and carried the audience along with captivating data, images and quizzes. Earth vs. Mars: The landform show-down changed ideas and challenged preconceptions about the similarities and differences between the blue and red planets. There were valleys and craters and a deep scar on the face of Mars and the fascinating Olympus Mont, the largest volcano in the solar system, which makes Earth’s Everest look like a baby. Though it was late and raining, people still gathered around Rode as the venue buzzed with geology.

Cambridge International announces March 2025 Exam Results

GNS News Agency, May 26

Cambridge University Exam Results, International Education group at Cambridge University, Cambridge University, Exam Results, Indian express news, current affairsKavita Kerawalla, Vice-Chairperson, VIBGYOR Group of Schools, said, “These results go beyond traditional markers of success, they represent a global outlook, critical thinking abilities and adaptability our students develop through the Cambridge pathway.”The International Education group at Cambridge University Press & Assessment (Cambridge) on Tuesday announced the result of its March 2025 exams series in India. This included over 17,000 students at 420 schools nationwide.According to information provided by Cambridge International Education, students more than ever, are now opting to take exams in the March series which aligns with the Indian academic calendar and allows them to meet the schedule of local university and college admissions.

Furthermore, the Cambridge International Education shared that this year saw a notable rise in entries, with Cambridge IGCSE (Class 10 equivalent) up by 12%, and Cambridge International AS & A Levels growing by 10%. STEM subjects remained dominant, with Mathematics, Physics, and Chemistry retaining their top spots. IGCSE Biology saw a significant 16% increase in entries, indicating rising interest in life sciences.Vinay Sharma, Senior Vice President, International Education at Cambridge, said, “The continued rise in entries exemplifies how Cambridge remains distinctly positioned to offer students a premium, globally recognised curriculum—equipping them with the skills to thrive in a fast-changing world and opening doors to top universities in India and internationally.”The Cambridge International Education, shared that the exam entries also showed an increased focus on developing future-ready skills, with Cambridge IGCSE Global Perspectives experiencing a remarkable 24% rise in entries. Cambridge Global Perspectives develops critical thinking, research, and collaborative problem-solving skills among students by engaging them with some of the most pressing issues facing the world today.Schools from Mumbai which offer Cambridge International Education reported outstanding performances with all schools recording 100 percent passing. Billabong High International Schools campuses around Mumbai (Juhu,



Malad, Mulund) and Amanora in Pune secured 100 percent results. Whereas students from Vibgyor schools offering Cambridge International Education curriculum brought numerous A* and A grades and subject distinctions.Kavita Kerawalla, Vice-Chairperson, VIBGYOR Group of Schools, said, “These results go beyond traditional markers of success, they represent a global outlook, critical thinking abilities and adaptability our students develop through the Cambridge pathway.”

Congress now sees internal strife between women leaders in Telangana

Hyderabad: There appears to be no end to the internal turmoil within the ruling Congress. If Ministers, MLAs, MLCs and other leaders have been vocal openly against the State leadership, with many men in the forefront of the internal strife, it appears that now women too are coming out openly against each other.On Tuesday, Congress women leaders and workers from Goshamahal constituency staged a protest at Gandhi Bhavan, demanding the party to initiate action against Mahila Congress State president Sunitha Rao. This was after Sunitha Rao staged a protest last week in front of TPCC president Mahesh Kumar Goud’s chamber in Gandhi Bhavan.

How energy sufficient are India and its States?



The story so far: “India has been transformed from a power deficit to a power sufficient nation in past ten years,” announced Union Minister of Power Shripad Naik in a written query in April 3, 2025. An addition of 238 GW in generation capacity since April 2014 spanning 2,01,088 circuit kilometers (ckm) of transmission lines has helped to boost inter-regional transferring capacity to 1,18,740 MW, he noted. In the past four years, the gap between the energy demand and capacity has fallen to 0.1% and total installed capacity has increased to 470 GW. Currently, energy produced by thermal fuels (coal, diesel, lignite and natural gas) is 12,41,261 Million Units (MU), while nuclear and hydro-electric sources account for to 51,962 MU and 1,39,780 MU respectively. Renewable sources accounted for 2,30,868 MU in energy production, with wind at 78,214 MU, solar at 1,27,339 MU, biomass 3392 MU, bagasse 8349 MU, small hydro 10,951 MU and others at 2621 MU. A closer look at India’s power production shows that while renewable energy sources are increasing, thermal remains the primary source. The contribution of renewable contribution as a percentage has gradually increased from 11.5% in 2021-22 to 13.78% in 2024-2025. Keeping in pace with India’s growing power demand, its generation has increased from 13,74,024 MU in 2021-22 to 15,46,229 MU in 2024-25, closing the gap from 0.4% in 2021-22 to 0.1% in 2024-25.

How is power transferred between States?

India’s States are divided into five regional power grids – North, East, West, South and North-East. The first inter-regional grid connection was accomplished in 1991 when the East and North-Eastern grids were connected. The West followed in 2003 and the North in 2006. A national power grid was established after the South was synchronously interconnected with the commissioning of the 765 kilo Volt (kV) Raichur-Solapur transmission line in 2013, thereby ensuring that the entire nation was operating at one frequency – 50 Hertz (Hz). The archipelagos of Lakshadweep and Andaman & Nicobar, which are far away from the Indian mainland, are not connected to the national grid.

This National Grid is maintained by the government-run Power Grid Corporation of India Ltd (the Power Grid) to monitor, regulate and facilitate inter-State power flow. Overall, the Power Grid carries 45% of India’s transmission capacity via its large network of transmission towers, substations of varying voltages, satellite communication, transformers and reactors. As part of its national grid operations, PGCi manages the national load dispatch centre (NLDC), five regional load dispatch centres (RLDC) and State load dispatch centres (SLDC), monitoring the power flow across States. These centres interact with the dispatch centres of private power companies to monitor and regulate their power flow too. While the Power Grid is the central transmission utility in India (and the largest), private companies like Adani Transmission, Tata Power, Sterlite Power, and ReNew Power too have their own network and load dispatch centres which are connected to the SLDCs. The Power Grid also oversees power trading between various power entities, States and regions and is responsible for integrating power produced by renewable energy sources with the National Grid, implementing smart grids across cities, facilitating power transfer between India and Bhutan, Nepal, Myanmar, and Bangladesh.

How are States bridging the power gap?

Comprising of Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Rajasthan, Punjab, Jammu-Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh, Haryana, Delhi and Chandigarh, in the N/orth has consistently reduced from 1% from 2021-22 to 0.2% in 2024-2025. Jammu-

Kashmir has seen a dramatic drop in its power gap from 7.6% to 0.5% as energy supply, which ranged between 18,400 and 19,700 MU caught up to its demand which has risen from 19,000 to 20,500 MU. Among the large states, Uttar Pradesh has managed to meet its energy demand reducing its gap from 0.9% to 0.2%, while Rajasthan saw fluctuation in its energy gap from 0.6% to 1.7% in 2022-23 and 0.3% in 2024-25. During this time, Rajasthan’s demand rose to 89,000 MU to 1,07,000 MU. These two regions which cover India’s largest power consuming states like Maharashtra, Gujarat, Tamil Nadu, Madhya Pradesh and Telangana, have managed to keep their energy gap limited to 0.1% through the years. In the West, Maharashtra is the largest power consumer as its requirement grew from 1,72,823 MU in 2021-22 to 2,07,018 MU in 2023-2024. However, it has managed to meet its power requirement keeping its energy gap a mere 0.1%. Gujarat, the region’s second biggest power consumer, saw its requirement increase from 1,29,953 MU to 1,45,768 MU; but its energy gap remained at 0%. Similarly in the South, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, and Telangana have large power requirements. The region’s requirement has ballooned from 3,50,672 MU in 2021-22 to 4,19,531 MU in 2023-24. The power demand of Tamil Nadu is the highest 1,09,816 MU to 1,26,163 MU but the energy gap is 0%. Similarly, Telangana and Karnataka have maintained a 0% energy gap but Andhra Pradesh’s energy gap has been gradually reducing from 0.6% to 0% in 2024-25.

Despite it being one of the first regions to get an interconnected grid, East grid’s States like Bihar and Jharkhand have been unable to meet their power demands. However, West Bengal and Odisha have been able manage their demands. In 2021-2022, Bihar and Jharkhand had an energy requirement of 36,216 MU and 11,148 MU for which 355 MU and 558 MU remained unmet respectively. This energy gap increased through the years before it settled to 0.4% and 0.5% for the respective states in 2024-25. On the other hand, Odisha and West Bengal’s demands which have increased from 54,001 MU and 38,339 MU respectively from 2021-22 to 67,576 MU and 41,358 MU in 2023-24, have managed to keep their energy gap within 0.1%. One of the lightest regions in terms of energy requirement, the North Eastern grid’s demand has increased slightly from 18,079 MU in 2021-22 to 20,022 MU in 2023-24. Its energy gap, however has been erratic increasing from 0.3% to 1.4% before dropping back to 0.1% by 2024-25. Assam, the region’s biggest power consumer, has seen a boost in its demand from 10,844 MU to 12,445 MU through the years. However, it has managed to meet its demand keeping its energy gap between 0-0.8%. On the other hand, Meghalaya, whose energy demand has more or less remained constant at 2200 MU, has seen its energy gap oscillate between 0.8% to 7.6% before dropping to 0%, indicating how its energy requirement of 170 MU remained unmet in 2023-24.

What is being done to rectify this?

According to the Power Ministry’s annual report 2024-25, India has added 14,360 ckm this year, enhancing the country’s transformation capacity by adding 86,610 MVA and interregional capacity of 2200 MW. Six Extra-High Voltage (EHV) lines – voltages above 400 kV, have been commissioned through the year in Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, Karnataka, Maharashtra, Assam and Meghalaya. Moreover, the Centre revealed that in the past four years, renewable energy production has increased from 1,70,912 MU in 2021-22 to 2,30,867 MU in 2024-25. Rajasthan has almost doubled its capacity from 24,099 MU to 50,322 MU, followed by Gujarat which added 15,644 MU in this time. States like Tripura, Manipur, Jharkhand, Puducherry, Goa, Arunachal Pradesh and Chandigarh are some of the regions where renewable energy production is very negligible (<40 MU). With India’s plan to boost its non-fossil energy capacity to 500 GW by 2030, the Centre needs to install the transmission system needed to evacuate the power. Accordingly, interstate transmission networks for the evacuation of 161.9 GW of the installed capacity of 209 GW of renewable energy are under construction. Transmission systems for delivery of power to the Green Hydrogen/Green Ammonia Manufacturing hubs at Mundra, Kundli, Gopalpur, Paradeep, and Vizag are under planning. Public or private investment upto ₹9.15 lakh crore is needed in the transmission sector to realise the Centre’s plan.

Why obesity in children is a growing concern in India



Childhood obesity is rising at an alarming rate worldwide, and India is no exception. A recent study highlights that the country is among the top nations globally, grappling with this issue. Sedentary lifestyles, unhealthy eating habits, and genetic factors contribute to this growing problem. But what does this mean for the future of children’s health? To understand the epidemic, let us first look at the reasons. Why are more children becoming obese?

One major factor is unhealthy diet choices: the high intake of processed foods, sugary drinks and fast food. This is compounded by a lack of balanced, home-cooked meals, due to the busy schedules of adults in households. The second factor is a lack of physical activity, made worse by increased screen time (TV, mobile phones, gaming) as well as limited outdoor play due to safety concerns and schools prioritising academics above sports. The third factor is genetics and medical factors, which include a family history of obesity that increases the risk for children, and conditions like hypothyroidism and insulin resistance that can contribute to the problem.

What are the consequences?

This brings us to the consequences of childhood obesity, which are many. The foremost is physical health risks: children who are obese have a higher chance of developing diabetes, heart disease and hypertension at a young age. This apart, they have an increased risk of joint problems and early-onset puberty. There is also psychological and social impact of obesity: obese children are more likely to experience low self-esteem and have an increased risk of depression and anxiety. They may also face bullying at

school.

How can we prevent childhood obesity?

There are a number of ways we, as a society, can prevent childhood obesity. The most important role is that of parents and schools. Parents must encourage home-cooked, nutritious meals and reduce consumption of junk food. They must also make physical activities part of a child’s daily routine -- be it sports, walking or yoga as a family activity. Parents can also teach children to read food labels and make conscious choices between healthy and unhealthy foods. They can encourage children to participate in meal preparation and activities at home. Schools, on their part, can introduce health awareness programmes. Mandating physical education in schools can go a long way. They can also conduct awareness programmes to promote healthy eating habits.

Routine health check-ups with a doctor to diagnose early obesity and intervene are crucial. Childhood obesity is not just an individual issue—it is a public health concern. Addressing it early through education, policy changes, and lifestyle modifications is essential to prevent long-term health complications. Parents, schools, and the government must work together to create a healthier future for children.

Woman dies after jumping from building with toddler over lost gold

Hyderabad: A woman, who was allegedly upset over losing her gold ornaments worth several lakhs and attempted to die by suicide by jumping from a multi-storied building with her toddler-son died under treatment in the hospital in Vanasthalipuram, on Tuesday late night. The child is under treatment. Sudeshna (28), a resident of Chinthalkunta who was married to Ashish Kumar four years ago has a two-year-old son Arush Kumar. They stay in a rented house in Agamaiah Nagar Colony in Vanasthalipuram.

Odisha’s SEBC reservation begins with 11.25% quota in higher education, stops short of professional fields



The Mohan Majhi government recently approved an 11.25% reservation in admissions for students from Socially and Economically Backward Classes (SEBC) in State-owned and State-funded higher education institutions — a move seen both as the Bharatiya Janata Party’s bid to champion the OBC cause and attempt to address the long-standing aspirations of Odisha’s largest demographic segment. For the first time, students belonging to the SEBC will benefit from a form of reservation in education. Both activists and political leaders have described the 11.25% reservation as a low-hanging fruit for the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) government to seize. They argued that the successive governments had long lacked the political will to correct the historical injustice and grant SEBCs the reservation they deserved.

OBC quota in employment The OBC reservation has witnessed a chequered implementation in the State. Odisha implemented a 27% reservation for OBC/SEBC in jobs in 1994 and this continued until 2007, when the Odisha High Court dismissed a writ petition, upholding the Odisha Tribunal’s 1998 judgment that nullified the provision in the absence of quantifiable data on OBC population. The tribunal had referred to the 1992-landmark decision in Indira Sawhney case by a nine-judge bench of the Supreme Court that laid down the rule that Scheduled Tribe, Scheduled Caste and OBC reservation cannot exceed the 50% threshold in employment.

The OBC reservation in employment fell to 11.25% as the SC and ST population had been enjoying reservation proportionate to their population – ST (22.5%) and SC (16.25%). While all these were happening, reservations in education for SEBC students, which many other States have followed, did not get the attention. Former Union Minister and veteran Congress leader Sri Kant Jena says States like Tamil Nadu and Telangana have OBC reservation in education to the tune of 50% and 42%, respectively, while Bihar, Kerala, and Maharashtra are providing above 30% reservations to OBCs in education. “What prevented successive governments in Odisha from providing reservations to OBC/SEBC students to pursue education is a mystery. The OBCs are both socially and economically backward in the State,” he said. The recent Cabinet approval for 11.25% SEBC reservation in education pertains to four departments - Higher Education, School and Mass Education, Odia Language, Literature and Culture, and Sports and Youth Services department from the current academic year – 2025-26. The

government stated that in line with National Education Policy, 2020, the move aims to promote access, equity and inclusion, increase the Gross Enrollment Ratio and enhance opportunities for marginalized and disadvantaged communities in Odisha.

Opposition political parties, however, accused the Mohan Majhi government of betraying the OBC population by denying reservations in professional education including medical and engineering education where job and self-employment prospects are higher than general education. The BJP, on the other hand, argued that no previous government in Odisha had attempted to provide OBC reservation in education, and accused critics of merely trying to find loopholes. Opposition leaders said of total 2,74,343 seats available in degree colleges, 2,04,759 students had taken admission while 69,584 seats were lying vacant in 2024-25 academic session. “Providing reservations to OBC students in general education does not serve any purpose. The government could have at least thought of providing reservation in medical, engineering and other professional streams,” Chidananda Jena, a journalist who has moved the Orissa High Court with a prayer to extend the SEBC reservation to professional courses. The petitioner said the BJP government could have gone beyond 11.25% as nowhere in Indira Sawhney judgment, the Apex Court had capped the reservation at 50% in education. Mr. Jena said despite OBC/SEBCs comprising 54% of Odisha’s population, these students had received 0% reservation in education instead of the mandated 27% and over 7,000 OBC/SEBC students have lost medical seats this year because of reservation not applying to professional courses. OBC demographics and politics

Although leaders across political parties have long claimed that OBCs make up nearly 54% of Odisha’s population, they have lacked concrete data to support this assertion. In 2023, the then Naveen Patnaik-led government set up the Odisha State Commission for Backward Classes, headed by retired Orissa High Court judge Justice Raghunath Biswal, to determine the actual status of the OBC population in the State. While the Commission did conduct a survey, it lacked rigorous scientific methodology. Nevertheless, it estimated that 39.31% of Odisha’s population belonged to the SEBCs. The findings of the Justice Biswal Commission were never made public by the then-ruling Biju Janata Dal government. According to the survey, 37.6% of the SEBC population had attained only primary-level education, while 10.1% were illiterate. Nearly half—49.6%—had low levels of education, either up to primary or below matriculation. About 22% had completed matriculation, intermediate-level education, or held ITI/diploma qualifications. Only 7.9% were college graduates or postgraduates, and just 1.6% held professional degrees. A mere 0.5% had education levels beyond post-graduation. Mr. Jena stated that although the Commission’s report did not fully capture the status of OBCs in the State, it provided a glimpse. “While just 6% of the general category population (Economically Weaker Section) benefits from 10% reservation, SEBCs—who are both economically and socially disadvantaged—are left with only 11.25% and are denied proportionate representation,” he said.

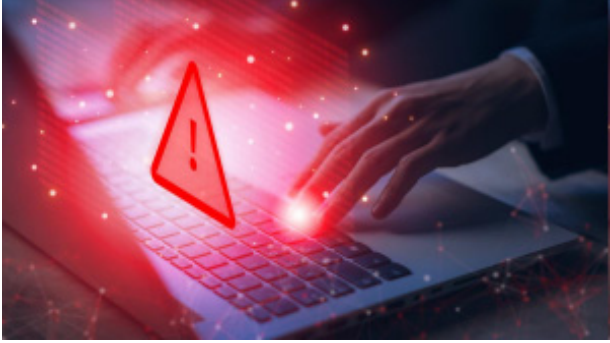
India’s ‘new normal’ deconstructed



On April 24, addressing a public gathering in Bihar, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said, “India will identify, track and punish every terrorist and their backers. We will pursue them to the ends of the earth....” Known to speak in Hindi to domestic audiences, it was noteworthy that the Prime Minister switched to English to say these lines. Clearly, the Prime Minister intended the message to be heard not only in Pakistan but across global capitals in an unambiguous manner that it would be firm in its resolve to take action against the particularly heinous terrorist attack in Pahalgam on April 22. On the night of May 6-7, a fortnight after the Pahalgam attack, India responded with the launch of ‘Operation Sindoor’, striking nine different terrorist targets in Pakistan that housed United Nations proscribed entities such as the Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT), the Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM) and the Hizbul Mujahiddin (HIM). Five of these were in Pakistan Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (POJK), while four locations were in Pakistan’s heartland, Punjab province. On May 7, India clarified that its response was “focused”, “measured” and “non-escalatory” and that Pakistani military establishments had not been targeted. However, any attack on military targets in India would invite a suitable response. In subsequent days, in response to Pakistan’s escalation, India foiled drone and missile attacks and delivered a fitting response to intense artillery shelling from Pakistani positions. As Pakistan escalated the attacks, India responded with precision strikes on Pakistan’s air defence systems. On May 10, India targeted 11 Pakistani military bases across the length of the country from Skardu in the north to Bholar and Malir in southern Pakistan. Within hours of these strikes, Pakistan interceded with a “ceasefire” plea that India acceded to. A change from the traditional response. On May 12, addressing the nation, the Prime Minister laid down India’s new doctrine to fight terrorism. The message also irrevocably underlined a ‘new normal’ in India-Pakistan relations. To understand this ‘new normal’, one has to recall the traditional Indian response to major terrorist attacks. India’s toolkit consisted of halting dialogue, suspending people-to-people contacts, and trying to sensitise the international community of Pakistan’s use of terrorism as an instrument of state policy towards India and its aim to bleed India with a thousand cuts. Influential countries paid little heed to India’s troubles and preferred to deal with Pakistan for their own benefit. Responding to Pakistan’s rhetoric on the threat of nuclear escalation — a policy Pakistan seemed to have perfected following every terrorist attack — the international community would

immediately pressure India to show restraint. India itself would be hesitant and never probing deep enough to call Pakistan’s nuclear bluff. A distinct change in the Indian approach became apparent after the terrorist attack in 2016, on the army camp in Uri; India launched cross-Line of Control (LoC) surgical strikes to hit terrorist camps in POJK. Pakistan should have taken heed of this but unfortunately it did not. Following the Pulwama attack in February 2019, India retaliated with a strike on terrorist group JeM’s training camp in Balakot, Pakistan. This was another message — that India would raise the costs for Pakistan if it targeted India. Pakistan did. The ‘new normal’ also encompasses the change in war-fighting strategy. Enhanced Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance (ISR) capabilities, precision weaponry, and drones and loitering munitions have defined how India retaliated to the terrorist attack from Pakistan. Going forward, the strategies that India employs to deter terrorism emanating from Pakistan will have a new-age component to it — allowing precise targeting to minimise collateral damage. ‘Made in India’ weapons have proven themselves during ‘Operation Sindoor’. There must be much greater synergy and cooperation between industry and the armed forces to enable industry to deliver on the needs of the forces. From this comes the next point. India’s war against terrorism is its own. We need to depend on ourselves to defeat this scourge; support from outside will wax and wane depending on the global situation. We have to steel ourselves to take on this challenge as a nation, united. For all those advocating better trade, dialogue and people-to-people relations to solve the problems between India and Pakistan, the message is clear. India’s cooperation on matters of water sharing and trade will be subject to Pakistan abjuring terrorism. Sharing of river water and terrorism cannot go together, just like trade cannot flourish in an environment where terrorism is raising threats. Any dialogue will rest upon Pakistan abjuring terrorism against India and the return of POJK to India. Nothing else. This too, is a key element of the ‘new normal’. The ‘New India’, under the Prime Minister, is free from self-doubt and inhibitions. The enunciation of a ‘new normal’ in strategy indicates a paradigm shift in how India deals with terrorism, and is a message to both Pakistan and the world. India will not compromise on its unity and security and will respond to terrorism as it deems fit, with or without global support. The Prime Minister’s resolute leadership at this difficult time conveys another unequivocal message. India will take its rightful place in a multipolar, and sometimes, anarchic world order. It has what it takes to get there.

Growing cybercrime and the need for an Indian cybersecurity force



In today's rapidly evolving digital landscape, the importance of cybersecurity cannot be stressed enough. In India alone, a company falls victim to cyberattacks every 11 seconds. By August 2024, nearly 60% of businesses globally had experienced a ransomware attack. On a global scale, we contend with 5.5 billion malware attacks annually and an astounding 6.3 trillion attempted breaches—an average of 6.5 attacks every second.

According to some leading research sites such as CRN India, ransomware poses a significant threat in India, with eight out of 10 enterprises confirming that they have experienced such attacks. Further, almost 40% of large enterprises in India have fallen victim to phishing email-led attacks. A striking 92% of all surveyed enterprises believe that operational disruption would be a significant consequence of a ransomware attack. This data present a compelling portrait of the digital landscape we navigate. While digitalisation brings substantial economic and social benefits, it also introduces unique challenges — much like any powerful tool — that we must be prepared to address effectively.As cybercrime continues to evolve into a sophisticated enterprise, the need for robust cybersecurity measures becomes imperative. Effective cybersecurity demands not only the integration of cutting-edge technology and innovation but also the ability to navigate the complexities that accompany these advancements. The impact of cyberattacks on enterprises extends far beyond organisational boundaries, affecting individuals and communities. A recent ransomware attack on a company disrupted payment systems for 300 small, especially rural and cooperative banks across the country. As such incidents multiply, their repercussions on the nation's economy and the financial well-being of its citizens are increasingly evident.

Shortage of skilled professionalsThe rising prevalence of these threats also underscores the urgency to address the shortage of skilled professionals in the cybersecurity sector. India's G-20 Sherpa and former NITI Aayog CEO, Amitabh Kant, recently unveiled a report that highlighted that over 1,16,000 cybersecurity incidents were reported in 2023, a significant increase from previous years. This alarming rise emphasises the pressing need for a larger, trained and skilled professionals to combat the challenges in an ever-evolving cybersecurity landscape.

According to a white paper from the World Economic Forum, India is home to nearly one-third of the world's graduates in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM). Yet, 30% of the 40,000 job vacancies for cybersecurity professionals in 2024 remain unfilled due to talent shortages. The current market for skilled talent offers a valuable opportunity for bolstering national security and enhancing economic growth. As cybercrime becomes more sophisticated, the Indian cybersecurity market is projected to grow at a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 18.33% from 2024 to 2029, as PwC India says, reflecting increased investment in cybersecurity measures by financial institutions.The demand for cybersecurity professionals has surged in the South Asian region and the 'Five Eyes' countries (Australia, Canada, New Zealand, the United Kingdom, and the United States), driven primarily by rapid digital transformation. A report from the Data Security Council of India indicates that the country will need 1.5 million cybersecurity professionals by 2025.

Therefore, it is crucial to train future generations in cybersecurity fundamentals to capitalise on India's demographic dividend. While India produces a wealth of technically skilled professionals known for their strong work ethic, ensuring that they are adequately equipped to tackle future challenges particularly in cybersecurity is essential. As a burgeoning hub for technology and innovation, India holds immense potential for developing its cybersecurity infrastructure.As educational institutions collaborate with policymakers to expand opportunities in cyberspace, key areas remain where targeted growth can drive more impactful outcomes. The findings of the 2023 Ministry of

Education report indicate that fewer than 30% of institutions offer comprehensive cybersecurity courses. And, even though these institutions offer cybersecurity courses in India, many need updated curricula that align with industry needs. Despite facing cyberattack challenges and accounting for 13.7% of all such incidents, India is emerging as a critical player in the global cybersecurity landscape. The PwC India report says that approximately 28% of global organisations have more than half of their cybersecurity teams based in India, with 17% housing over 75% of their teams there.Models to look at in the worldIndia can learn lessons from countries such as the U.S. and Israel, which have developed unique curricula and methodologies to equip their youth with essential cyber skills. The U.S. National Initiative for Cybersecurity Education (NICE) framework provides a structured approach to education and skill development. At the same time, Israeli universities emphasise interdisciplinary studies that combine cybersecurity with fields such as Artificial Intelligence and data science. Although some Indian universities offer specialised courses in cybersecurity, there remains a substantial opportunity for hands-on training and exposure to real-world scenarios.

With India reporting at least 40,000 job vacancies in cybersecurity as of May 2024, and at least 30% of these positions requiring trained professionals, the urgency of addressing these gaps and taking positive inspiration from other nations and academic recommendations cannot be overstated.While India has always focused on balancing and learning from global best practices, it has delved deeper into the realm of developing frameworks and mechanisms for cybersecurity strengthening. The National Cybersecurity Reference Framework aims to provide clear guidelines on roles and responsibilities in cybersecurity based on existing regulations. The Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology collaborates with technology companies to enhance cybersecurity training and skill development among government officials, which is crucial for improving the skills of learners and officials nationwide. Recognising the ever-evolving landscape of cyber threats, India is prioritising skill development initiatives through collaborations with educational institutions, industry certifications, and in-house training programmes. The rise in cybersecurity certification offerings, covering over 400 institutions, demonstrates a unified effort to cultivate local talent and address the increasing demand for qualified cybersecurity professionals.Additionally, India's government can draw inspiration from Israel's heavy investment in research and development for cybersecurity. Increasing funding for research initiatives in this field is essential. Cybersecurity education should also encompass soft skills training, such as critical thinking and teamwork, as U.S. employers report that these skills are necessary for 75% of cybersecurity roles.To establish a robust cybersecurity framework in India, we can constructively draw from global practices that have yielded positive results. For instance, New Zealand successfully created a cybersecurity infrastructure that provides employment opportunities for its youth while developing a curriculum suited to future challenges. Implementing incentives for educational institutions to expand their cybersecurity offerings is crucial, as is fostering collaboration between government and industry to enhance workforce development programmes that produce skilled professionals.

India can position itself as a regional hubWe must aspire to balance economic growth with national security and social considerations, guided by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's recommendations on digital security strategies. Furthermore, India's active engagement with the U.N. Cybercrime Treaty offers a platform for strengthening its legal framework and enhancing international cooperation. By drawing inspiration from initiatives such as the U.K.'s Cyber Accreditation Program and Singapore's Cybersecurity Academy, India can strategically position itself as a regional hub, leveraging the projected \$345.4 billion global cybersecurity market to export talent and stimulate economic growth. Revitalising historical educational development systems will further support these initiatives, fostering a comprehensive culture of digital security across the economy and society.Comprehensive educational reforms must be prioritised to empower India's cybersecurity workforce and unlock global opportunities. With fewer than 30% of institutions offering robust cybersecurity courses, India can expand its talent pool by incentivising course offerings and fostering public-private partnerships. As the global cybersecurity market is projected to reach \$345.4 billion by 2026, India has a unique opportunity to balance national security with economic growth. By actively engaging in international cybersecurity initiatives, India can position itself as a leader in this dynamic field.

CAG flags ‘suspicious’ PDS deliveries: ‘244 quintals in car, 300 on 3-wheeler’



CAG flags 'suspicious' PDS deliveries: '244 quintals in car, 300 on 3-wheeler'The report had two photographs showing alleged improper maintenance of WSDs titled — “stray pigs at KFCSC Raichur (main WSD)” and “infested rice bags at KFCSC Mandya (U)”.A minitruck — which has a carrying capacity of 7.5 quintals — transported 277.69 quintals and 281.29 quintals of foodgrains in two trips, a car transported 244.20 quintals in a single trip, a three-wheeler (passenger) hauled even a higher quantity of 300.02 quintals in just one trip: these are some of the findings of the CAG in its audit of Karnataka's Public Distribution System implementation.

Revealing the use of passenger vehicles and light goods vehicles in transporting foodgrains, the CAG report 'Performance Audit on Supply Chain Management of Public Distribution' noted, “The vehicles used for transporting food grains should be in accordance with the list of vehicles submitted to the Department (of Food and Civil Supplies). Audit verified vehicle numbers as per truck chits with that of vehicle details in 'Vaahan' portal and found that many of them were passenger vehicles. Transportation claims were submitted by the contractors using both passenger and light goods vehicles, including cars, autos, three-wheelers and mini trucks claiming to have lifted and transported foodgrains...”The CAG said that wholesale contract transporters are required to obtain the authorisation of the Department of Food and Civil Supplies for vehicles to be used in wholesale transportation along with maintenance of the vehicle as per the conditions of contract. “Audit test checked 2,510 truck chits in seven districts and found that in 1,725 trips, transportation of foodgrains was carried out in vehicles not authorised by the department,” it said.As per the report, which covered the period 2017-22, a quantity of 244.20 quintals of foodgrains was claimed to be transported in a single trip using Tata Indica (V2) under the Hanumanthanagar

Wholesale Depot (WSD), while 492.20 quintals of foodgrains were shown as transported in two trips of Maruti 800 Omni.It also gives instances of transportation of 277.69 quintals and 281.29 quintals of foodgrains in two trips using a Tata Ace EX BS3 minitruck under Banashankari Wholesale Depot. “The carrying capacity of these mini trucks was 7.5 quintals only,” the report said.The claims of the transporters in delivering 4,014.44 quintals of foodgrains using (the) above passenger vehicles is highly suspicious and the same could not be vouched in audit. The Department failed to disallow the transportation costs claimed by the transporters, as the possibility of delivering such huge quantities is highly impossible considering their carrying capacities. The reply of the Government is silent about the audit findings,” the report said.The CAG said wholesale contract transporters are required to obtain the authorisation of Dept of Food and Civil Supplies for vehicles to be used in transportation. The report said, “Audit test checked 2,510 truck chits in seven districts and found that in 1,725 trips, transportation of foodgrains was carried out in vehicles not authorised by the department.”“Audit observed that though the transporters submitted the list of vehicles to be used in transportation, they also resorted to usage of vehicles which were not authorised/not in the list of vehicles as per contract agreement.

Further, the godown manager of WSD failed to ensure that the essential commodities are delivered by the authorised trucks listed out in the contract agreement. Consequently, the contractors submitted claims against the consignments made in unauthorised vehicles which were allowed by the Department...” the CAG said.Highlighting the risks from alleged lack of hygiene at WSDs levels, it said, “Audit observed that poor maintenance of WSDs increased the risk of contamination and pest infestation of foodgrains leading to loss and degraded foodgrain quality... The Department stated that no provision was made towards handling losses and wastages. In the absence of proper set criteria for accounting of handling losses and wastages, the audit could not quantify the losses on this account.”The report had 2 photographs showing alleged improper maintenance of WSDs titled — “stray pigs at KFCSC Raichur (main WSD)” and “infested rice bags at KFCSC Mandya (U)”. Sharing the government's response to the findings, it said, “The State Government replied (April 2023) that Karnataka Food and Civil Supplies Corporation Limited (KFCSC) was directed to forward proposals for improvement of Wholesale Depots based on the standard and good warehousing practices.”

How Delhi Police helped trace over 1,000 missing people in two years

In his red T-shirt and blue pants, with a backpack on, the 14-year-old boy was last spotted cycling past central Delhi's Bara Hindu Rao area. He had been reported missing from his home in Najafgarh. At his office in Civil Lines, sub-inspector Vinod Walia of the Delhi Police's Missing Persons' Tracing Squad looked at the distance the child had covered and the time he had taken to do so. Speed = Distance/Time. If the police left fast enough, he calculated, they might catch up with him in Rishikesh, Uttarakhand.It worked: a week after the boy went missing, Walia and his team of four people traced the 14-year-old and brought him back home to Najafgarh.

“The boy's father had passed away during Covid. He did not have many friends who could tell us much. The family got his MacBook unlocked at a service centre in Nehru Place — his data gave us an indication of where he might have gone,” says Walia, adding that the boy's search history revealed that he had researched religious places.“What was worrying for us was the fact that his internet searches included things that were similar in the Burari case where 11 people of a family hung themselves (in Delhi in 2018) — spirituality, peace, meditation and what not. We also saw his Google Maps and figured out he was planning to head to Kedarnath via Rishikesh,” Walia tells The Indian Express.A team from the Delhi Police's North district soon left for Rishikesh and also alerted their counterparts in Uttarakhand. Along with the police in Rishikesh, the Delhi Police finally spotted the boy sitting at one of the ghats. He was then handed over back to his family.

The team in actionIt was in January 2022 that the North district police's Missing Persons' Tracing Squad started 'Operation Talash' with a specific mandate: to look for missing persons not only from the recent past but also from years ago. The operation, started by then DCP Sagar Singh Kalsi, touched a milestone last month of 1,005 solved cases, including those that involve abduction and human trafficking. Of the approximately 21,000 people declared 'missing' in Delhi, 950 are from North Delhi.On the ground floor of the office of DCP North in Civil Lines, the squad occupies a room that's buzzing with energy as orders are passed around. On one side of the room is the team tracks call data records, CCTV footage and social media; on the other are the members who scroll through Zipnet — a specialised police database of missing people. The moment a case comes up in the database, two teams are assigned the job. While one goes to the spot from where the person is reported missing, the other tries to collect as much technical evidence as possible. The moment they hit upon a concrete clue that might lead them to the victim, they rush to the ground — whether it's in the city or outstation.Some cases take a day to solve, others take weeks and even months. The squad works in teams of two — one person does the field work and the other parses through technical evidence and the internet to aid the search.Time is of the essence in new cases, and the squad goes through as much data as possible to aid its search. When the team hits upon a clue, the personnel rush to the ground.For the unit, the most difficult cases are the ones that involve children. According to Head Constable Ashish Kumar, who received an out-of-turn promotion in 2022 for “exceptional work”, most minors who go missing do so either after a fight at home or because of relationships.Constable Reena Chauhan, a recipient of the Delhi Police's Asadharan Karya Puraskar for 'exceptional devotion' in 2023, cites the example of one the oldest cases the squad cracked — that of a 13-year-old girl who went missing from Sarai Rohilla 10 years ago.“We found her in a town in Uttar Pradesh. She is now 23, has children and is married to the man she had fled with. Irrespective of whether a case is five or 10 years old, our aim is to find the missing,” Chauhan says.Some cases are harder than others, such as those involving the hearing impaired. “These are challenging because the missing person cannot communicate with anyone. When you question people on the ground, they too have no clue,” says Constable Gurpreet Singh.He cites a case from June 18, 2023, that's particularly close to his heart. The case involved a 16-year-old hearing impaired adolescent boy who got lost and couldn't find his way back home to Burari. The teenager was found nearly a month later, on July 15, at North West Delhi's Bawana. “For days, we were out on the streets



with his photo to look for him. Each day, we scanned CCTV's. Our search finally ended when we found him at a shelter home in Bawana. I still can't forget how she smiled and hugged us when we found him. That happiness was unmatched... he was nearly in tears,” he says.But for Chauhan, it's the cases where children repeatedly run away that are the real challenge. She cites the example of a 14-year-old who left home on September 16, 2023. The girl was tracked down to Surat, Gujarat, and brought back but the child has since run away thrice.

“We can't do anything because she's a minor and it's our duty to bring her back. Each time she ran away, we brought her back — the latest being last month. She says she doesn't want to stay with her parents but we can't help in that situation because we are bound by the law,” Chauhan says.Assistant Sub-Inspectors Deenanath, who only uses his first name, and Jagbir Singh both agree that such cases are especially demanding. They cite a case from May 13, 2024, when two sisters aged 12 and 14 went missing from the Wazirabad police station area.

Days later, a three-member team that included a woman personnel went to Madurai, Tamil Nadu, where they found that the girls were working as domestic help.“Her father, with whom they didn't share a good relationship, went with us but they refused to return because they liked the independence. It became a huge task for us. After a lot of counselling, we somehow persuaded them,” says Deenanath.

Then there is the challenge of working under difficult conditions, such as having to travel without reservation in time-sensitive cases. The team also cited an instance of how one policeman led a three-member team that had to once stand in the bathroom of a train that was chock-a-block.“We laugh about all these episodes later but we feel that there should be some reservation for the police and should be given at least one seat while travelling for such operations,” one policeman says.A happy ending

IPS officer Raja Banthia, the current DCP of North Delhi, believes reaching a milestone of 1,000 cases is remarkable given the difficulties involved.“Abduction, kidnapping and human trafficking cases are a big challenge. It ends up being a lifelong nightmare for the families who lose their loved ones...In today's world, people living in metro cities are often unaware of their own neighbours, making it easy for criminals involved in human trafficking.

This makes it challenging for the police department to trace such missing people,” he says.But for Walia, the challenges involved in the task are offset by something more priceless: the joy of reuniting families.“We experience tears, happiness, sorrow, love and all kinds of emotions while looking for missing children and reuniting them with their families,” he says.For the family in Najafgarh, finding their missing 14-year-old son marked the end of a harrowing week.“He left home saying 'I'm going to become a monk',” the boy's uncle says. “We informed the police and searched for all routes, trains, buses or any medium of transport... We were worried that he could be kidnapped. We finally managed to trace him on the eighth day. There was a great sense of satisfaction in seeing him unharmed.”

Fulfilled almost half of manifesto vows in a year: Bhajan Lal Sharma

Rajasthan CM Bhajan Lal Sharma highlights key achievements of the BJP government in its first year, including tax cuts and anti-corruption efforts.The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) government in Rajasthan, led by chief minister Bhajan Lal Sharma, completed one year in office on Sunday. In an interview with Sachin Saini, CM Sharma reflected on his government's journey so far, listing out some key decisions such as reducing taxes and lowering prices of fuel, as well as efforts made by his government to “restore trust of people” in government machinery. Edited excerpts:People of Rajasthan voted the BJP in government with great expectations and our government has been working to fulfil them. Relaxing taxes and lowering petrol/diesel prices was a major step to provide immediate relief to the people. However, the state machinery and economy were reeling due to corruption under the Congress regime. Our government took a firm stance against corruption and tried to restore trust of people in government machinery. We made government services more accessible for citizens and ensured that deserving (beneficiaries) are able to receive the benefit of state and central government schemes.In line with the vision of our honourable Prime Minister Narendra Modi, we are making government more efficient and accessible for public. It's delighting that people of Rajasthan displayed their approval through votes in recent by-elections.There are still some vacancies in the cabinet. Is there a reshuffle on the cards soon?We our analysing our efforts and achievements over the last year. Accordingly, necessary decisions will be taken in consultation with senior party leaders.Thanks to the strong will of our PM Modi, the One Nation, One Election bill is soon going to be tabled in Parliament. This shall bring down financial expenditure, administrative burden, and other challenges caused due to frequent elections. Our government's functioning also impacted twice in the last one year due to the model code of conduct for the Lok Sabha elections and subsequent assembly bypolls.How do you see the BJP's performance in the recently held assembly bypolls?

Hard work of our party workers and the charisma of

Hybrids vs EVs: Honda’s pivot to hybrids is now part of a growing trend



GNS News Agency, May 26

Honda Motor Co., Japan’s second-largest automaker, said on Tuesday that it was moving to scrap its previous goal for electric vehicles (EV) to be 30 per cent of its cumulative global vehicle sales by 2030, citing slowing sales of EVs in the US. The decision by the Tokyo-based carmaker ties in with the broader trend being seen across markets, even outside of the US. Carmakers across markets have been pivoting away from EVs (essentially battery electric vehicles) towards hybrids. Honda is part of that trend.

Honda Motor Chief Executive Toshihiro Mibe termed the decisions “a switch in the planned course,” while asserting that the long-term shift toward electrification remained unchanged, just “pushed back in time”. Incidentally, last year, Honda was forced to jettison a pact with American carmaker General Motors that aimed to build a line of cheaper EVs in the US. Also, talks that began late last year to merge the operations of Honda and Nissan Motor Corp, as well as smaller automaker Mitsubishi Motors Corp, collapsed earlier this year. From Honda’s perspective, this venture was also aimed at jointly harnessing rival Nissan’s EV expertise.

Since late 2023, an EV slowdown is getting more pronounced in the US, with Tesla, the market leader with over half of all EV sales in that country, consistently reporting its lowest quarterly earnings in over two years. Other American car manufacturers too are beginning to right-size their EV ambitions, with General Motors distancing itself from its earlier production target for EVs last year, while Ford has belatedly stepped up its hybrid focus since mid-2024. In the Indian market too, there are signs of a subtle pivot that automakers are already making, in line with the trends being seen in developed markets. Players with a keen interest in the EV segment, including Mahindra & Mahindra and Hyundai Motor, both strong proponents of battery electric vehicle technology, are learnt to be exploring the hybrid option to diversify their offerings. Hyundai Motor India, the country’s second-largest carmaker, looks set to enter the

hybrid vehicle segment in the coming three years and is said to be looking to add a hybrid powertrain as part of its electrified future in India. A Reuters report quoted Euisun Chung, the executive chairman of Hyundai Motor Group, telling employees in India that hybrids and electric vehicles will be critical parts of its portfolio in the country. Chung had addressed a town hall in April 2024, offering a long-term strategy for the Indian market. Hyundai group company Kia too has committed to introducing hybrid vehicles in India. The one reason for the waning enthusiasm in EV in the US is President Donald Trump and his lack of enthusiasm for electric vehicles. Japanese automakers, alongside most others, have been scrambling to adapt to the policy switch by Washington DC. “The environment surrounding the automobile industry is changing day by day. Uncertainty in the business environment is increasing, due particularly to the slowdown in the expansion of the EV market due to several factors, including changes in environmental regulations,” Honda said in a statement Tuesday. Honda chief Mibe did not give a specific timeline for a new course on electrification, but said that Honda will be more aggressive in producing hybrids instead. Beyond the Trump factor though, there are at least three structural issues that are playing out in most global markets, with the exception of perhaps China, which is triggering a gradual consumer pivot from battery electric vehicles to hybrids.

The three broad factors blunting EV penetration are increasing concerns around EV capital costs, especially triggered by lower price realisation for used EVs; uncertainties over government policies on EVs; and a growing shortage of charging stations, especially fast chargers. Overcoming these challenges could predictably take some time. Another issue that EV makers such as India are experiencing is that the so-called first adopters – the ones open to experimenting with a new technology and making a switch – are slowly thinning out, and new customers are increasingly reluctant to shift to EVs. This is largely due to issues such as perceived inadequacy of charging infrastructure and comparatively higher prices. In its latest annual Electric Vehicle Outlook released in 2024, BloombergNEF lowered its global battery-electric sales projections by 6.7 million vehicles through 2026. Globally, BloombergNEF projects that over the next four years, electric car sales will grow at an average of 21 per cent per year in the Economic Transition Scenario, compared to an average of 61 per cent between 2020 and 2023. The charging problem, which is now one of the major deterrents to the penetration of EVs in global markets, is an emerging problem in India too. All this is happening at a time when there is promise of a genuine breakthrough in existing battery technology, with Chinese battery manufacturing leaders BYD and CATL announcing versions of the lithium-ion batteries that promise incredibly faster charging times.

Succession: Kin of Indian family business owners not keen on taking reins, shows survey

GNS News Agency, May 26

A mere 7 per cent of the next generation of India’s family business owners feel a sense of obligation to take the reins, indicating a significant lack of interest in succeeding their parents, says an HSBC report. This raises questions about the future leadership and succession planning for these family businesses. While 88 per cent of Indian entrepreneurs surveyed by HSBC trust the next generation’s ability to manage family wealth, 45 per cent of surveyed entrepreneurs (55 per cent of first-generation and 35 per cent of multi-generation) do not expect their children taking over the family business, according to HSBC Global Private Banking’s report titled ‘Family-owned businesses in Asia: Harmony through succession planning’.

The HSBC report has highlighted the preparedness of family-owned businesses in India and across Asia for the future of their enterprise and their wealth, offering key insights into succession planning and intergenerational dynamics. Shift in approach to succession planning HSBC said this trend highlights a shift in the traditional approach to succession planning, even as family-owned businesses continue to play a pivotal role in India’s economy, contributing approximately 79 per cent of the country’s gross domestic product (GDP) — one of the highest ratios globally. Interestingly, only 7 per cent of Indian respondents felt obligated to take on the family business when the business was passed on, reflecting a growing openness to exploring opportunities outside the family enterprise, it said. Kotak Mahindra Bank founder Uday Kotak had recently advised the next generation of business heirs to step into building real-world businesses and flagged concerns regarding the increasing inclination of young business heirs to run family offices and investments instead of starting businesses of their own. According to the HSBC report, this sentiment is supported by strong feelings of encouragement within multi-generational families, with 83 per cent of respondents stating they felt empowered to pursue other interests when they first took over the business.

Despite this shift, the report said that 79 per cent of Indian entrepreneurs still plan to pass their businesses to family members, aligning closely with global trends (77 per cent in the UK and 76 per cent in Switzerland). Notably, Indian second- and third-generation entrepreneurs feel a strong sense of trust from their predecessors, with 95 per cent reporting they felt trusted when taking over the business — significantly higher than the global average of 81 per cent. India is on the brink of a significant intergenerational wealth transfer, it said. According to Hurun data, in 2024 India had 334 billionaires in US dollar terms with the number rising 29 per cent year-on-year. Nearly 70 per cent of the list are on the cusp of a \$1.5 trillion intergenerational wealth transfer that equates to more than one-third of India’s GDP. This underscores the importance of robust succession planning to ensure the seamless transition of wealth and business leadership. Sandeep Batra, head, international wealth and premier banking, HSBC India, said: “India’s family-owned businesses are balancing legacy preservation with modernity. While there is trust in the next generation to uphold the values and culture of the family business, there is also need for open communication and robust succession planning.” India’s family-owned businesses are unique in their longevity, with some thriving for over a century. However, many of these businesses were established in the 1990s, following the government’s economic liberalisation, ushering in a generational shift. Second-generation entrepreneurs, often educated abroad and raised in cosmopolitan settings, bring new perspectives to the table. Unlike the humble beginnings of many first-generation entrepreneurs in India, the second generation has grown up in cosmopolitan urban environments. However, family-business owners do trust the ability of the next generation to maintain the values and culture of the family business, the HSBC report said. Multi-generational family businesses accord a high value to extended family and kinship. Second- and third-



generation entrepreneurs in the Indian subcontinent almost unanimously acknowledge the faith that their predecessors placed in them when they took over the business. Like India, second- and third-generation entrepreneurs across the rest of Asia trust the next generation to maintain the values and culture of the family business. Of those who have succession planning in place, India has the highest percentage of entrepreneurs who intend to pass their business on to a family member, with 79 per cent intending to do so, which puts Indian business owners on a level with their counterparts in the UK (77 per cent) and Switzerland (76 per cent). However, fewer than half of the respondents in Hong Kong share this intention (44 per cent), along with just 56 per cent in mainland China and 61 per cent in Taiwan.

Govt to open up key spectrum for high-speed WiFi: Why it’s a win for tech companies

6GHz spectrum India, 6 GHz WiFi band, license-free WiFi India, In December 2023, the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) had set aside the 6425 MHz – 7125 MHz range for licensed mobile operations. In a major win for tech companies like Sony, Apple and Meta, the Indian government has proposed to open up licence-free use of a portion of the key 6GHz spectrum, paving the way for faster WiFi speeds, and supporting connectivity needs of devices like the Sony PlayStation Pro, and virtual reality gear from Apple and Meta. The 6 GHz spectrum band (5925 MHz-7125 MHz) and its use has been a point of contention between telecom companies Reliance Jio, Bharti Airtel and Vodafone Idea on one side and tech companies on the other. Telcos have been calling for the entire band to be reserved for licensed mobile telecommunication for 5G and 6G services, whereas tech companies wanted the band to be delicensed and provided free to use to improve WiFi services. While rules vary country-by-country, some nations like the United States have allocated the full 1200MHz of 6GHz spectrum for unlicensed use, with others choosing to allocate a smaller swath of 500MHz, with an aim to create a balance between the two technologies. India has chosen to go the latter route. In a draft notification released recently, the Ministry of Communications said that a part of the 6 GHz band (5925 MHz -6425 MHz) would be made license-free. In December 2023, the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) had set aside the 6425 MHz – 7125 MHz range for licensed mobile operations. “No Authorisation or Frequency Assignment shall be required to establish, maintain, work, possess or deal in any wireless equipment for the purpose of Lower Power Indoor and Very Low Power outdoor wireless access systems, including radio local area networks operating in the frequency band 5925-6425 MHz,” the communications ministry said in a notification on the draft rules.

Covid-19 cases rising in India: Is waning vaccine immunity a concern?



Following a spike in Covid-19 in Southeast Asia, India has also seen fresh cases of Covid-19 in recent weeks, with most cases being reported from Kerala, Maharashtra, Gujarat and Tamil Nadu. However, most of the cases are mild and not associated with severity or mortality. “So far cases have been sporadic. The JN.1 sub-variant of the virus, which is believed to be a part of the surge in Asia, is already present in India. It is a descendant of the BA.2.86, also known as ‘Pirola’ strain, belonging to the Omicron lineage. This strain can evade existing immunity and is more transmissible. But it has so far not differed much from the symptoms associated with Omicron,” says Dr Jatin Ahuja, infectious disease specialist at Indraprastha Apollo Hospitals, Delhi.

What is JN.1 all about?

JN.1 is a sub-lineage of the Omicron variant. The virus has had around 30 mutations. That does not mean it is becoming more dangerous but it is looking for ways to evade our immune systems. The changes are in the surface receptors, the spike protein (the part of the virus that enters our cells). These trick the immune system, making the virus more easily transmissible. Do we need to worry because the immunity acquired from vaccination is waning and we

WHO adopts first global pandemic treaty: Why it redefines public health despite the US absence

WHO chief Tedros ‘confident’ of eventual pandemic treaty deal Director-General of the World Health Organisation (WHO) Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus attends the World Health Assembly at the United Nations in Geneva.

After three years of intense negotiations, the World Health Organisation (WHO) on Tuesday adopted the world’s first pandemic agreement during the ongoing annual meeting of the inter-governmental body. The adoption came after the approval by vote a day ago by member state delegations — there were 124 votes in favour, none against and 11 abstentions. The agreement is historic because it sets out principles for better international coordination to strengthen the global health architecture for pandemic prevention, preparedness and response. It hopes to ensure equitable and timely access to diagnostics, vaccines and therapeutics — something that was not seen during the Covid-19 pandemic where richer countries had surplus vaccines and others struggled to get enough for their population.

“The agreement is a victory for public health, science and multilateral action. It will ensure we, collectively, can better protect the world from future pandemic threats. It is also a recognition by the international community that our citizens, societies and economies must not be left vulnerable to again suffer losses like those endured during COVID-19.... The world is safer today thanks to the leadership, collaboration and commitment of our member states to adopt the historic WHO Pandemic Agreement,” said WHO director general Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus. The Intergovernmental Negotiation Body — which was behind creating the draft agreement through consensus — was set up in December 2021 following the devastating second wave of the pandemic during the second-ever special session of the World Health Assembly. The draft was finalised in April this year after 13 rounds of meetings, nine of which had to be extended.

Why did the treaty take so much time?

There were several contentious issues such as intellectual property rights and sharing of pathogens. In its cur-

do not have a vaccine that factors in JN.1? More than vaccination, we went through the Omicron wave not too long ago. This can still trigger both memory T cells and memory B cells, which upon encountering the virus or its similar variant again, can fight it and limit disease severity. Memory T cells can recognize multiple parts of the virus, including those in the Omicron variant, according to a study published in the journal PLoS Pathogens. Memory B cells produce antibodies that can neutralize the Omicron variant.

Are there distinctive signs and symptoms?

No, what we are seeing are sore throat, cough and fever, all akin to symptoms of flu-like illnesses. Some may have nausea, some conjunctivitis like in earlier waves. Just rest, hydrating yourself, self-isolation and antivirals should help you settle down.

Can JN.1 lead to complications?

There are chances in those living with co-morbidities or the immuno-compromised. People with uncontrolled diabetes, chronic kidney disease, HIV and transplant patients need to be cautious. The elderly, pregnant women and children are vulnerable to it.

Do we need another round of vaccinations?

No. The older vaccines were developed for ancestral strains only. Besides they were made from a weakened or inactivated virus. Now you need mRNA vaccines, like Gemcovac-19, which use lab-made mRNA to create a protein, or a piece of it, to trigger an immune response. Unfortunately, this vaccine is not readily available. The new vaccine can be stored at 2 to 8 degrees Celsius, compared to other mRNA vaccines that require sub-zero temperatures. The mRNA technology works best for preventive vaccines because they can be tweaked for emerging variants. For other preventive measures, go back to the drill. Wear a mask in crowded and polluted places, practise hand hygiene and stay away from close contact with the infected.



rent form, the Agreement establishes a pathogen access and benefit-sharing system with a coordinating financial mechanism. It will help countries take concrete measures to strengthen preparedness and resilience of health systems as well as pandemic prevention, including through the One Health approach that looks at infections in humans, animals and plants together. Importantly, it will work on building geographically diverse research and development capacity as well as facilitate technology, knowledge and skill transfer for production of pandemic-related health products. During the Covid-19 pandemic, vaccines were developed and manufactured in a handful of countries, leading to problems of access. One of the concerns with the Agreement was preserving the sovereignty of countries to take decisions even amidst a pandemic. The Agreement says: “Nothing... shall be interpreted as providing the Secretariat of the World Health Organisation, including the Director-General of the World Health Organisation, any authority to direct, order, alter or otherwise prescribe the national and/or domestic law, as appropriate, or policies of any Party, or to mandate or otherwise impose any requirements that Parties take specific actions, such as ban or accept travellers, impose vaccination mandates or therapeutic or diagnostic measures or implement lockdowns.” Since the US withdrew from the WHO in January, funding for implementation might get affected. It also means that US pharma majors are under no compulsion to share information.

Why smoking is the most serious risk factor for young heart attacks: This 32-year-old had no BP, weight or sugar

It doesn’t matter whether you smoke one or ten cigarettes, each cigarette is a risk factor. Smoking is not dose-specific. It doesn’t matter whether you smoke one or ten cigarettes, each cigarette is a risk factor. Smoking is not dose-specific. On the face of it, the young 32-year-old patient didn’t seem like one who could have a heart attack. He kept to meal times, was particular about his workouts, had no blood pressure or sugar in his annual screening tests, had no family history, slept seven hours and didn’t burn the midnight oil to get through deadlines. So what caused his heart attack in the middle of a work day?

The young man complained of a sharp pain near his collarbone along with a toothache. Since he had already injured his shoulder before, he thought it was a periodic pain that would resurface post his workout sessions. But when he felt unusual anxiety and sweating, he got himself to hospital with some help. After an angioplasty to open up his clogged arteries in the heart, I kept on eliminating risk factors till he told me he was a smoker but a mild one, limiting himself to four, may be six cigarettes a day. Even smoking up to four cigarettes a day can increase your risk of heart attack by 11 per cent. It doesn’t matter whether you smoke one or ten cigarettes, each cigarette is a risk factor. Smoking is not dose-specific. A study by the American Heart Association found smokers were more likely to have a heart attack than non-smokers even if they did not have any underlying condition for heart disease. Smokers also developed cardiovascular disease up to five years earlier than non-smokers, which led to a significantly shorter lifespan, the research showed. Even short-term smoking accelerates the build-up of plaque in arteries, narrowing them and restricting blood flow. In fact, 90 per cent of young heart attack patients in India are smokers.

Smoking increases the stickiness of blood and raises levels of clotting factors, making it more likely to form blood clots that can block arteries and cause a heart attack. Nicotine stimulates the release of adrenaline, causing an immediate increase in heart rate and blood pressure.



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This constant stress on the cardiovascular system can cause the heart to pump blood harder, elevating blood pressure and wearing out the lining of arteries.

Carbon monoxide in cigarette smoke reduces the oxygen-carrying capacity of the blood, forcing the heart to work harder to supply the body’s oxygen needs. Now you may not have had a massive plaque buildup in your arteries but the weakening of vessels in the heart can dislodge even minimal plaque from the walls. The tear in the artery wall because of plaque rupture means that blood rushes there to form a clot, which gets bigger as it pools over the dislodged plaque. This triggers a heart attack. Smoking has emerged as an independent risk factor with lingering effects. In fact, the vessels can take up to three years to completely heal and repair themselves. Stopping smoking can reduce your risk of heart attack by half.

CSK vs RR: Vaibhav Suryavanshi impresses in a rare RR successful chase; Dhoni and CSK's struggles continue



GNS News Agency, May 26

Chennai Super Kings huff and puff to an underwhelming total, and even Rajasthan Royals, with a history of messing up from winning positions, couldn't squander this opportunity. A contest between the 9th and 10th-placed teams in the competition should theoretically have been close. But it showed how far behind the rest the old warhorses of Chennai Super Kings have fallen. At the Arun Jaitley Stadium, which has seen some big scores set and chased, their 187 was woefully inadequate. Their batsmen have underperformed this season, and their bowlers — especially the spinners — were also found wanting. A six-wicket defeat to fellow strugglers Rajasthan Royals, with as many as 17 balls to spare, would be a chastening experience. It was a game between two cellar-dwellers, but even with nothing at stake in the larger context of the tournament, it was evident that one team relied on youth while the other seemed suspicious of it. On the eve of the game, CSK head coach Stephen Fleming had said that his side will continue to bank on experience as it had brought them trophies. Well, there's a word for doing the same thing repeatedly and expecting a different result. It's not smartness. RR were battling to avoid finishing last, but they have chosen to swim or sink with their youngsters. And despite botching up several winnable chases this season, skipper Sanju Samson needs to be commended for biting the bullet and deciding to bowl first.

Vaibhav Suryavanshi has caught the eye with his shot-making and derring-do, Tuesday gave him an opportunity to show some maturity in a chase. He lost opening partner Yashasvi Jaiswal relatively early — albeit after another whirlwind start — and the 14-year-old had to build a partnership with his captain. The two did that with consummate ease and the 98-run second-wicket stand, off 59 balls, broke the back of the chase. When Ravichandran Ashwin dismissed both set batsmen in the same over, the ghosts of old chases

may have returned to haunt RR, but Dhruv Jurel and Shimron Hetmyer didn't let the game get interesting as a flurry of boundaries, aided by some shoddy CSK bowling, finished proceedings in quick time. Unless something drastic happens against Gujarat Titans in their last game, Dhoni's team is destined to finish at the bottom.

There's a time-tested adage in limited-overs cricket which says that a team's best batters should get the opportunity to face the maximum number of deliveries. Of late, this theory has been upended by the fad called 'entry points', which prompted the sight of spinners Ravindra Jadeja and Ashwin in the middle — with the bat — even before the Powerplay was over. Teenager Ayush Mhatre had injected momentum in the CSK innings after two early wickets with a 20-ball 43, but with the hitting power of Dewald Brevis and Shivam Dube in the dugout, the team management chose to use the veteran spin duo. As it turned out, Brevis and Dube found themselves in the middle with less than eight overs bowled, but with half the side dismissed. It helped that the run rate was close to 10, so the duo had some leeway. They did their best, with the South African — clearly one of the brighter spots in a dismal season for CSK — playing some sparkling shots in his 25-ball 42. Dube tried to take on the mantle thereafter, only with limited success, with his 32-ball 39 helping the team to a total of 187/8, with the second half of the innings bringing only 85 runs.

It was a sporadic innings with a couple of decent knocks. The muddled thinking behind some of the decisions also doesn't help much. Dhoni has made a name for himself by taking the game deep and making it a one-on-one contest with the bowler in a who-blinks-first situation. But at this stage of his career, he seems to be taking the game deep even when his team bats first. What else can explain an innings of 17-ball 16 after coming to bat with 6.2 overs left? That included a straight six off part-time off-spinner Riyan Parag. The other 16 balls the CSK skipper faced brought 10 runs. The large crowd, dotted with CSK shirts which gave him a grand reception before and during the game, roared in anticipation whenever Dhoni swung his bat, but the desired connection eluded him. At the toss, he had said that the last few games of this IPL season were useful in planning for the future. The franchise had "one eye already on next year, which individuals can play a part," Dhoni had said. The franchise, and the player himself, have a few decisions to make. Brief scores: Chennai Super Kings 187/8 in 20 overs (Mhatre 43, Brevis 42, Shivam Dube 39; Madhwal 3/29, Yuvraj Singh 3/47) lost to Rajasthan Royals 188/4 in 17.1 overs (Suryavanshi 57, Samson 41, Jaiswal 36, Jurel 31 not out) by 6 wickets.

'If I was MS Dhoni, I would say "enough": Sanjay Bangar's honest take on CSK legend playing another IPL season

GNS News Agency, May 26

MS Dhoni of Chennai Super Kings during match 62 of IPL 2025 between Chennai Super Kings and Rajasthan Royals at the Arun Jaitley Stadium, Delhi. (Sportspics for IPL) MS Dhoni of Chennai Super Kings during match 62 of IPL 2025 between Chennai Super Kings and Rajasthan Royals at the Arun Jaitley Stadium, Delhi.

Chennai Super Kings endured their 10th loss in 13 games in the ongoing Indian Premier League, losing by six wickets to the Rajasthan Royals at the Arun Jaitley Stadium in New Delhi on Tuesday. Batting first, five-time champions could just score 187/8 with the lens on captain Mahendra Singh Dhoni once again as he laboured to a 17-ball 16-run knock. So far in 13 innings, Dhoni — who took over captaincy mid-way through the season after captain Ruturaj Gaikwad's injury — has managed to score just 196 runs at an average of 24.50 and at a strike rate of 135.17. His top score has been an unbeaten 30. After the latest defeat for Dhoni and Co, former India cricketer Sanjay Bangar said that if he were MS Dhoni, he would say 'enough' after this season. "It all boils down to MS, but if I was MS, I would say 'enough'. I'd say, 'Okay, I have played whatever I wanted to play, I have looked after the interest of the franchise', if there's any, if that was the motivation. But, you know, you move on," was Bangar's brutally honest view on Dhoni's position at the CSK franchise, where he has been



came a cornerstone. Bangar was responding to a question on ESPNcricinfo about Dhoni's future.

"By you being there, if you're thinking that the transition will happen fast, there's never an ideal time to pick. So you might as well [make] peace with the fact that, 'okay, even if I leave now, the franchise will develop on its own; it will take a year longer, but I'm not going to be here for the entire cycle'. That's how I would look at MS' position if I was in that position," Bangar added. "I think at 43 it's very tough to play in that competitive environment. When you're 43, why this competitive environment, even if you go and play some local cricket, you will find how tough it is on the body as well," Bangar said.

'Not a clown, never will be': Spurs boss Postecoglou hits out at reporter before Europa League final vs Manchester United

GNS News Agency, May 26

Tottenham manager Ange Postecoglou during a training session ahead of the Europa League final against Manchester United at the San Mames Stadium in Bilbao. (AP) Tottenham manager Ange Postecoglou during a training session ahead of the Europa League final against Manchester United at the San Mames Stadium in Bilbao. (AP)

With a realistic chance to win their first trophy in 17 years, Tottenham Hotspur will take on Manchester United in the final of the UEFA Europa League in Bilbao. A feisty Spurs manager, Ange Postecoglou, defended his record ahead of the high-stakes final amid a terrible Premier League season, stating: "I'm not a clown".

Postecoglou was asked at the pre-match press conference at the San Mames Stadium in Bilbao whether he is aware that he is walking a fine line between infamy and history ahead of the match in northern Spain by a reporter who used the word "clown" in his story headlined "Ange Postecoglou teetering between hero and clown with Tottenham legacy on the line in Europa League final" for The Standard.

Replying to that statement, Postecoglou said, "That depends on your outlook, but I'll tell you one thing, irrespective of tomorrow, I'm not a clown and never will be," he said. "You really disappointed me that you used such terminology to describe a person that, for 26 years, without any favours from anyone, has worked his way to a position where he is leading out a club in a European major competition. For you to suggest that somehow us not being successful means that I'm a clown, I'm not sure how to answer that question," he added. Spurs sit 17th in the Premier League and are enduring one of their worst seasons since



With a realistic chance to win their first trophy in 17 years, Tottenham Hotspur will take on Manchester United in the final of the UEFA Europa League in Bilbao. A feisty Spurs manager, Ange Postecoglou, defended his record ahead of the high-stakes final amid a terrible Premier League season, stating: "I'm not a clown".

the club returned to the top flight in 1978. They have lost a club-record 21 games in the English top flight and sit with 38 points. The former Australia and Celtic manager Postecoglou said he had worked hard at Spurs, who have not won any European trophy since 1984. "I've tried as hard as I can to stick to that process in getting the club to a position where they can challenge for trophies and at the same time, rejuvenate the squad and change the playing style," he said. "It has been a fair assignment with plenty of challenges along the way. With such a big game tomorrow, there is an opportunity to fulfil at least the main task I was given, which was to bring trophies to the club," he concluded.

Delhi Capitals co-owner Parth Jindal requests for venue change for MI vs DC with rain threat in Mumbai: Report



GNS News Agency, May 26

Delhi Capitals co-owner Parth Jindal reportedly has requested the organisers to move his franchise's all-important Indian Premier League 2025 match against Mumbai Indians in the wake of a possible washout due to inclement weather predictions in the city. The virtual knockout MI vs DC clash will be played on Wednesday in Mumbai's Wankhede Stadium. According to a report by ESPNcricinfo, Jindal's request came after the May 23 fixture between Royal Challengers Bengaluru and SunRisers Hyderabad in Bengaluru was shifted to Lucknow after RCB's last match at the Chinnaswamy Stadium was washed out. There are rain predictions for the MI vs DC game in Mumbai on Wednesday as well.

"The IPL Match No. 65 between Royal Challengers Bengaluru (RCB) and Sunrisers Hyderabad (SRH) has been relocated to the Bharat Ratna Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee Ekana Cricket Stadium in Lucknow, due to unfavourable weather conditions in Bengaluru," the BCCI said in the statement. The BCCI has also increased the extra time to complete matches to 120 minutes from the existing one hour. The step has been taken considering the unpredictable weather. Previously, 120 minutes of extra time was



only reserved for play-offs and not the league games.

The encounter on Wednesday (May 21) is crucial for both the fourth-placed MI and the fifth-placed DC. A win will all but guarantee the last playoff spot, which is up for grabs. MI sit with 14 points from 12 games while DC — after being thrashed in their last home game against table-toppers Gujarat Titans by 10 wickets — have 13 points in 12 matches. Asking for a change in venue, Jindal wrote an email to IPL saying, "The forecast in Mumbai is for heavy rains and there is a strong likelihood that the game will be washed out. Just as the game between RCB vs SRH has been moved out of Bengaluru in the quest for consistency and in the interest of the league it is my request that tomorrow's game also be moved to a different location as we have known for the better part of 6 days that the forecast for 21st in Mumbai is for heavy showers," said Jindal as quoted by ESPNcricinfo. Earlier, GT's 10-win took them alongside RCB and Punjab Kings in the playoffs, with only one spot remaining for qualification. The BCCI also announced on Tuesday the venues for the IPL 2025 playoffs and final, with the Narendra Modi Stadium in Ahmedabad set to host the summit clash as well as Qualifier 2, while the New PCA Stadium in New Chandigarh, also known as the Mullanpur stadium, will host Qualifier 1 and Eliminator.

Grandmaster Shyamsundar Mohanraj is on a quiet quest to produce more Indian GMs

GNS News Agency, May 26

"I was super desperate to start producing grandmasters for the country," declares GM Shyamsundar Mohanraj in a soft, yet determined, voice right after guiding Srihari LR on his quest to become a grandmaster. Last week, the Chennai-based Srihari became India's 86th grandmaster, separated from India's 85th by a gap of just over a year. "It's been a year since India has had a GM. In India we have too many talented players so it's a pity that we have not had a GM for so long. There are so many guys who are within touching distance of the title," he laments. The grandmaster title is the one of the hardest-earned ones in the sport of 64 squares. It's a recognition of talent and aptitude but has to be earned by earning three norms at three different tournaments and crossing a rating threshold of 2500.

Srihari's 10-month-long struggle to get the final grandmaster norm reminded Shyamsundar of his own long wait to get past the finish line. The story goes that back in 2012, he had ticked off all three norms, but his coronation as a grandmaster was held up because he was just 0.2 points away from the 2500 rating.

"I know the pain of the players who struggle so hard to become grandmaster. I was 2499.8 at some point and needed just 0.2 points. It took me six months to get that 0.2 rating. There were times when I was going to play in a tournament and had I withdrawn from that, I would have become a GM because the ratings would have been rounded off to 2500 in the next published rating list. But that's not how I wanted to become a grandmaster. Becoming a grandmaster is just one of the things in chess. I knew I would become a GM anyway. But my goal was not just to become a GM. I wanted to become a GM in a proper way," Shyamsundar tells The Indian Express.

He has brought this never-settle quality in his coaching as well and is hoping to influence his wards. When Srihari became a GM last week, in his post on Instagram wishing the teenager, Shyamsundar reminded him that now the time had come to focus on the next goal. As he explains, these days becoming a grandmaster comes with certain perks and financial opportunities that could sidetrack you and make you ease up on the hunger to forge ahead. He's already mapped out the changes he wants Srihari to bring in his playing style: trying to make him a more universal player, rather than just being a solid player.

Being solid is good, but it's not enough for anyone to get to the next level," he says about Srihari. "I want to make him a universal player, good at dynamics and positional chess. It's tricky, because I want him to lose his ability to grind out results. I want to fine-tune his way of playing." The other lesson Shyamsundar, who is an Asian Junior Champion and Commonwealth medalist, learnt from his own career was how to deal with the pressure that comes when you're close to the finish line. He admits that the pressure to get the GM title took a toll on him. He had sponsors promising him to invest in him once he became a GM. But that thought of getting the title quickly weighed heavy on his mind. Eventually, when he reached there six months later than he could have, and looked back, there were no sponsors in sight. Eventually, as a GM, there was a phase where he played with no job and no sponsors backing him. Every game won in a tournament would help plot an assault on a tournament in the future. A loss would pinch the pocket.

Having experienced these pressures first-hand, he made the conscious decision to take a break from his academy Chess Thulir in Chennai and travel to UAE for three tournaments over a 45-day period — Sharjah and Dubai following the Al Ain event — with a merry gang of six players: two GMs (Bharat Subramaniam and Pranav V) and four IMs (Srihari, Muttiah, Aswath S and Ilamparthi AR.) All four, he stated, were close to becoming GMs with most of them needing one or two norms. They train hard, but also spend plenty of time playing other sports and cooking in each other's company to take the edge of their profes-



sional pursuit.

He has gathered a band of talented youngsters who are all on the ascendency. Aswath S last month won the Grenke Open in Germany despite being seeded 38th after scoring 8/9 and securing his first norm. He also crossed 2500 so he needs just two norms to become GM. Muthaiah AL also has two norms, and needs just 30 rating points and a final GM norm. Ilamparthi has two norms and has crossed 2500 so he's awaiting just one more norm. At the recent event in Al Ain, he took down grandmaster Tabatabaei M Amin, and just when it looked like he could get his final norm too, he faltered. "Ilamparthi was ill at the end of the tournament so he could not convert winning positions. If he had, India could have had two GMs being confirmed on the same day," says Shyamsundar.

Since the pandemic, the world has looked towards Chennai as the world's fastest churning conveyor belt of grandmasters. From the much-vaunted houses of RB Ramesh, Srinath Narayanan and Vishnu Prasanna have arrived the country's top talent causing seismic tremors in the sport. Gukesh, the youngest world champion in the history of the sport, and Leon Luke Mendonca worked with Vishnu. Ramesh shaped the world-beating sibling duo of Praggnanandhaa and Vaishali besides players like Aravindh Chithambaram and Karthikeyan Murali besides also working with Leon. Srinath moulded players like Arjun Erigaisi and Nihal Sarin. Now, in the form of Shyamsundar comes another grandmaster from India's in-between generation — the group between Viswanathan Anand and the golden gen of Gukesh-Pragg-Arjun — to step up to create more grandmasters.

Indian jr women's hockey team leaves for Four Nations Tournament

Bengaluru: The Indian junior women's hockey team left from Kempegowda International Airport, Bengaluru, in the early hours of Wednesday for the Four Nations Tournament in Rosario, Argentina.

The friendly tournament, part of the team's preparation for the FIH Hockey Junior Women's World Cup in December, will feature Argentina, Uruguay, and Chile alongside India, as the teams battle it out for top honours. Scheduled from May 25 to June 2 (IST), the Four Nations Tournament will see the Indian team play two matches against each of the participating nations. The tournament aims to help the team evaluate their performance, test combinations, and refine strategies ahead of the World Cup.

Hyderabad-born screenwriter Shreyas Ayaluri wins Audience Choice Award at UCLA Film Festival



Hyderabad: Hyderabad-born screenwriter Shreyas Ayaluri has won the Audience Choice Award at the UCLA Film Festival for his absurdist short film, 'The Serene Place' (formerly titled 'The Serene Place Where The Stars Poop').

Written by Shreyas and directed by Shriya Rana, the short film presents a comical narrative centered on a film school graduate who must navigate a bizarre, bureaucratic maze—mirroring the reality of the entertainment industry. The story follows two characters: the dreamer and the gatekeeper. The dreamer is a fresh grad—an eager immigrant, ready to do anything to break into the Hollywood studio world. The gatekeeper is a seasoned veteran who has been worn down by the system and thoroughly consumed by it, becoming one of its enforcers. With more than 30 acclaimed screenplays to his name, Shreyas Ayaluri's storytelling has earned him a place in the spotlight. His other standout works include 'A Mother's Battle', 'Eclipsed Innocence', and 'Cupid's Curse'. The young screenwriter is currently working on several new projects, like 'Casbah', a supernatural family horror film. The project is still in the developing phase, with producers on board and a director expected to be announced soon.

Forget the actor, it's Mohanlal the producer who should make a comeback; the one behind both his National Awards for Best Actor



Seeing the recent success of Thudarum, it's almost impossible not to wonder how the same Mohanlal—who is still capable of delivering spectacular performances, as he demonstrated in the Tharun Moorthy directorial, completely shedding his star mantle and effectively silencing his critics—kept bombarding audiences with atrocities such as Ittymaani: Made in China (2019), Kaappaan (2019), Big Brother (2020), Marakkar: Arabikadalinte Simham (2021), Aaraattu (2022), Monster (2022), Alone (2023), and the biggest bomb of all, his directorial debut Barroz (2024), one after the other over the past few years.

Although he did offer decent films like Drishyam 2 (2021), Neru (2023), and Malaiikkottai Vaaliban (2024) during the same period, his cinematic dumpster fires far outnumbered the not-bad entries, making one wonder if his involvement in the better projects was merely accidental. In fact, it's hard not to ask: where did the old Mohanlal go?

No, I'm not talking about the actor he once was; probably in his 20s, 30s or even 40s. It's senseless to expect someone in their 60s to perform with the same agility and intensity they had at half their age. But I'm not referring to the actor in him. I'm talking about the producer instead; the Mohanlal who once threw his weight behind exceptional films, sensing the true potential of a story, a project or a director, and turning himself into the creative rock on which a film could be built. What happened to that Mohanlal, the one who could recognise and help realise great films?

Before he began frequently collaborating with Aashirvad Cinemas, a production house established by his driver-turned-confidante-turned-close friend Antony Perumbavoor, Mohanlal, who turns 65 on Wednesday (May 21), had personally bankrolled over a dozen and a half films. In hindsight, many of these projects not only played a key role in elevating his stature as an actor but also stand among the finest mainstream Malayalam films of their era. Mohanlal entered film production for the first time alongside fellow superstar Mammooty. A poster of director Sathyan Anthikad's Gandhinagar 2nd Street bearing the name of the production banner, Casino Films.

Interestingly, Mohanlal entered film production for the first time alongside fellow superstar Mammooty. Together with producer Century Kochumon, director IV Sasi and his wife, actor Seema, they co-founded Casino Films. The company made its debut by bankrolling Adiyozhukkukal (1984), written by MT Vasudevan Nair and directed by Sasi himself. A hard-hitting drama, the film earned Mammooty his first Kerala State Film Award for Best Actor. Casino Films didn't stop there, it went on to produce three more acclaimed movies—Sasi and P Padmarajan's Karimbinpoovinakkare (1985), and Sathyan Anthikad and Sreenivasan's Gandhinagar 2nd Street (1986) and Nadodikkattu (1987), before the superstars bid goodbye to the company. Needless to say, all of these titles have been etched into the golden annals of Malayalam cinema and remain cherished classics to this day. During this period, Mohanlal also became involved with another production house, Cheers, which launched its journey by funding P Anil's Adiverukal (1986). Cheers went on to produce Kamal's widely acclaimed tragedy Unnikale Oru Kadha Parayam (1987) and the comedy-drama Orkkappurathu (1988). The company's final production was Aryan (1988), directed by Priyadarshan, which has, over time, drawn significant criticism for its casteist and savarna-centric themes and dialogues. By then, Mohanlal had not only established himself as one of the finest actors in the industry but had also achieved full-fledged superstardom. Yet, he continued to invest in films that prioritised quality above all else. And soon, he floated his own production company, Pranavam Arts International. Not only did Pranavam Arts change the trajectory of Mohanlal's career, but it also gifted the industry a handful of culturally and aesthetically significant films that defied conventional commercial formulas. Pranavam's films were not just starkly different from each other in terms of story and aesthetics, but they all explored and highlighted previously unseen facets of Mohanlal's acting abilities, making significant use of his untapped potential. More than that, every film he took on as a producer seemed to possess a soul of its own. It was also as if he chose to produce only those projects that would challenge him as a performer. Interestingly, four out of the eleven movies he bankrolled under the banner of Pranavam Arts—named after his son Pranav Mohanlal—were penned by the acclaimed screenwriter Lohithadas, renowned for crafting some of the most celebrated dramas in Malayalam cinema, among which was Kireedam (1989), directed by Sibi Malayil, which earned Mohanlal a National

Film Award – Special Mention.

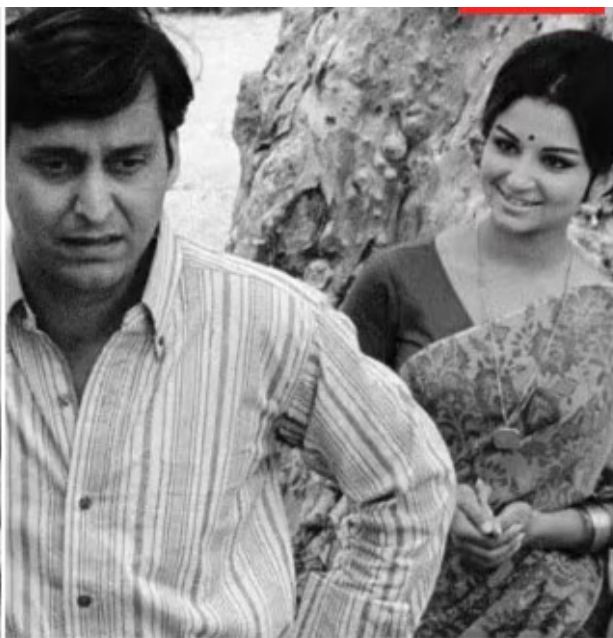
The Sibi-Lohithadas collaboration continued with His Highness Abdullah (1990), which marked Pranavam's debut production. The film followed Abdullah (Mohanlal), a poor Muslim Qawwali singer in Bombay, who is hired by members of an affluent royal Hindu family in Kerala to assassinate their patriarch, Maharaja Udayavarma (Nedumudi Venu). The movie not only showcased Mohanlal's extraordinary ability to perform play-back song sequences with near-perfect lip-syncing, but it also broke away from typical mainstream narratives. Unlike many films that either glorify or victimise savarna and Brahminical cultures while portraying Muslim characters in stereotypical roles that are reduced to the binaries of good and bad, His Highness Abdullah boldly exposed the rot in elitism, exemplified by a lack of compassion even among blood relatives with each person being more consumed by a greed for dynastic wealth than the other. Featuring some of Malayalam cinema's most iconic songs, such as "Pramadhavanam," "Devasabhathalam," and "Gopika Vasantham," composed by Raveendran and sung by KJ Yesudas and others, the film emerged as a major box office success. The very next year, the producer-actor returned with another project, once again teaming up with the same writer-director duo. While His Highness Abdullah revolved around an impending crime with elements of a thriller too, Bharatham (1991) was a pure musical drama, featuring an unrestrained and unmatched Mohanlal at its core. Though films like Kireedam, Thalavattam (1986), and Ninnishtam Ennishtam (1986) had showcased his emotional depth as a performer, the role of Kalloor Gopinathan in Bharatham was particularly fresh and complex even for him. Centred on the minor ego clash that erupts between two brothers—Carnatic music virtuosos Gopinathan and his elder sibling Ramanathan (Nedumudi Venu)—following an unforeseen and unfortunate incident, the film gradually evolves into a deeply layered musical family drama with a powerful emotional undercurrent. Bharatham further underlined Mohanlal's willingness to shed his star persona, portraying a character rendered helpless by life's cruel twists and misfortunes.

In Kamaladalam (1992), another musical drama crafted by the Sibi-Lohithadas duo and produced by Mohanlal, the trio pushed the actor in him into uncharted territory as he portrayed a revered classical dance teacher fighting alcoholism and the ghosts of his past. Though Mohanlal's physical agility was already well-known, primarily through comedic and cinematic dance sequences, this film revealed a completely different dimension of the same. As Nandagopan, Mohanlal delivered a jaw-dropping performance. Once again, he excelled as both producer and actor, proving how a true thespian can use his stature not just to maintain fame but to refine his craft and continually push his artistic boundaries.

Mohanlal in Kaalapani. Mohanlal in Kaalapani. (Credit: The Complete Actor website) Mohanlal and Suhasini Maniratnam on the sets of Vanaprastham. Mohanlal and Suhasini Maniratnam on the sets of Vanaprastham.

Although his next production ventures, Priyadarshan's Mithunam (1993) and Sathyan Anthikad's Pingami (1994), failed to succeed at the box office, they remain beloved among film lovers. It was after these that Mohanlal undertook his most ambitious and grandest project yet as a producer, Priyadarshan's Kaalapani (1996). In collaboration with R Mohan's Shogun Films, Pranavam Arts mounted this epic period drama, focusing on the lives of the inmates of the Cellular Jail (Kaalapani) in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands during the British Raj. As a producer, Mohanlal spared no effort in assembling the best possible cast—including Tabu, Prabhu, Amrith Puri, Sankaradi, Nedumudi Venu, Delhi Ganesh, Sreenivasan and Cochin Haneeffa—and crew, which featured stalwarts like Ilaiyaraaja (music), Santosh Sivan (cinematography), Sabu Cyril (art direction), and ST Venky (special effects). Although the film failed to recoup its then-massive production costs, Kaalapani became a landmark in Indian cinema and continues to serve as a reference point for period dramas. The movie also earned four National Film Awards. In 1998, Mohanlal once again joined forces with Lohithadas and created Kanmadam, which opened to both critical and commercial acclaim. Various aspects of the film, particularly the performances of Mohanlal and Manju Warrier, received widespread praise. That same year, Pranavam Arts mounted another massive project, Haikrishnans, which marked the much-anticipated on-screen reunion of Mohanlal and Mammooty after a decade or so. Featuring Juhi Chawla in the lead, the mystery buddy comedy was directed by Fazil and jointly produced by Mohanlal and his wife, Suchitra. The film lived up to the hype and became a blockbuster, helping Mohanlal recover from the financial setbacks caused by his earlier unsuccessful ventures to an extent. Unfortunately, Pranavam's next project, Bhadrans' Olympian Anthony Adam (1999), failed to make an impact. Yet, nothing could dampen Mohanlal's spirit. He once again donned the producer's hat for Shaji N Karun's Vanaprastham, one of the most significant films in Malayalam's parallel cinema movement, wherein he played a lowered caste Kathakali artiste grappling with marginalisation from all quarters. An international co-production, the film opened to universal acclaim and even earned Mohanlal .

Sharmila Tagore stayed in a chowkidar's room while Simi Garewal got a bungalow during the shoot of Satyajit Ray's Aranyer Din Ratri: 'You cannot imagine how hot it was'



After being methodically restored over six years, filmmaker Satyajit Ray's 1970 film Aranyer Din Ratri (Days and Nights in the Forest) was screened in the Cannes Classic section at the ongoing Cannes Film Festival. The film starred Soumitra Chatterjee, Subhendu Chatterjee, Samit Bhanja, Rabi Ghosh, Sharmila Tagore, Kaberi Bose, Simi Garewal and Aparna Sen. Actors Sharmila Tagore and Simi Garewal attended the event, which was hosted by the celebrated filmmaker Wes Anderson. The restoration and screening of the film also brought back the old memories for the actors. Speaking about the film, Sharmila recalled shooting for the film in extreme conditions.

Sharmila Tagore was shooting for Rajesh Khanna's Aaradhna when she received a call from Satyajit Ray. The veteran actor recalled her conversation with him and told The Hollywood Reporter India, "He said, 'Will you work in my film? I need you for one month... in month of May'. Without thinking I said yes. Then when I put the phone down, I said, 'Oh God, I am committed to Shakti Samanta because he was doing Meri Sapno Ki Rani that exact May.' She added, 'Rajesh Khanna was very busy because he had won a talent contest and was indebted to 12 producers. So he had to give dates to everybody and they were all making a film. His dates were very precious. I said, 'Shakti ji, I just have to do this film. Somehow I negotiated and managed to come to Satyajit Ray and then went back to the other film.'"

Sharmila Tagore, who had marked her acting debut with Satyajit Ray's Apur Sansar (The World of Apu), didn't want to take the risk of saying no to the filmmaker. "I always treated him with a little bit of awe, respect, like you did

to your father", said the actress.

In the same conversation, the 80-year-old screen legend recalled, "When we were shooting for Aranyer Din Ratri, we were staying in different places because there was paucity of space. Simi (Garewal) and Kaberi (Bose) stayed in a sort of next-door village in a plush forest bungalow. Satyajit Ray with Soumitra Chatterjee and other crew members stayed in another place. And Samit Bhanja, Subhendu Chatterjee, Rabi Ghosh and I stayed in another place." "I had the chowkidar's room and I had a water cooler. In dry weather, it worked very well. These guys were in a shed with tin roof. So they would all joke about themselves and say 'I am Rabi roast, Subhendu would say I am sauteed Subhendu' because it used to be so hot. You cannot imagine how hot it was. We could only work from 5:30 AM to 9:00 AM and then again from 3:00 PM to 6:00 PM. Rest of the time, we just bonded and became good friends. It was really a tough location." "Sharing the reason behind the filmmaker choosing the particular month of May for his shoot, Sharmila said, "He wanted that time because the trees were leafless. He wanted a particular look and it was only possible in May because then the rains came soon after and before that it was all leafy and lush." Aranyer Din Ratri is a Bengali-language adventure drama film based on the novel of the same name by Sunil Gangopadhyay. The film was primarily shot in the Palamu region of Jharkhand. Palamu is one of the twenty-four districts of Jharkhand and the temperature crosses 44 degrees Celsius during summer, making it an extremely tough location to work in.

Shah Rukh Khan left quietly after I told him 'nas kaat lungi', recalls Wamiqa Gabbi: 'There was pin-drop silence on the sets of Baby John'

After gaining recognition for several of her Punjabi films and appearances in series like Modern Love Mumbai, Wamiqa Gabbi received her big break after she was cast as one of the leads in Atlee's film Baby John starring Varun Dhawan and Keerthy Suresh. This was filmmaker Atlee's second Bollywood project after Shah Rukh Khan starrer Jawan. While he directed-produced Jawan, he presented Baby John with Kalees as its director. For the film's muhurat, Atlee had his Jawan film star, Shah Rukh Khan attend the event. This also marked Wamiqa's first official meeting with the superstar. However, the meeting was nothing like she anticipated.

In a recent interview with Mashable India, Wamiqa Gabbi recalled her first meeting with the star and said, "My conversation was very weird with him. We were all at Baby John's muhurat when Shah Rukh Khan visited the set for 15 minutes. My brother Hardik was with me on the set. When he came, everybody was so charmed by him that they stood around him and heard him talk. My brother and I were standing at the back and we were having our own conversation, anticipating our possible conversation with the star. I asked Hardik, 'If he will come to speak to me while leaving, what do you think I should speak with him?' Hardik joked, 'Nas kaat de'. We are laughing talking all this."

"And as anticipated, he did come to me before he left



as I was also in the film. He said 'okay, bye' and I said, 'It was so nice meeting you sir, my brother was suggesting I cut my wrist but obviously I won't do that.' Now, as soon as I told this to him, everyone went quiet, and SRK simply left. After he left, a person from the production came running to me and was like, 'Did you just talk about cutting your wrist?' My brother was shocked. I honestly thought SRK will get the humour, but he didn't," added an embarrassed Wamiqa Gabbi. Rajkumar Rao, who too was part of the interview, recalled his last meeting with the star and said, "I met Shah Rukh sir at Farah Khan's birthday. We spoke a lot. We discussed his film, King, then we spoke about Aryan Khan's new show. He also said he liked my film Stree 2."

'It's Just the Start': J-Hope goes beyond BTS with solo milestone, lands second Billboard cover since PSY



BTS' J-Hope makes history as the first solo K-pop male on Billboard's May cover since PSY, building a solo career with sold-out tours, top charts, and mega collaborations

BTS' J-Hope seems to have overtaken fellow band member Jungkook's Billboard singer tag after achieving a historic feat on the US-based music magazine's May cover, becoming the first male K-pop solo act to be featured twice on the cover since PSY in 2012, with his breakout song "Gangnam Style." The third-oldest in the group, J-Hope, aka Jung Hoseok, has been touring American cities since his military discharge last year and has carved out his identity as a solo artist, with sold-out shows and landing big covers while representing luxury brands as their ambassador.

From choreographing the group's signature dance steps to spitting fire with his rap verses and magnetic stage presence, once the most underrated member of BTS, J-Hope is now showing a new side of himself as a solo artist,

with the group's projects on hold until 2026 due to the anticipated June reunion. After his first solo album, Jack in the Box, reached number 6 on the Billboard 200 chart, the singer returned with big names such as Miguel, Don Toliver, and Pharrell Williams for new collaborations. He's currently storming the music charts around the globe with titles like Mona Lisa, Sweet Dreams, and more. Speaking to the magazine, J-Hope said, "Growing up, Billboard seemed like a completely different universe to me. I'd follow the charts to see where my favourite artists landed... so having my own music recognised by Billboard still feels surreal and exciting."

The 31-year-old has one dream, and that's for the world to remember him as an artist they can be inspired by. "Above all, I hope to continue growing into an artist who brings light and encouragement to others wherever I go," he said. The singer said he wants to live up to live up to his name, and revealed how he was totally invested in every detail during the tour, whether it was the stage, the setting, the mood, or even the designs. The tour will wrap up on June 1 after 15 dates across North America and Asia. Going forward, he said, "I want to keep creating authentic performances that unite everyone through the power of music." Making history by headlining US stadiums alone was a big milestone for him. He told Billboard, "Having performed at countless stadiums with BTS, I was always part of a seven-member team filling the stage. This time, I was on my own, and honestly, I wondered if I could handle that immense energy and pressure by myself. But I pulled it off, and that means a lot to me."