

Minor boy ends life after parents scold him over mobile phone use

Hyderabad: Upset over his parents reprimanding him for excessive usage of mobile phone, a minor boy died by suicide by hanging in his house in Saidabad on Monday.The 16-year-old boy from Vinay Nagar Colony in IS Sadan had failed in one subject in the recent Secondary School Certificate examination. He was staying back at home and preparing for the Advanced Supplementary Examinations.As per available information, on Saturday, he borrowed the smart mobile phone from a friend and was playing video games in it.In the past too, his parents had scolded him for using his mobile phone too much daily and watching television and not concentrating on studies.

Blast in Amritsar’s Majitha road: Suspected Khalistani terrorist killed while retrieving explosives

GNS News Agency, May 27

A suspected Khalistani terrorist died in a blast while retrieving explosive material from a vacant area on the Majitha road bypass in Punjab's Amritsar on Tuesday.The intensity of the explosion, which took place around 9:30 a.m., was such that both arms of the man were blown off.Deputy Inspector General (Border Range) Satinder Singh said the man is suspected to have links with some terror organisation like Babbar Khalsa International (BKI).

The man came here to retrieve the explosive material and thereafter, the blast took place, he said."The explosive material was in his hands when the blast took place," Mr. Singh told reporters in Amritsar. "We are investigating his identity and the terror organisation he belonged to," he said.Replying to a question, the DIG said the man was yet to be identified."As per circumstantial evidence, it is clear that this man was a member of some terrorist organisation," Mr. Singh said, adding police got some vital clues from the man's pocket which indicated his links with some terror outfit.A team of Forensic Science Laboratory is investigating to find out whether it was an IED (improvised explosive device) blast or grenade blast.Amritsar Rural Senior Superintendent of Police Maninder Singh said the man was retrieving some explosive material when the blast happened, possibly due to mishandling.Locals reported hearing a loud blast followed by a panic in the area, which has since been cordoned off by police.

The DIG appealed to people not to panic, saying "we will soon trace this case".

ACB summons in Formula-E race case smacks of political vendetta, says KTR

GNS News Agency, May 27

Hyderabad: BRS working president KT Rama Rao has been summoned by the Anti-Corruption Bureau (ACB) to appear for an inquiry on May 28 in connection with the Formula E case. Terming the case as pure political harassment, Rama Rao said he would cooperate fully with the authorities.In a statement after receiving the notice, Rama Rao said he had already informed ACB officials in writing about his pre-scheduled trip to the UK and USA for official events."As a law-abiding citizen, I will certainly appear before the agency as soon as I return," he said.The BRS working president charged Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy with indulging in cheap vendetta politics.

"I should appreciate Revanth Reddy for his thirst for political vendetta and the way he swings in any direction without any scruples to achieve the same," he said, also questioning the silence of BJP leaders over Revanth Reddy's alleged involvement in the National Herald money laundering case, in which the latter's name reportedly figured in an ED chargesheet just two days ago."Within 24 hours, Revanth

Seven members of a family found dead inside parked car in Haryana’s Panchkula; suicide suspected

GNS News Agency, May 27

Police said that some facts emerged from probe into the case indicate that this is a matter of suicidePolice said that some facts emerged from probe into the case indicate that this is a matter of suicide Seven members of a family, including three children, allegedly died by suicide inside a

Govt extends income tax returns filing deadline to September 15, 2025 from July 31

GNS News Agency, May 27

The Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT) has extended the deadline for filing income tax returns (ITRs) for the financial year 2024-25 to September 15 from the earlier deadline of July 31, 2025, citing the numerous changes that the forms have undertaken and the time taken to update the systems. "The notified ITRs for AY 2025-26 have undergone structural and content revisions aimed at simplifying compliance, enhancing transparency, and enabling accurate reporting," the CBDT said in a release on Tuesday (May 27, 2025). "These changes have necessitated additional time for system development, integration, and testing of the corresponding utilities."

Hyderabad mountaineer Vishwanath sets new record

HYDERABAD: Vishwanath Karthikey Padakanti of Hyderabad set a new record by becoming India's youngest and the world's second youngest to complete the 7 Summits across all the continents, which is the ultimate dream for any mountaineer.

The 16-year-old Vishwanath completed the 7- Summits challenge, climbing the highest peak on each of the seven continents. With this extraordinary achievement, he becomes "India's youngest and the world's second youngest" to complete one of the most prestigious feats in mountaineering.

Terrorism is Pakistan’s war strategy, India to respond accordingly

GNS News Agency, May 27

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday (May 27, 2025) said terrorism practiced by Pakistan is not a proxy war but a deliberate war strategy and India will respond accordingly.Pakistan is engaging in war through terrorism, Mr. Modi said, while speaking about Operation Sindoor at the urban development programme of Gujarat Government.

"We can't call this a proxy war as those who were killed on May 6 night [in Indian strikes on terror camps in Pakistan] were given state honours in Pakistan. Pakistani flags were draped over their coffins, and their military saluted them," Mr. Modi said. "This proves that these terrorist activities are not just a proxy war but a deliberate war strategy on their part. If they engage in war, then the response will be accordingly," he said.

Mr. Modi said that whenever India and Pakistan went to war, Indian armed forces defeated Pakistan in a way the neighbouring country would never forget. "Realising they could never win a direct war against India, they turned to proxy warfare, providing military training and support to terrorists instead," he said. "No matter how strong or healthy the body is, even a single thorn can cause constant pain. We have decided that the thorn must be removed," Mr. Modi

In Iran, Pakistan PM Shehbaz Sharif expresses willingness to hold peace talks with India to ‘resolve all issues’

GNS News Agency, May 27

Pakistan Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Monday (May 26, 2025) expressed his willingness to hold peace talks with India to resolve all issues, including Kashmir, terrorism, water and trade.Mr. Sharif made the remarks in Tehran, where he arrived on the second leg of his four-nation tour.The Pakistan Prime Minister flew from Turkiye to the Iranian capital, where President Masoud Pezeshkian received him at the Saadabad Palace. Mr. Sharif received a guard of honour and held talks with President Pezeshkian.Addressing a joint press conference with Mr. Pezeshkian, Mr. Sharif said he was ready to talk with India for the sake of peace."We want to resolve all disputes, including the Kashmir issue and the water issue, through negotiations and are also ready to talk to our neighbour on trade and counter-terrorism," he said."But if they choose to remain aggressors, then we shall defend our territory... like we have done a few days ago," he said. "But if they accept my offer of peace, then we will show that we really want peace, seriously and sincerely." India has made it clear that it will only have a dialogue with Pakistan on the return of Pakistan-occupied Kashmir and the issue of terrorism.

Mr. Sharif also claimed that his country came out "victorious" out of the four-day war with India.Tensions between India and Pakistan escalated after the April 22 Pahalgam attack, which claimed 26 lives. India then carried out precision strikes as part of Operation Sindoor on terror infrastructure in Pakistan and Pakistan-occupied Kashmir in the early hours of May 7. It was followed by Pakistan's attempt to attack Indian military bases on May 8, 9, and 10. The Indian side responded strongly to the Pakistani actions.

The on-ground hostilities ended with an understanding of stopping the military actions following talks between the directors general of military operations of both sides on May 10.Mr. Sharif appreciated Mr. Pezeshkian for his concern during the recent conflict between Pakistan and India.

At least 5 dead and 19 injured in chemical plant explosion in China

GNS News Agency, May 27

A huge explosion rocked a chemical plant in China's eastern Shandong province around noon on Tuesday (May 27, 2025), killing at least five people and injuring 19, according to state broadcaster CCTV. An additional six people remain missing.The blast was powerful enough to knock out the windows at a storage warehouse more than two miles (three kilometers) away from the factory, according to a video shared by a local resident, who declined to give his name out of concern for retaliation.His home shook from the blast, he said. As he went to the window to see what was wrong, he saw a tall column of smoke from the site, more than seven kilometers (4.3 miles) away.The explosion happened at the Gaomi Youdao Chemical Co., which is located in an industrial park in the city of Weifang. It manufactures pesticides as well as chemicals for medical use, and has more than 500 employees, according to corporate

Heavy Rains Expected in Andhra Pradesh

GNS News Agency, May 27

The Meteorological Department has issued a warning of heavy rainfall across Andhra Pradesh. According to the AP State Disaster Management Authority, a low-pressure area is anticipated to form in the west-central and adjoining north Bay of Bengal within the next 24 hours. This development may lead to scattered heavy downpours in the state over the next three days, accompanied by gusty winds reaching speeds of 50-60 km/h in certain areas.

On Tuesday, 27th May 2025, heavy rain is expected in the districts of Srikakulam, Parvathipuram Manyam, Vizianagaram, Alluri Seetharamaraju, Visakhapatnam, Anakapalle, Kakinada, East Godavari, West Godavari, Eluru, and Konaseema. There may also be light rain in the remaining districts.Looking ahead to Wednesday, 28th May 2025, similar scattered rains are likely in Srikakulam, Parvathipuram, Vizianagaram, Alluri Seetharamaraju, Eluru, Krishna, NTR, Guntur, Prakasam, Nandyal, Kurnool, and Anantapur districts, with light rain possible elsewhere.As of 5 PM on Monday, recent rainfall figures included 56 mm recorded in Rajapanukulu, Alluri district, 42.7 mm in Vizianagaram, and 41.5 mm in Mareduilli, among other notable amounts across various regions, as reported by the AP State Disaster Management Organisation.

Indian Chronicle

English Daily

All eyes on team in transition

Even as a young Team India gets ready to leave for England for a crucial five-Test match series, this will not be the first time that India is embarking on an overseas series with a relatively young squad. Expectations are high that the bunch, which will be led by the stylish batsman from Punjab, Shubman Gill, will prove its worth on English soil. Leading a squad is not something new for Gill, who is the captain of Gujarat Titans in the IPL championship. However, he will be overburdened in the absence of the three stalwarts- R Ashwin, Rohit Sharma and Virat Kohli, who shouldered the team's responsibilities with aplomb by coming up with match-winning performances. Though, the number four slot has fallen vacant since Kohli's retirement, many opine that Gill will be the best bet to take the position. The 25-year-old, who entered the record books as India's fifth youngest Test captain, has his task cut out. He must lead from the front, especially now when his form has not been to the expectations nor does he have the leadership qualities that were demonstrated by Kohli and Rohit Sharma. There will be heavy reliance on the prowess of KL Rahul and Rishabh Pant, who incidentally, are grappling with career lows. In fact, Pant, who had a horrific tour Down Under, is yet to strike form if one goes by his dismal showing in the on-going Indian Premier League.

Even Rahul has not done anything exceptional to boost the team morale. A major negative in this team in transition is that the 18-member squad is loaded with all-rounders and most of them have been good only in the game's short formats. Many will be upstarts in the longer format. A surprise call-up, and one that could tilt the scale during critical junctures, has been that of Karun Nair, who last appeared in a Test match way back in 2017. It is a good augury that the selectors have taken into consideration his prolific exploits in domestic cricket.

Haryana opens CET registration for Group C posts, 14 lakh applications expected

GNS News Agency, May 27

After a three-year gap, the Haryana Staff Selection Commission (HSSC) has announced the Common Eligibility Test (CET) for Group C posts in various government departments across the state. The Haryana CET is a preliminary written examination conducted by the commission to select candidates for different government roles.

According to a notification issued on Monday, online registration for CET Group C posts will take place from May 28 to June 12, with June 14 being the last date for fee submission. Once the registration process for Group C posts is completed, a separate notification will be issued for Group D posts. In the notification, the commission mentioned that the examination date will be communicated at a later stage. Approximately 14 lakh candidates are expected to apply for Group C posts, while nearly 17 lakh candidates are likely to apply for Group D posts.

The Group C posts include various roles such as junior engineers, clerks, excise and taxation inspectors, auditors, assistant managers, patwaris, and male and female police constables, while Group D roles in Haryana include various entry-level positions in government departments, including peon, animal attendant, helper, gardener, cook and water carrier. HSSC Chairman Himmat Singh has already advised candidates to ensure their documents are prepared to avoid any registration issues. He also urged applicants to update their personal details, such as name, father's name, mother's name, date of birth, and mobile number in their Aadhaar Card and Parivar Pehchan Patra (PPP) if there are any discrepancies in official records. The CET score will remain valid for three years. However, if an applicant improves their score in a later attempt, the new validity period of three years will begin from the date of the result declaration of that attempt. Himmat Singh said that compared to previous years, 2024 saw the highest number of youths being provided employment, with 56,830 selections. According to Singh, recruitment numbers varied each year as follows: In 2015, recruitment was conducted for 2,780 posts; in 2016, for 2,229 posts; in 2017, for 8,403 posts; in 2018, for 20,141 posts; in 2019, for 34,649 posts; in 2020, for 8,694 posts; in 2021, for 3,651 posts; in 2022, for 16,366 posts; and in 2023, for 838 posts.

Meanwhile, in a post on social media platform X, Chief Minister Nayab Singh Saini said: "I am pleased to share with you that the CET (Common Eligibility Test) will soon be conducted in the state, and all eligible candidates can apply online starting May 28. This examination brings a golden opportunity for thousands of young individuals in the state to secure employment." Saini also said, "Our government is working with complete dedication under the 'bina kharchi, bina parchi' (no bribery, no recommendation) policy and the 'mission merit' principle. We remain committed to providing jobs to Haryana's youth solely based on merit. The BJP government in the state stands firmly with the youth in all circumstances."

Niranjan Reddy urges Centre to halt Operation Kagar, initiate talks with Maoists

Hyderabad: Former Minister and BRS senior leader S Niranjan Reddy urged the Central government to stop Operation Kagar and initiate peace talks with the Maoists. He cautioned that continued military suppression could destabilise democratic values and trigger public outrage.

Addressing a press conference at Telangana Bhavan on Tuesday, Niranjan Reddy slammed the BJP-led government at the Centre for prioritising corporate interests over the welfare of the common man. He said the Centre could not act with arrogance, wield power without responsibility, and ignore voices calling for peace.

"Shooting our own citizens cannot be the solution. Talks are the only way forward," he asserted, citing BRS supremo K Chandrashekhara Rao's appeal in Warangal to halt combat operations and initiate dialogue with the Maoists.

The former Minister criticised the Centre's plan to eliminate Maoists by 2026, calling it flawed and dangerous. "You cannot eradicate ideas by eliminating individuals," he said, adding that around 22 student unions and several public organisations had been urging for negotiations.

Blue Ocean assures youth waiting for visa



Kondapur May 27 Indian Chronicle Educated youth want to work in other countries. But now it is very easy for us to get a job and visa in other countries through Blue Ocean, said Mahmood Moinuddin, CEO of Blue Ocean Company, in a statement. They said that we have taken the responsibility of providing a visa and assures many people



and have been 100% successful. The company CEO said that Blue Ocean will take full responsibility for any problems. Many people who have studied PG and engineering will not waste their time and get a job in other countries, Blue Ocean Company will be a complete guarantee for you, said Mahmood Moinuddin, CEO of Blue Ocean Company, in a statement.

SVU to Observe N.T. Rama Rao's Birth Anniversary as State Function



"May 27, Indian Chronicle, Rayalaseema co-ordinator "Sri Venkateswara University, Tirupati, proudly announces that the Government of Andhra Pradesh has officially declared 28th May of every year to be observed as a State Function to commemorate the birth anniversary of Sri

Nandamuri Taraka Rama Rao, the legendary actor, cultural icon, and former Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh. "This recognition underscores NTR's monumental contributions to Telugu cinema, public life, and governance. His visionary leadership, artistic excellence, and unwavering dedication to social justice continue to inspire generations across the state and beyond.

"As part of this commemoration, Sri Venkateswara University will organize a gathering on 28th May 2025 at 11:00 AM in the Senate Hall, SV University campus. All teaching and non-teaching staff members are requested to attend and participate in the event to mark the occasion with due respect and dignity. "This observance highlights the university's commitment to celebrating the lives of individuals who have significantly shaped the cultural and political landscape of Andhra Pradesh.

Sri Krishna Swamy Blesses Devotees on Golden Tiruchi “



"May 27, Indian Chronicle, Rayalaseema co-ordinator "Devotees were treated to a divine spectacle as Sri Krishna Swamy, presiding deity of the temple attached to Sri Padmavathi Ammavari Temple in Tiruchanur, adorned a golden Tiruchi (palanquin) and was taken in a grand procession along the Mada streets on Tuesday evening. The auspicious event was held in celebration of Rohini



Nakshatram, the birth star of Lord Krishna. "Earlier in the day, special rituals commenced with Suprabhatam to awaken the Lord, followed by an Abhishekam with various aromatic substances. "In the evening, the Utsava Murthys (processional deities) of Sri Krishna Swamy, accompanied by His consorts Rukmini and Satyabhama, were exquisitely decorated. The deities were then majestically seated on the golden Tiruchi before being carried in a vibrant procession through the temple streets."

A large number of devotees thronged to witness the divine procession, offering camphor harati and seeking the blessings of Lord Sri Krishna. Temple officials and a significant gathering of the faithful participated in the spiritually charged event, which filled the air with devotion.

High court overturns ‘illegal promotions’ in Haryana Vidyut Nigam



GNS News Agency, May 27

HVPNL promotion case, Punjab Haryana High Court ruling, Divisional Accountant promotion Haryana. In a rare move, the court also called for disciplinary proceedings against the officer responsible for approving the promotions in violation of the policy. The Punjab and Haryana High Court has quashed the promotions of ministerial cadre employees to the post of Divisional Accountant in Haryana Vidyut Parsaran Nigam Ltd. (HVPNL), directing a fresh selection process that gives due consideration to eligible Junior Accountants.

The judgment, delivered by a division bench of Justices Sanjeev Prakash Sharma and Meenakshi I. Mehta, came on an appeal filed by Jyoti Saini and Parvinder Singh — both Junior Accountants — challenging their exclusion from the promotion process. The appeal arose from a 2016 order by a single judge who had directed HVPNL to finalise its revised Recruitment and Promotion Policy, without addressing the appellants' core grievance. Saini and Singh, both part of the erstwhile Haryana State Electricity Board (HSEB), contended that their rightful claim to promotion under the 50 per cent quota for the post of Divisional Accountant had been ignored. They pointed out that ministerial cadre employees, including Ashwani Chauhan and Pooja Lathwal, were wrongly promoted despite not belonging to the accounts wing, an action they said violated the Recruitment and Promotion Policy of HVPNL's Audit & Accounts Wing.

The high court bench examined Clause 4.3 of the policy, which stipulates that the Divisional Accountant post

must be filled from among qualified Accountants, or in their absence, from Junior Accountants and Accounts Clerks who have cleared the departmental examination. The court noted that Chauhan and Lathwal, who remained in the ministerial cadre until their promotions in 2012 and 2014, did not meet this criterion and were therefore ineligible. The bench criticised HVPNL for ignoring cadre boundaries and extending undue benefits to ministerial staff. "The promotions granted to Ashwani Chauhan and Pooja Lathwal are unsustainable in the eyes of law," the court held, setting aside their appointments and ordering HVPNL to conduct a fresh promotion process.

The court further directed that Saini and Singh be considered for promotion based on their eligibility as of the years 2012 and 2014, with all consequential benefits, including seniority and salary arrears, to be granted from the date of the original writ petition, if found eligible. In a rare move, the court also called for disciplinary proceedings against the officer responsible for approving the promotions in violation of the policy. It left open the possibility of recovering the salaries paid to the ineligible appointees. Emphasising the need for transparency and fairness in promotions, the bench said the case highlights the importance of respecting cadre-specific policies and protecting the rights of qualified employees.

Woman arrested for killing husband in Hyd

Hyderabad: The Vanasthalipuram police took into custody three persons including a woman who allegedly killed her husband and tried to cover up the murder.

The woman, Sirisha, was married to Kishan Naik, eight years ago. A few months ago, differences came up between the couple and the woman started staying separately at a house in Hills Colony, Vanasthalipuram.

Although the woman was staying away from Kishan, the differences between them continued and Sirisha decided to kill her husband.

Monsoon reaches Maharashtra a day after Kerala, earliest onset in 35 years

GNS News Agency, May 27

The southwest monsoon arrived in Maharashtra on Sunday (May 25, 2025), making it the earliest onset of the annual rainfall season over the state in 35 years, the India Meteorological Department said.

The southwest monsoon is expected to advance to Mumbai and some other parts over the next three days, the IMD added. In 1990, southwest monsoon made onset over Maharashtra on May 20, IMD scientist Sushma Nair said. The monsoon advanced into some more parts of the Arabian Sea, Karnataka, entire Goa, parts of Maharashtra, north Bay of Bengal, and parts of Mizoram, parts of Manipur and Nagaland on Sunday, the IMD said. The northern limit of monsoon passes through Devgad, Belagavi, Haveri, Mandya, Dharmapuri, Chennai, Aizawl and Kohima, it said. "Conditions are favourable for further advance into some more parts of central Arabian Sea, more parts of Maharashtra including Mumbai, Karnataka including Bengaluru, some parts of Andhra Pradesh, remaining parts of Tamil Nadu, more parts of west-central and North Bay of Bengal and some more parts of North Eastern states during next three days," the IMD said. In Maharashtra, the coastal Konkan stretch and Mumbai have been witnessing heavy pre-monsoon rains over the last two days.

The southwest monsoon hit Kerala on Saturday, marking its earliest arrival over the Indian mainland since 2009 when it had reached the southern state on May 23. Normally, the southwest monsoon marks its onset over Kerala by June 1 and covers the entire country by July 8. It starts retreating from northwest India around September 17 and withdraws completely by October 15. It usually reaches Maharashtra around June 7 and Mumbai on June 11. M Rajeevan, a monsoon expert and former secretary of the Ministry of Earth Sciences, said early onset and covering a large area on the first day is not uncommon. "In 1971, monsoon at the time of onset covered a larger area in Karnataka and parts of Maharashtra. Present active monsoon conditions will continue at least till June 2 and will help to advance monsoon into Maharashtra and eastern parts of the country," Mr. Rajeevan said.

Orange alert for Meenachil, Korappuzha, Achankovil, Manimala rivers as water level rises



GNS News Agency, May 27

In the wake of heavy rain across Kerala which pushed water levels dangerously high in many rivers, the State Irrigation department on Tuesday (May 27, 2025) issued an orange alert for Meenachil in Kottayam, Korappuzha in Kozhikode, and Achankovil and Manimala rivers in Pathanamthitta. The department has advised people living on the banks of these rivers to be cautious against rising water levels.

A yellow alert is already in place for Vamanapuram river in Thiruvananthapuram, Perumba in Kannur, Bharathapuzha in central Kerala, Uppala in Kasaragod, and Kabani in Wayanad. The orange alert has been issued for Perur station on Meenachil river in Kottayam, Kunnamangalam station on Korappuzha river in Kozhikode, Kalleli station on Achankovil river in Pathanamthitta, Konni GD station, and Thondara (Vallamkulam) station on Manimala river.

A yellow alert has also been issued at Kaithapram station on Perumba river in Kannur, Uppala station on Uppala River in Kasaragod, Kolikkal station and Kadiyangad station on Korappuzha river in Kozhikode, Thiruvengappura station on Bharathapuzha river in Malappuram, Mylamoodu station on Vamanapuram river in Thiruvananthapuram, Kelothukadavu station, Muthanga station, Panamaram station and Muthankara station of the Central Water Commission (CWC) on Kabani river in Wayanad. The authorities said those living on the banks of these rivers should be vigilant, and people should not enter or cross the rivers under any circumstances. Those living near the riverbanks should be prepared to move away from flood-prone areas as per the instructions of the authorities.

State govt announces Rs 4.05 lakh compensation for Home Guard's kin who died during PM Modi's visit

visit PM visit Gujrat Prime Minister Narendra Modi waves at supporters during a roadshow in Bhuj, Gujarat, on Monday. The deceased was deployed in Kishanwadi area for the PM's visit and was declared dead on arrival at SSG hospital, according to officers.

The Gujarat government Tuesday announced a compensation of Rs 4.05 lakh for the family of the Home Guard who Monday suffered a heart attack and collapsed while posted on duty during the visit of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, said officers familiar with the matter. The Home Guard, identified as Nitesh Jaria (30) was attached to the Laxmipura police station in Vadodara city. The incident took place when Jaria, who was deployed in Kishanwadi area for the PM's visit, collapsed, and was declared dead on arrival at SSG hospital, according to officers. On Tuesday, Senior Staff Officer (SSO) Manish Trivedi accompanied by the Vadodara District Home Guard Unit Commanding Officer Gaurang Joshi and BJP leader Rajesh Ayare visited Jaria's residence. Joshi said: "It was an unfortunate incident that our jawan Nitesh Jaria collapsed on duty... He died after suffering from a heart attack and was declared dead on arrival at SSG hospital..."

After cases in Delhi and Mumbai, Turkey-based Celebi takes legal battle to Madras High Court



GNS News Agency, May 27

After moving the Delhi High Court and the Bombay High Court, Turkey-headquartered airport ground handling major Celebi has now knocked on the doors of the Madras High Court as part of its legal battle against Indian aviation authorities and airports following the revocation of its security clearance in India—a key market—and the consequent termination of its contracts by various Indian airports. One of Celebi's Indian subsidiaries—Celebi GS Chennai Pvt Ltd—has filed two arbitration applications and a request for interim measures against the Airports Authority of India (AAI) before the Madras High Court against the termination of its contract at the AAI-operated Chennai International Airport.

“...our subsidiary, Celebi GS Chennai Private Limited, 100% of whose capital belongs to our company, filed two arbitration applications with a request for interim measures against the Airports Authority of India at the High Court of Judicature at Madras on 26.05.2025 and 27.05.2025 regarding the unjust unilateral termination of the Ground Handling Concession Agreement regarding CGSC's operations in Chennai International Airport due to the cancellation of the security permit of CGSC by the Civil Aviation Security Bureau of the Ministry of Civil Aviation of India on the grounds that it poses a threat to national security,” parent company Celebi Hava Servisi said in a regulatory filing in Istanbul. The lawsuits follow cases filed by three other Celebi subsidiaries—Celebi Airport Services India, Celebi Delhi Cargo Terminal Management India, and Celebi Nas Airport Services India—before the Delhi High Court and the Bombay High Court against the security clearance revocation and the resultant cancellation of Celebi contracts by the operators of Delhi and Mumbai airports.

Amid the backlash in India over Turkey's support for Pakistan in the India-Pakistan conflict, India's aviation security regulator BCAS on May 15 revoked the security clearance of an Indian arm—Celebi Airport Services India—of Celebi on grounds related to “national security” with imme-

diated effect. The revocation also applies to other associate entities of Celebi in India. This led to Indian airports terminating their contracts with Celebi group companies. Defending itself, Celebi Airport Services India said that it is “truly an Indian enterprise” led and managed by Indian professionals, and is “not a Turkish organisation by any standard”. Celebi, which operated through five subsidiaries at nine Indian airports, is challenging the revocation of its security clearance and the resultant cancellation of contracts by the airports before various courts. The company has argued before the courts that the revocation of its security clearance was in violation of due procedure and natural justice as the Centre suddenly cancelled the clearance without notice and any opportunity for the company to make its case. On its part, the government has argued that it can exercise its plenary powers in the interest of national security and aviation security. The Delhi High Court reserved its order in the case, while a vacation bench of the Bombay High Court granted temporary relief to Celebi by restraining Mumbai International Airport Ltd (MIAL) from finalising the tender to replace Celebi's subsidiary till the matter is heard by the regular court.

India is an important market for Celebi, and the company's share price has declined almost 21 per cent since the revocation of its India security clearance. According to the company's regulatory filings, in its consolidated revenue of around \$585 million in 2024, its five Indian arms cumulatively accounted for a 33.8 per cent share, which comes out to over \$195 million. Celebi operated at nine Indian airports—Mumbai, Delhi, Kochi, Kannur, Bengaluru, Hyderabad, Ahmedabad, Chennai, and Goa (Mopa). The airports and airlines that were working with Celebi are turning to the other major ground handling players in India's aviation sector like AI Airport Services, Air India SATS Airport Services, the Bird group, and Indo Thai Aviation Services. Ground handling refers to operations that are critical for flights to be prepared and operated. These include passenger handling and check-in, baggage handling, cargo handling and management, aircraft servicing and maintenance, ramp services, and catering. Celebi Airport Services India said that it is a globally operated aviation services company with no political links or affiliation, and is majority-owned by international institutional investors. The company also termed as “factually incorrect” the allegations about its ownership that have been doing rounds on social media. These include the claim that Sümeyye Erdogan Bayraktar—daughter of Turkey's President Recep Tayyip Erdogan—is a part owner in Celebi. The company categorically rejected this claim.

How this duo behind Grainstorm and their all-women team are revolutionising snacking



GNS News Agency, May 27

Some of the machines at the Hadapsar factory of Grainstorm, a company that makes snacks from locally sourced ingredients, are quite large, reaching around 15 feet in height. The technician, who came to install the machine, told Grainstorm's founders, Neeta and Deepak Kamath, “Ek to aapko aadmi rakhna padega (You have to employ at least one man)”. Deepak turned to the all-women staff at the factory for their response. The team challenged the male technician, climbed to the top of a 15-foot machine and carried out the tightening of bolts as required. Deepak, the only other male on the factory floor, remembers the incident as evidence of the core ethos of Grainstorm, a company run by women who not only create artisanal snacks in eco-friendly packaging but also champion healthier traditional food choices.

Grainstorm's products – Quinoa Mild Chilli Crisps, Jowar Rustic Spice Crisps, Tangy Beaten Rice Crisps and Ragi Zesty Cheese Crisps, among others – occupy shelf space alongside premium and imported products at more than 50 upmarket stores in Pune. “Our target market is, demographically, between 25 to 45 years old; the upwardly-mobile Indian man and woman who want these snacks for themselves and their children because they are worried about snacking on junk food,” says Deepak. A study from 2018 by the International Food Information Council has shown that millennials are more conscious of making healthy food choices compared to their elders. According to the study, 80 per cent of millennials prioritise health when choosing foods as opposed to 64 per cent of those born between 1946 and 1964. In India, according to market research company IMARC Group, the size of the Indian snacks market is going to soar to Rs 95,521.8 crore by 2032 – it was Rs 42,694.9 crore in 2023 – on the back of popularity, increasing implementation of quality standards by the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India and growing numbers of e-commerce brands, and better distribution networks.

The Kamaths did not have these stats in mind when, in 2018-2019, they set up Grainstorm. Neeta was a professor of Economics at Wadia College and Deepak, an MBA, had a family business in electronics but “always wanted to do something in the food business”. “He always talked about it... I, too, was looking to do something different, change my track,” says Neeta. One of their friends was MA Tejani of Gits Food Products Pvt Ltd, which makes ready-to-cook and ready-to-eat products. Things fell into place in 2018-2019 and they started making papads as a way to revive traditional Indian snacks. Just as they started building customers, Covid-19 hit.

“We had not yet built a fully-fledged team as there were only three or four women staff members with us. We used to do a lot of Research and Development. This was the time when the millet revolution was picking up. 2021 was declared as the International Year of the Millet then 2023 was declared as the Indian Year of the Millet. We got that boost and went into that line. It was something different we were trying with millets. People started saying that these tasted really good. We started using our in-house seasoning. We do not want any preservatives or chemicals. From milling to packaging, all the processes are carried out in-house. We have developed all the recipes within our premises with the team members,” says Neeta. She adds that the base crisps are prepared and dried indoors in a sanitised and dust-free environment and, then, flash-fried in five sec-

onds at a high temperature in customised equipment. Neeta had taught women's empowerment and financial inclusion for years but Grainstorm became her platform to put her ideas and ideals into practice. The women who handle production, sales and promotion come from underprivileged homes and receive training from the company. The effort seems to be paying off as Grainstorm is targeting earnings of Rs 80 lakh by the end of the year.

“One of the things we have learned is that people like taste over health,” says Neeta. “We call our products ‘sensible snacking’ rather than ‘healthy snacking’ because healthy food is perceived to be non-tasty food. We made our food tasty from the beginning. Our customers are looking to eat good and tasty food but want to avoid the nasties, such as trans fat, cholesterol, much saturated fat and sugar,” says Deepak. Driven by the concept to make our food flavoursome, the company decided that the way to go was to get as close to the traditional manufacturing system as possible. “We have customised a lot of our machines to ensure that traditional handmade techniques could be replicated,” he adds. After all, Indians had been snacking for decades before foreign chips and other munchies came in.

Tourist murdered as fight between two groups at farmhouse near Lonavala turns violent; 2 held

GNS News Agency, May 27

A 45-year-old tourist was killed and two others were injured as an argument over parking between two groups staying at a farmhouse near Lonavala in Pune turned violent on Sunday evening, the police said. The incident occurred at a farmhouse in Dahivali village, approximately 10 km from Lonavala. The Pune Rural Police have arrested two suspects and launched a manhunt for more than half a dozen others involved in the brutal attack. The police identified the deceased as Kamlesh Tanaji Dhopavkar, 45, a fisherman who hailed from Adur Kondkarul village in Ratnagiri district, and the injured as Prajwal Uday Mehta, who sustained a head injury, and Manoj Madhukar Varvatkar, 42, who suffered an injury to his hand.

Dhopavkar, Mehta and Varvatkar were part of a group of 15 fishermen from Karanje Port in Uran in Raigad district who had travelled to the Lonavala area to visit Ekvira Temple and other places. After visiting the temple on May 25, the group came to the Yewale Farm House at Dahivali. According to the FIR registered by Varvatkar, the tangle or head crewman of the group of fishermen, the first argument took place at around 6.45 pm on May 25. Varvatkar's group was leaving the farmhouse in their rented tempo traveller. The driver, Sagar Navale, was finding it difficult to take the vehicle out of the parking area since there was another tempo traveller parked on the way, the FIR said. As Navale tried to navigate the turn, a member of another group started passing snide remarks about him and even used abusive words, as per the FIR. At this point, some members of Varvatkar's group stepped out of the vehicle and started questioning the man hurling abuses. The argument escalated into violence, and one of the members of the other group allegedly hit Mehta on the head with a bamboo stick. After this, a fight broke out and members of the other group started hitting Varvatkar's group with sticks, metal rods, pipes, etc., the FIR alleged. At this point, as per the FIR, members of Varvatkar's group convinced the other group to stop and left the farmhouse in their vehicle. However, after they travelled a short distance, some more accomplices from the other group blocked their vehicle, even as the group from the farmhouse followed in cars, the FIR stated. Another fight ensued, in which Dhopavkar was allegedly hit hard on his head with a metal rod by a man wearing a green T-shirt, the FIR added. As Dhopavkar fell and stopped moving, the group fled, as per the FIR.

HPPCL chief engineer's death: CBI lodges FIR following direction by Himachal Pradesh High Court



GNS News Agency, May 27

Following a direction by the Himachal Pradesh High Court, the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) Tuesday lodged a fresh First Information Report (FIR) in connection with the death of HPPCL chief engineer Vimal Negi and seized all relevant records from the Shimla police. The central agency also constituted a three-member Special Investigation Team (SIT) headed by Brijendra Prasad Singh, Deputy Superintendent of Police. Its other members include Pradeep Kumar, Inspector, and Nilesh Singh, Sub Inspector.

The FIR was registered against unknown people at the Delhi office of the CBI's Special Crime Branch (SCB) under sections 108 (abetment to suicide) and 3 (5) (involvement of many people in crime) of the Bharatiya Nyaya

Sanhita. It also mentioned the name of Desh Raj, suspended director (electrical) of HPPCL, in the summary, along with that of the managing director. The body of Himachal Pradesh Power Corporation Limited (HPPCL) chief engineer Vimal Negi, who went missing on March 10, was found on March 18 at Bhakra Dam in Bilaspur district. His wife Kiran had alleged that Negi's seniors at work had harassed him over the last six months and demanded a CBI probe into his death, a request initially denied by the state government. Inquiry by a fact-finding committee into allegations raised by Kiran highlighted the humiliation Negi faced from senior officers, a show-cause notice issued for availing casual leave, a threatening message, and toxic workplace conditions. Following the submission of this report, the high court directed that the probe be transferred to the CBI. “The Hon'ble High Court of Himachal Pradesh at Shimla passed the order dated May 23, 2025, for transfer of FIR No. 09/2025 dated March 19, 2025, to C??. The FIR was registered at PS New Shimla... on 19.03.2025 against the unknown person on the written complaint of Kiran Negi, wife of deceased Vimal Negi,” the FIR stated. “The complaint was given after the recovery of the body of deceased Vimal Negi on March 18. She has alleged that her husband has been harassed for the last 06 months specially by Desh Raj, Director (Electric) and Managing Director of Power Corporation,” it added. “In compliance of the order of Hon'ble High Court of Himachal Pradesh at Shimla, the FIR is being re-registered... and investigation of this case is being entrusted to an SIT...,” the CBI's FIR stated.

Smaller classrooms, fewer credits: IIT-Delhi revamps curriculum to ease student stress

GNS News Agency, May 27

In a move aimed at reducing academic pressure on first-year students, the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Delhi has introduced a revised curriculum — it mandates smaller classroom sizes and reduces the total credit load across undergraduate, postgraduate, and PhD programmes. The new curriculum will be implemented starting from the 2025-26 academic year. “All first-year courses are now mandated to have small class sizes,” the institute said in a statement Tuesday, signalling a structural move to allow more personalised attention and improve student-faculty interaction. Additionally, “all programmes have a small reduction in credits, with a more focused core,” it said.

The revisions follow a comprehensive curriculum review that began in 2022 and incorporated feedback from students, alumni, and industry experts. The new undergraduate programme is described as “an outcomes-based, flexible curriculum” that allows students to pursue minors, specialisations, and an optional honours programme. “We have reviewed and revamped our curriculum to make our graduates future-ready,” said Professor Rangan Banerjee, Director of IIT-Delhi. “The new curriculum has emerged after extensive feedback from stakeholders and provides flexibility and hands-on learning for our students.” The reduction in credit requirements is designed to help students explore electives beyond their core academic units. “Many branches are now offering a flexible core curriculum,” the statement said, allowing students to pursue additional qualifications such as advanced M.Tech./MS (Research) degrees without overburdening their schedules.

To further support students in their first year, the cur-



riculum introduces early departmental exposure, enhanced lab and tutorial components, and greater emphasis on interactive, hands-on teaching. “Laboratory and tutorial components in most departmental courses allow students to engage with faculty in a deep and meaningful manner,” the institute said. Beyond easing academic load, the curriculum has modules on environmental sustainability, creative expression, ethical reasoning, and emerging technologies. In a first, AI-based code generators will also be integrated into the foundational programming course to help students “write better programs for more complex problems in less time”.

The changes extend to postgraduate and PhD programmes as well, with the introduction of project-based capstone components, industry-linked internships, and formalised pathways for interdisciplinary research and conversion to doctoral degrees. In 2025-26, the institute will also launch new academic programmes, including a BTech in Design, a BS in Chemistry, and an MTech in Photonics.

Relief for cantonment residents: Rs 5,000 registry fees to be scrapped

GNS News Agency, May 27

In a long-awaited move that promises major relief for thousands of residents living in cantonment areas across India, the Ministry of Defence has approved the removal of the Rs 5,000 condition for land registry—a provision that has been in place since the British era. BJP national executive member Rana Gurmeet Singh Sodhi made this announcement during a press conference organised at Ferozepur Tuesday, declaring it a “historic decision” that will end decades of bureaucratic and financial hardship faced by cantonment dwellers. “I had personally met Defence Minister Rajnath Singh just last month to raise this concern. I'm glad to share that the ministry has now given a green signal,” said Sodhi.

The Rs 5,000 registry condition, known to be rooted in the General Government Order (GGO) 1836, dates back to colonial times when land in cantonments was retained under military control. While the land remains legally owned by the President of India, residents typically own only the structure built on it. As a result, only the “debris” of the building was registered, not the land itself, rendering residents ineligible for bank loans, property transfers, and even minor renovations without prior permission from the Cantonment Board.

Sodhi said a committee is now being formed to draft implementation guidelines for the new policy. “Soon, residents will be able to register their properties without paying the outdated Rs 5,000 fee. This will give them long-denied security and dignity,” he added. He also recalled the persistent efforts of the late advocate Yogesh Gupta, a nominated



member of the Ferozepur Cantonment Board, who long championed the cause of registry rights for residents. “This is a promise I made during the 2022 Assembly elections and reiterated during the Lok Sabha campaign. I thank Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Defence Minister Rajnath Singh for making this possible,” said Sodhi, assuring residents that “the people of Ferozepur Cantonment are like family to me, and I will ensure they face no further hardship”.

The decision has been welcomed by residents and local associations who view it as a step toward true ownership, modernisation of governance, and freedom from colonial-era rules that no longer reflect the realities of present-day civilian life in cantonment towns. The residents are eagerly waiting for its implementation in letter and spirit. Sodhi had unsuccessfully contested from Ferozepur city constituency on a BJP ticket and seeking true ownership rights of land in cantonment area is a long pending demand of the cantonment residents of Ferozepur.

Man dies after fight over skull cap in Haryana's Panipat; kin allege hate crime, cops deny

A 24-year-old tailor in Haryana's Panipat died last week after being assaulted in an alleged hate crime following an argument over his skull cap. The accused in the case, a 30-year-old man, was sent to judicial custody for 15 days on Monday. The incident took place on May 24 near Flora Chowk in Sector 29. The police identified the deceased as Firdaus Alam alias Asjad Babu and the accused as Narendra alias Shishu Lala. According to the police complaint filed by Alam's elder brother, Asad Raees, on May 24, at around 6 pm, Alam had come to Flora Chowk to visit his in-laws. At 8.30 pm, he went for a walk in the vacant field near Flora Chowk with his friend, Shah Nawaz. While returning, he passed in front of Lala's grocery shop, the complaint said. Lala allegedly took Alam's skull cap and wore it. When he was repeatedly asked to return it, he allegedly refused and threw it on the street, as per the complaint. Alam picked up the cap and angrily asked why Lala had thrown it on the road, the complaint said. Lala allegedly got angry at this, brought a stick from his shop, and hit Alam on the head, wounding him.

After Lala returned to his shop, Shah Nawaz informed Raees about the incident, and the duo took him to multiple government hospitals. He succumbed to his injuries while undergoing treatment at PGI Rohtak. Alam, who hailed from Karl Virpur village in Bihar's Kishanganj district, stayed in Vikas Nagar with Raees. The brothers did tailoring work together. Following Raees's complaint, an FIR was lodged at the Industrial Sector 29 police station on May 25, and Lala was arrested hours later. Speaking to The Indian Express, Raees alleged that it was a hate crime. “The fight was over the cap only, and he was beaten up badly with a stick,” he said. “I have lost my brother, and it will take time to get justice,” he added. However, Police Sub-Inspector Subhash Khansa, Station House Officer, Industrial Sector 29 police station, denied any religious angle to the crime. “Absolutely not. The accused just wanted to try on the cap, which he might not even have known was a proper skull cap. When he put it on and asked how he looked, the deceased asked him to return it. After that, a fight broke out. There is nothing more in the case, and the investigation is on,”

Landmark study unravels Coorgs’ ancient genetic history



GNS News Agency, May 27

Hyderabad: For the first time in India, geneticists from Hyderabad and Delhi unravelled the secret origins and demographic history of the Coorgs, a small and religiously/ socioculturally homogeneous community in Kamataka. The genetic genealogy study by a group of genetic researchers has revealed their ancient origin, population drift due to isolation and distinctness from neighbouring populations. The latest study has presented insightful evidence that they date back to the late Bronze Age.

Titled as 'Unique demographic history and population

substructure among the Coorgs of Southern India', published in the prestigious Nature-Communications Biology (May 2025), has revealed their ancient origin.The multifaceted analyses indicated clear delineation of the present-day Coorg population into three distinct groups, including Coorg 1, Coorg 2, and Coorg 3. While diverse ethnolinguistic groups such as the Kannadigas, Konkanis, and Tuluvas populating Karnataka, the Coorgs have remained distinct entities, lead researchers K Thangaraj of Hyderabad-based CCMB and B K Thelma from the Department of Genetics, University of Delhi, said.

The study also presented evidence for an ancient origin and unique genetic architecture of the Coorg population. The three distinct genetically heterogeneous clusters date back to the late Bronze Age. However, it is evident that this group had a much higher contribution of ancient Bronze Age Middle Eastern ancestry. The Coorg 1 group has the highest similarity to tribal populations such as Palliyar; it is also distinct from local tribes such as Kurchas, Kurubas, Kurumans and Ezhavas.Taken together, the results of this study corroborate a model wherein Coorg1 (native) and Coorg3 (neighbouring, with recent local contribution from Sikh Jatt population) all date to the late Bronze Age.They were initially isolated but eventually converged geographically and admixed genetically to give rise to Coorg2. This model, upheld by the extensive tools utilised in the study, explains the contemporary socio-cultural homogeneity of the present-day Coorgs.Furthermore, in the case of Coorgs, cultural assimilation occurred much later than their genetic delineation into distinct groups, the researchers in the study said.

PM Modi has not rejected Trump's 'India-Pakistan ceasefire' claims even once: Congress senior leader Pawan Khera

GNS News Agency, May 27

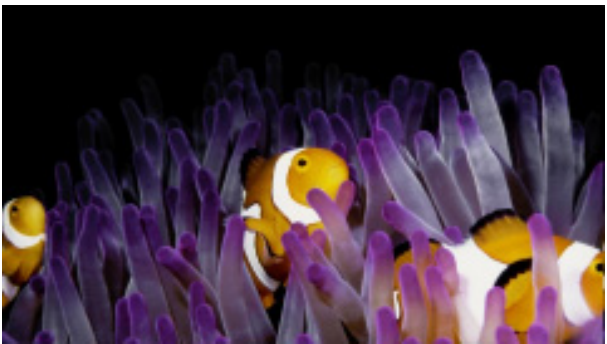
With U.S. President Donald Trump repeating his claim that he settled the recent conflict between India and Pakistan through trade, the Congress on Thursday (May 23, 2025) said Prime Minister Narendra Modi has not rejected this claim even once and asked what does this "silence" mean.Congress' media and publicity department head Pawan Khera said this is the eighth time President Trump has made this claim that he got Operation Sindoor stopped. "He claims to have used trade to get India to end Operation Sindoor. Prime Minister Modi has not rejected this claim even once. What does this silence mean?" Mr. Khera said in a post on X.



In his remarks in the Oval Office during a meeting with visiting South African President Cyril Ramaphosa, Mr. Trump said, "If you take a look at what we just did with Pakistan and India. We settled that whole, and I think I settled it through trade." He said the U.S. is doing a "big deal" with both India and Pakistan. "And I said, 'What are you guys doing?'" Mr. Trump said. "Somebody had to be the last one to shoot. But the shooting was getting worse and worse, bigger and bigger, deeper and deeper into the countries. And we spoke to them, and I think we, you know, I hate to say we got it settled and then two days later, something happens and they say it's Mr. Trump's fault.

"But... Pakistan has got some excellent people and some really good, great leader. And India is my friend, Modi," Mr. Trump said to which the South African president replied, "Modi, mutual friend." "He's a Great guy and I called them both. It's something good," Mr. Trump said. The U.S. President has been repeatedly claiming that he helped settle the tensions between India and Pakistan.India carried out precision strikes under Operation Sindoor on terror infrastructure early on May 7, 2025 in response to the April 22 Pahalgam terror attack that killed 26 people. Following the Indian action, Pakistan attempted to attack Indian military bases on May 8, 9 and 10, 2025. The Indian forces launched a fierce counter-attack on several Pakistani military installations.India and Pakistan reached an understanding on May 10, 2025 to end the military confrontation after four days of intense cross-border drone and missile strikes. On May 10, Mr. Trump had announced that India and Pakistan agreed to a full and immediate ceasefire after a long night of talks "mediated" by Washington.

In a marine heatwave, clownfish get small to get by



GNS News Agency, May 27

In 2023-2024, the world suffered a devastating coral bleaching event during which 84% of the world's reefs spanning 83 countries and territories were affected. Scientists have since linked the event to ocean warming and marine heatwaves — extended periods of high sea surface temperature than usual.These phenomena are of great research interest because they have several consequences for marine ecosystems and the human livelihoods and industries that depend on them.For example, a study in Science Advances on May 21 has now revealed that adult clownfish can shrink, regrow, and even synchronise these changes with their partners, using body size as a flexible tool to survive the stress of hot water.

During the 2023-2024 event, researchers from the UK and the US tracked 67 breeding pairs of wild clownfish (Amphiprion percula) in Kimbe Bay in Papua New Guinea for about 180 days. They caught each fish by net and measured its total length at the start of the study and at the end of every lunar month. They also tied sensors by cable next to each anemone and recorded the water temperature every two minutes, used to estimate the heat stress the fish experienced.To describe body-size change, team members calculated the monthly percentage change in length. Then they then built Bayesian statistical models to test how shrinking and growth related to heat stress in the current and previous month, each fish's initial size, the size ratio between partners (a proxy of social conflict), and survival through the heatwave.

In all, the team reported that only 11 fish died: the fish that never shrank had the highest mortality. A single shrinking episode cut death risk by 78% and all individuals that shrank multiple times survived the entire heatwave. Survival was even higher when both partners shrank together, suggesting coordinated size adjustment reduced conflict and metabolic load.Researchers usually assume vertebrates including fish grow or stay the same size once they become adults, yet the clownfish routinely shrank to ride out extreme heat. According to the study, this let them balance the extra metabolic cost of living in warm water while maintaining social order inside the anemone.If the ability to bounce back is widespread, the shrinking could help reef-fish populations survive more frequent marine heatwaves but it may also lower future reproduction because smaller adults lay fewer eggs.

We missed Axar badly, says Faf du Plessis

HYDERABAD: Faf du Plessis, captain of Delhi Capitals which was knocked out of contention for a place in the play-offs after losing to Mumbai Indians in the IPL league match in Mumbai on Wednesday night, said the team lost momentum in the last two overs when Mumbai were batting after they bowled well for 18 overs.

"I thought we were excellent today in the field. The guys showed great fight. Obviously, not the easiest pitch to bat on, so it probably made the bowlers' job a little bit easier. But still, it's a very strong batting line-up (of MI), and I thought we were excellent," du Plessis said in the post-match briefing.

"And then [we] just let it slip there in the last two overs which... momentum is a real thing in cricket. So I thought the way that they counterpunched there to get almost 50 in the last two overs really cost us the game," he said.

"Yeah, I think we missed especially Axar on a wicket like that. If you look at the way that Mitch Santner bowled, they're very similar bowlers. Axar is that kind of class bowler, international, proven left-arm spinner that on a wicket like that, they would love to bowl in it. But unfortunately, he was very, very sick the last two days. We also missed Starcy (Mitchell Starc) who is a fantastic bowler," he added.

"With the bat, you would need a good start on a surface like that, and we didn't get going at all with the bat. So it sums up pretty much our season. We've been cold in either batting or bowling in the last six or seven games," du Plessis said.

"And to be in the top four in the IPL, you can't afford to do that. So probably a fair reflection not to make that top four," he said.

Development without the savaging of urban biodiversity



GNS News Agency, May 27

Biodiversity, which refers to the variety and the variability of living organisms on this earth — and fundamental to human well-being, a healthy planet, and economic prosperity for all — is under peril. About 25% of species are facing the threat of extinction. The theme for International Day for Biological Diversity this year (observed annually on May 22) is "Harmony with nature and sustainable development". The date 'commemorates the adoption of the text of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) on May 22, 1992'. The Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF) was also developed by the CBD with four goals as well as 23 targets to conserve global biodiversity (conserve and manage 30% of terrestrial and marine biodiversity) by 2030. Target 12 of the GBF lays emphasis on enhancing green and blue spaces in cities and urban planning for human well-being and biodiversity conservation. Goal 11 of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal also states the importance of making cities and human settlements safe, resilient and sustainable. But, still, urban biodiversity is under great threat with unplanned development and human greed.Green space in urban sprawls

Almost half the world's population lives in urban areas, a percentage that is expected to rise to 70% by 2050. City spaces are of premium value and face competing demands. In such a situation, do we have space for greenery? The answer is yes if you consider the range of benefits urban biodiversity offers.First, health benefits. Urban trees provide provisional services such as food, fibre and water, minimise the urban heat island effect (a much discussed topic) and help in flood control. They help in temperature control, pollution abatement, water conservation and carbon sequestration, and keeping carbon dust and suspended particulate matter in check. Tree lines of a 10 metre width can reduce noise pollution by 5 decibels. In Frankfurt, green belts were shown to reduce the temperature by 3.5° C and increase the relative humidity by 5% when compared to the city centre. Green spaces also provide much needed recreational and spiritual services in the form of parks in what would otherwise be concrete jungles.

Second, economic benefits. Theodore Endreny, Professor of Water Resources and Ecological Engineering, State University of New York College of Environmental Science and Forestry estimated the value of annual services provided by mega city trees to be around \$9,67,000 (?8 crore) per square kilometre of tree cover. Therefore, protecting existing greenery, pursuing the development of parks and new urban green spaces, establishing tree avenues along the roads, and conserving natural rivers and water bodies should be undertaken. The key element of developing green infrastructure is promoting community health and well-being.In its latest report, the Forest Survey of India has estimated the average forest cover in leading urban cities to be only 10.26% of their geographical area (Mumbai 25.43%; New Delhi and Hyderabad 12.6%, Bengaluru, Chennai and Ahmedabad 6.85%, 4.66% and 3.27%, respectively). Chennai and Hyderabad have lost 2.6 and 1.6 square kilometres of forest cover between the 2021 and 2023 assessments.The GBF gives a framework to urban planners for biodiversity conservation in cities by protecting blue and green spaces and developing new ones. It suggests enhancing native biodiversity, ecological connectivity and improving human health and well-being.In this context, the UN Habitat's 3-30-300 prescription is relevant. The

principle is: Every home, workplace, or school should have a view of at least three established trees. Neighbourhoods should have a minimum of 30% tree canopy cover and a public green space of at least 0.5 to 1.0 hectares, should be accessible within a 300-metre walk or bike ride from every home.

A city biodiversity index is prepared based on the present status of the city in terms of three large parameters — the extent of native biodiversity in the city, ecosystem services provided by them and the level of governance of biodiversity. The International Council for Local Environmental Initiative (ICLEI) Asia has prepared a city biodiversity index using 23 indicators for cities such as Kochi, Gangtok and Nagpur. Once the current biodiversity status of the city is assessed through a survey, a local biodiversity strategy and action plan (LBSAP) is prepared to improve the status of the city in terms of biodiversity conservation and sustainable human welfare.Urban areas have the resilience to support biodiversity if there is an enabling environment. Local biodiversity could be augmented while undertaking plantations in cities. In Chennai, the greening of the Chennai Koyambedu market in 2021 (undertaken by the Care Earth Trust with the financial support of Chennai Metropolitan Development Authority) helped in the natural regeneration of 141 species of higher plants belonging to 39 families and 106 genera within two years. The site also attracted 35 bird and 27 butterfly species that are considered bioindicators of biological diversity. The Koyambedu model mimics a three-storied natural forest which would be better than the Miyawaki model to enhance native biodiversity in small parcels of land available in cities.

The Care Earth Trust prepared a strategy and action plan in 2018 for the Greater Chennai Corporation (GCC) to plant one million native trees in Chennai city over five years. The sprawling Madras Race Club land at Guindy is being transformed into a lake for augmenting groundwater recharge. However, urban development and encroachment has swallowed up many waterbodies in and around Chennai and Bengaluru. The crucial Pallikaranai marsh in Chennai which was once considered a wasteland and garbage dump has been partly restored and declared as a reserved forest (Ramsar site). Most urban waterbodies are losing their ecological integrity due to garbage and sewage pollution. They must be ecologically restored after preventing garbage dumping and treating sewage through conventional treatment or nature-based solutions. Ensuring legal protection to the remaining lakes and waterbodies in urban areas is a necessity before they are lost.

Many independent houses in Chennai have now given way to multi-storeyed flats leading to the disappearance of home garden trees (coconut, mango, jackfruit). This could also be a reason for the reduction in the city's green cover. As a condition to granting planning permission for new structures, the GCC should consider mandating the planting of at least five trees in a plot that measures over 2,400 square feet along the plot boundary. This will help greening the city in a decentralised manner. The horticulture department should also promote roof gardens and kitchen gardens for every household to m cultivate greens and medicinal plants. This will not only help in augmenting city biodiversity but also help in improving the health and well-being of people.Need for collective actionCity managers need to take stringent action against those who destroy greenery and pollute waterbodies. It is heartening that the Supreme Court of India has been tough on the executive for the mass destruction of trees over acres in the Kancha Gachibowli area in Hyderabad, for the development of IT infrastructure. Development should not lead to the wanton destruction of biodiversity. City managers must mainstream biodiversity considerations in decision making, taking a long-term view to achieve sustainable development. The involvement of all stakeholders such as the resident welfare associations, non-governmental organisations and corporates in city greening and protecting waterbodies from pollution and encroachment is important to make biodiversity conservation a mass movement in cities.S. Balaji, IFS, is presently Co-Chairman,

Govt. is sending multi-party delegation to divert attention from the tough questions PM is facing, says Congress



GNS News Agency, May 27

The Congress on Wednesday (May 21, 2025) said Prime Minister Narendra Modi's image had been "shattered" globally, and that the PM was sending multi-party delegations to avoid tough questions he was being called upon to answer. The Congress's communications chief Jairam Ramesh, while paying tribute to former Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi on his death anniversary, noted that, since the 1950s, Members of Parliament from various political parties had been sent on delegations to the United Nations in New York every October-November, but Mr. Modi had stopped this tradition since 2014.Listen to your conscience, Congress tells its leaders picked by government for all-party delegations

"But now that he is desperate and his image globally has been shattered, he suddenly thought of such all-party delegations of MPs to visit different countries to divert attention from the tough questions he is being called to answer," Mr. Ramesh said in a post on social media platform X.Mr. Ramesh also shared a video of the late former PM Atal Bihari Vajpayee talking about how Rajiv Gandhi had included Vajpayee in a delegation to the UN, so that his (Vajpayee's) medical treatment could be undertaken abroad and the expenses taken care of.

At a separate press briefing, the principal Opposition party alleged that the April 22 Pahalgam terror attack was an intelligence and security failure for which Union Home Minister Amit Shah should own responsibility. It added that

the country's defence forces were 100% successful but Mr. Modi had "failed" as a leader."Operation Sindoor was a complete military success while Modi was a political failure," All India Congress Committee (AICC) Ex-Servicemen Department chairperson Colonel (Retd) Rohit Chaudhry said at a joint press conference along with Wing Commander (Retd.) Anuma Acharya.Wing Commander Acharya reiterated the party's questions with regard to the intelligence failure at Pahalgam, and why the terrorists had not yet been arrested.She said the country wanted to know why the "ceasefire" was announced so suddenly, and that too by a third party, referring to the announcement made by U.S. President Donald Trump on social media platform Truth Social.She also demanded that the May 25 meeting of National Democratic Alliance (NDA) Chief Ministers with the PM on the issue of national security should also include the non-NDA Chief Ministers. "What is their (non-NDA CMs) crime for not being invited to the meeting?" she asked.The Congress also announced 'Jai Hind Sabhas' across 16 cities between from May 24 to 31, in the first phase of the party's intention to honour and celebrate "the bravery of our soldiers".

Dhanush to play APJ Abdul Kalam in biopic directed by Om Raut

New Delhi: Tamil cinema star Dhanush is set to essay the role of former president and aerospace scientist APJ Abdul Kalam in a biopic directed by Om Raut. The film, titled "Kalam: The Missile Man of India", was unveiled at the Cannes Film Market on Wednesday.

Dhanush shared the announcement along with the film's first poster on his Instagram account. "I feel truly blessed and deeply humbled to be portraying the life of such an inspirational and magnanimous leader — our very own Dr APJ Abdul Kalam sir," he wrote."Kalam" is produced by Bhushan Kumar and Krishan Kumar of T-Series and Abhishek Agarwal and Anil Sunkara of Abhishek Agarwal Arts.

Raut, known for "Tanhaji: The Unsung Warrior" and "Adipurush", also posted the film update on his official X page. "From Rameswaram to Rashtrapati Bhavan, the journey of a legend begins... India's Missile Man is coming to the silver screen. Dream big. Rise higher. #KALAM — The Missile Man of India @dhanushkrajia @omraut #BhushanKumar @AbhishekOfficl @AAArtsOfficial," he wrote.

Narrating the nation abroad



GNS News Agency, May 27

India's decision to send diplomatic envoys and delegates to various countries to explain its position on the recent combats with Pakistan and the terrorist attack that triggered them raises an important question: is this display of proactive diplomacy a mark of strength or a gesture of reassurance?

On the surface, the move can be seen as a strategic effort to manage international perception, pre-empt misrepresentation, and reinforce India's standing as a responsible global actor. Yet beneath that lies the more complicated reality of narrative legitimacy in a world where perception often outweighs fact, and international sympathy cannot be taken for granted. While much of the debate centres on the government's domestic strategy in selecting members of the delegation and the political calculations behind it, the more important questions ought to concern the necessity, effectiveness, and anticipated outcomes of such a move. In the contemporary global order, it is no longer sufficient to act with self-justified conviction; states must constantly perform their legitimacy before an audience of allies, media, and institutions. India's outreach can certainly be viewed as part of this performance. It aims to convince the international community that its military response is calibrated, directed at non-state actors, and rooted in the imperative to defend its sovereignty against terrorism — not as a pretext for escalating an old and unresolved national rivalry. From this angle, the move reflects a calculated strength: a confidence that India's case, if communicated properly, can take the moral high ground and secure international solidarity. But at the same time, the very need for such an extensive exercise points to an underlying legitimacy deficit. If India's position were entirely beyond reproach or universally acknowledged, would such explanation tours be necessary? The fact that India must engage in diplomatic clarification suggests a concern that its actions might be misread, misframed, or lost in the noise of global crises. In that sense, the effort reflects not just a desire to assert control over the narrative but also a tacit recognition of the fragility of international opinion. Crisis of credibility

This vulnerability is amplified in an era when misinformation travels faster than official briefings. Recent examples during the India-Pakistan conflict show how easily falsehoods become facts in the public imagination. Old video footage, unrelated disaster clips, and even scenes from digital war games have been circulated online and passed off as real-time evidence of military operations or civilian suffering. These are not state-sponsored manipulations alone; they are generated and shared by ordinary users. caught in a whirlwind of nationalist fervour, emotional reaction, or digital mischief. Both Indian and Pakistani social media users have shared sensational content that turns out to be fabricated.

AI-generated images and deepfakes complicate the picture, as they become harder to detect. In such a climate, India's attempt to set the record straight may seem like swimming upstream, particularly when the people on both sides have already made up their minds based on viral clips and emotionally charged narratives.

What, then, is the implication of this collapse of credibility in the news? Does anyone care anymore about verifiable information as a public good? Or has the idea of news itself been absorbed into a larger game of affect and performance, where truth matters only insofar as it confirms one's pre-existing bias? This erosion of trust poses a deep philosophical crisis. The old saying that "truth is the first casualty of war" was once confined to the logic of state secrecy — governments hiding facts from their citizens in the name of national interest. The Japanese emperor's radio address at the end of World War II never mentioned the word "surrender" but instead said the war had "developed not necessarily to Japan's advantage." This was state-sanctioned euphemism, an elite strategy of softening reality. Today, however, the distortion of truth is no longer top-down alone — it is bottom-up, lateral, and participatory. Citizens actively produce the falsehoods they wish to believe, and in doing so, dissolve the very distinction between truth and illusion. This situation resonates powerfully with Jean Baudrillard's provocative claim that "The Gulf War did not take place." He did not mean that bombs were not dropped or that people did not die. Rather, he argued that the war was consumed entirely as spectacle — televised, mediated, edited — such that the reality of war was displaced by its simulation. In our time, that idea has become almost literal: the simulated now overrides the real in public perception.

In the realm of the humanities, where the pursuit of meaning, narrative, and ethical clarity is central, the end of credible news represents a profound loss. Without the possibility of shared facts, even argument becomes impossible. Disagreement presupposes agreement on the basic ground of what is happening. When that ground collapses, what remains is not debate but disorientation. In this sense, India's diplomatic campaign is not just a strategic act of persuasion — it also represents a battle to restore the very conditions under which persuasion is meaningful. It remains unclear whether this effort signals an admission of vulnerability or a reassertion of strength — an attempt to reaffirm the nation's authenticity, rooted in the accumulated legacy of the Non-Aligned Movement years. However, if this effort fails, then no amount of military precision or moral clarity will matter, because the audience will no longer be capable of distinguishing a justified action from a manufactured illusion. Hence, the deeper question is not whether India can explain itself to the world, but whether the world still retains a framework within which such explanations are heard as truth and not dismissed as just another version of the story.

Google defeats Rumble's antitrust lawsuit over video sharing market

GNS News Agency, May 27

Alphabet's Google has persuaded a federal judge in California to reject a lawsuit from video platform Rumble accusing the technology giant of illegally monopolising the online video-sharing market. In a ruling on Wednesday, U.S. District Judge Haywood Gilliam Jr said Rumble's 2021 lawsuit seeking more than \$2 billion in damages was untimely filed outside the four-year statute of limitations for antitrust claims.

Rumble accused Google of violating antitrust law by rigging user searches to give preference to Google's YouTube platform over Rumble. The lawsuit also accused Google of scheming with device makers to bar Rumble from being preinstalled on some Android phones. Google had no immediate comment, and Rumble did not immediately respond to a request for one. At the heart of its case, Rumble said there was "considerable direct evidence" that Google illegally was "self-referencing" its YouTube platform in web searches. Rumble claimed it lost out on billions of video views on its platform. Google has denied Rumble's claims and had urged Gilliam to end the case before trial, which was set for July. Gilliam said Rumble failed to present evidence allowing a jury to find and apply an exception to the statute of limitations. The judge criticised Rumble for presenting "bare attorney argument lacking any evidentiary support." Rumble, founded in 2013, had an average of 59



million global monthly active users in the first quarter of 2025, the company said this month. The platform had recently expanded its trial team to include prominent litigator David Boies of law firm Boies Schiller Flexner. Rumble separately is suing Google over its digital advertising practices. The lawsuit, filed last year in California, accused the company of anticompetitive conduct relating to online advertising. Google has called Rumble's claims in that case "simply wrong" and said Rumble uses "dozens" of competing ad services in addition to Google's ad manager. Google faces other antitrust allegations by the U.S. government and groups of states that are challenging the company's dominance in digital advertising and search markets. Google has denied the allegations in those cases.

Mr. Owaisi, who is also the president of the All India Majlis-e-Ittehadul Muslimeen (AIMIM), also criticised the proposed applicability of the law of limitation to waqf properties. "This means that if a property belonging to a temple in Nalgonda is encroached upon for 25 years, it still does not become the encroacher's. But Modi is telling Muslims that if someone encroaches upon a waqf property and has been in possession for 12 years, that property will be given to him. What kind of justice is this?" he asked.

He dismissed claims by the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) that the legislation enjoys widespread support of the Muslim community. Describing those backing the bill as legatees of Abu Jahal and Abu Lahab, figures known as bitter enemies to the Prophet Muhammad, he said, "Only those who are the legatees of Abu Jahal and Abu Lahab are supporting this law. The followers of Prophet Muhammad, until the Day of Judgment, will say that this is a black law," he declared.

The AIMIM chief also took aim at the Uttarakhand government for implementing the Uniform Civil Code in what he implied was a discriminatory fashion. He questioned why the Hindu Undivided Family law and Adivasis had been excluded from its purview.

Supreme Court grants interim bail to Ashoka University professor Ali Khan Mahmudabad

GNS News Agency, May 27

The Supreme Court on Wednesday (May 21, 2025) granted interim bail to Ashoka University Associate Professor Ali Khan Mahmudabad, but refused to stay the investigation against him for his social media posts on the Pahalgam terror attack, Operation Sindoor, and the sufferings caused by war. He was arrested by the Haryana Police on Sunday (May 18, 2025) after it filed two first information reports (FIRs) against him for his online posts.

A Bench headed by Justice Surya Kant made it a point to clarify that the interim bail was given to "facilitate" the investigation. The court directed the Haryana Director-General of Police to constitute a Special Investigation Team (SIT) within 24 hours of three senior, directly recruited IPS officers who did not hail from either Haryana or Delhi. The SIT would be led by an officer of the rank of Inspector-General. The other two investigators would be Superintendents of Police. One of the members would be a woman. Suspecting the academician of indulging in "dog whistling" through his social media posts, the court tasked the SIT with examining the language and checking the nuances of particular words used in the posts. The court said, prima facie, some of the words used by the Professor held a "dual meaning". Justice Kant compared them to a "missile" seemingly shown as going in one direction but actually intended to travel the opposite way. "This is a matter of investigation," Justice Kant remarked. The Bench directed Mr. Mahmudabad to join the investigation and cooperate with it fully.

The court also ordered the academician, represented by senior advocates Kapil Sibal and Siddharth Luthra and advocate Lzafeer Ahmad, to refrain from writing or speaking anything related to the posts. The court directed the petitioner to desist from expressing any opinions on the conflict recently faced by India in relation to the Pahalgam attack or Operation Sindoor. The court asked Additional Solicitor-General S.V. Raju, appearing for Haryana, to instruct the State not to register any further FIRs on the two posts. Mr. Raju submitted that the State was in "the process of unearthing more incriminating material". The court gave the State liberty to place such material, if gathered, on record before it. Justice Kant, after Mr. Sibal took the Bench through the text of the social media posts, asked whether this was the time for his client to indulge in such talk. "The country has faced a big challenge. Monsters came all the way from



a different jurisdiction and attacked our innocent people. At a time when we are united... Why did you (Mahmudabad) try to create cheap popularity on this occasion?" Justice Kant asked. No criminal intent, says counsel Mr. Sibal said his client had no criminal intent. He was saluting and not denigrating the defence forces and people of India. "Everybody talks about freedoms, where is the duty to protect others? It is as if for the past 75 years the country is only distributing rights without telling what your duty to the nation is..." The learned professor had no dearth of words... It is very, very unfortunate in a society where one is given freedom of expression, a choice of words is made deliberately to insult, humiliate or cause discomfort to others... This is called dog whistling," Justice Kant observed orally. The court said the academician had a right to his opinion, but not at the cost of hurting others. "There was no criminal intent. He was obviously hurt by what was happening... He has not said anything against any woman officer," Mr. Sibal responded.

Why is India seeking to impose retaliatory tariffs on U.S.? | Explained



Retaliating to the U.S. imposing 25% tariffs on imports of steel and aluminium earlier in March, India notified the World Trade Organisation (WTO) last week of its intent to place tariffs on \$7.6 billion worth of imports from the country across the Atlantic. New Delhi held that the measure estimated to rack up \$1.91 billion in duties would mirror the impact on their exports of steel and aluminium because of Washington's tariffs. The development transpired days before the two countries informed about having expedited progress towards the first tranche of the bilateral trade agreement. The reciprocal measures come into effect thirty days from the date of notification, that is, May 9.

What all has happened in the recent past?

Into his second term, U.S. President Donald Trump this March reinstated 25% tariffs on all steel and aluminium being imported into the country. This was alongside eliminating all country and product-specific exemptions. He argued the move meant to protect domestic industries being reportedly "harmed by unfair trade practices and global excess capacity". The 45th U.S. President endowing paramount focus on pursuing protectionist policies is widely acknowledged and not anything new. Mr. Trump had earlier instituted tariffs on the two commodities back in March 2018 during his first term. Steel was subject to 25% tariffs whilst aluminium 10%. India first moved for retaliatory measures only in June 2019 when Washington removed it from their Generalised System of Preferences (GSP), citing unresolved issues. For perspective, GSPs are unilateral, non-reciprocal and non-discriminatory benefits extended by economically better economies to developing countries. Disapproving of the exclusion as "unfortunate", India imposed retaliatory tariffs on 28 items of import (from the U.S.) as apples, walnuts and almonds, among others. Later in 2020, albeit unrelated to the prior development, U.S. expanded the scope of the regime to also cover derivatives of the two metals. The trade-related headwinds only sought to ease when Democrat leader Joe Biden assumed the North American country's top administrative office in 2021. The formal steps were carved later during Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to the U.S. in September 2023. Reciprocating India's gesture to withdraw the duties imposed in 2019, the U.S. Dept of Commerce committed to ensuring greater market access to Indian steel and aluminium. Things however, reverted to the 2019 order with Mr. Trump's return to the Oval Office this year. This time around, both aluminium and steel find themselves subjected to the same rate, that is, 25%.

What all issues have India highlighted?

The central point of contention is the nature of the American tariffs. The United States has maintained at the WTO that its measures are not safeguards but intended to pursue a "national security statute". It argues that the tariff regime is in accordance with the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) 1994 and the Agreement on Safeguards (AoS), citing the redeemable exception for pursuing security interests in the covenant. However, as indicated in a WTO communication, the European Union, India, China and the U.K. disagree with the "characterisation of these measures, asserting that they are safeguards". Further, India in its notice also stated that the mandatory consultations prior to attaining an acceptance of AoS had not taken place. Thus, it contended about reserving the right to "suspend concessions or other obligations" that are "substantially equivalent to the adverse effects of the measure to India's trade". India has indicated they intend to pursue the same by suspending concessions or other obligations.

How have our industries reacted to such develop-

ments?

The tariff revisions in 2018 had prompted concerns about Indian exports becoming "costlier and uncompetitive" in the U.S. market. Back then, the trade dynamics pitted India against countries accorded an exemption to the paradigm. The present regime, however, does not accord any exemption. Back then, according to data from the Joint Plant Committee tabled in parliament, finished steel exports to the U.S. declined 48.4% in FY 2019-20 and 46.7% in FY 2020-21. Furthermore, in response to a question on the same subject in February 2020, Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal told the house that the share of the U.S. in India's steel exports came down to 2.5% in 2018-19 from 3.3% in 2017-18.

In the now concluded financial year 2024-25, provisional data indicated exports having increased 44.21% until February compared to a decline of 42.3% in FY 2023-24. Though the impact of the latest set of measures is yet to be ascertained, steel manufacturers have sought caution. In an investor call this February, the Steel Authority of India Limited (SAIL) held that the U.S.' protectionist measures have raised concern among producers globally about "the potential retaliatory measures and (its) impact on the global trade pattern". "The imposition of tariffs by the U.S. has also led to increased volatility in the global market. While U.S. steel market stock has surged in anticipation of gaining a competitive advantage, global producers are experiencing decline," it observed.

Poignant to note, however, is that the protectionist policy of 2018 ironically did not cause much enthusiasm in Washington as well. An analysis by the U.S.' Federal Reserve Board in December 2019 concluded the regime to have given a "small boost" to employment in the realm of manufacturing which was although offset by "larger drags" of rising input costs and retaliatory tariffs. Additionally, it attributed the increase in prices (for producers) to rising input costs.

What broader implications are we looking at?

Ajay Srivastava, founder of the Global Trade Research Initiative (GTRI), held that India's latest WTO action could potentially cast a shadow over negotiations. He added that notwithstanding the same India's "calibrated, rules-based approach" contrasts with the U.S.' "unilateralism", thus, positioning India as a "staunch defender of multilateral trade norms". He further added that the move also indicated New Delhi's tougher stance, especially in "politically sensitive sectors" as steel and aluminium, that aligned with its Make in India industrial strategy. Naveen Pant, Head of the Secretariat at the Aluminium Secondary Manufacturers Association (ASMA), told The Hindu that the step was necessary to protect the interests of the domestic industries. He further stated that being at par on the negotiation table would also help soften the impact of tariffs on steel and aluminium. "Earlier, they also had some arrangement through Mutually Agreed Solution (MAS) through which they got their agricultural products exempted in return for the exclusion of duty on steel and aluminium," he explained. What happens next, though, according to Mr. Srivastava, would depend on Washington's response. He observes that, should the U.S. engage in consultations or withdraw the contested measures, a solution could be attained. Failing which, India's proposed reciprocal tariffs take effect in early June. "Either way, India's move reflects a broader shift: a willingness to assert itself within global trade rules to protect its economic interests," he argues.

Hyderabad and districts battered by rains in peak summer

Hyderabad: In the month of May, when summer is usually at its peak, Hyderabad and districts recorded a significant amount of rainfall between Wednesday evening and early hours of Thursday.

Under the intense spell of thunderstorms that lasted for a few hours, some parts of Hyderabad, such as Bandlaguda, received as much as 99 mm of rainfall. Parts of Medak, meanwhile, witnessed 119.3 mm rainfall, as indicated by the rainfall data from the Telangana State Development Planning Society (TSDPS) on Thursday.

Army’s Western Command removes video showing Pakistan’s Shaheen missile



GNS News Agency, May 27

Social media was abuzz on Monday with speculation that a Pakistani nuclear-capable Shaheen ballistic missile fired on India was shot down by an S-400 air defence system during Operation Sindoor. This followed a video put out by the Army’s Western Command the previous night showing the missile. The video was taken down in the morning and Army sources said the images were used “for representation only” but it was erroneously not mentioned.

In response, Pakistan’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) rejected the “unfounded allegations” circulating in certain segments of the Indian media, which “falsely” claim that Pakistan employed the Shaheen missile. The MFA said these claims originated following the release of a video by the “Indian Army’s official Twitter handle, purportedly showing the use of Pakistan’s Shaheen missile.” “Upon realising that the claim was unsubstantiated, the Indian Army promptly deleted the misleading video. However, by then, sections of the Indian media had already amplified the false narrative without verification,” the statement added.

Meanwhile, the visits of senior officials and officers to

forward locations in the aftermath of Operation Sindoor continue. On Monday (May 19, 2025), Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) General Anil Chauhan visited Suratgarh Military Station and Naliya Air Force Station, while Army Chief General Upendra Dwivedi visited the desert sector in Rajasthan. “Enemy Missiles neutralised. #IndianArmy - impregnable wall of fire,” the Chandimandir-based Western Command said in a post on ‘X’ late on Sunday (May 18, 2025) night with several hashtags including “#JusticeServed”. The video showed the Shaheen, Fatah missiles of Pakistan, among others, and in ‘India’s response’ showcased the BrahMos supersonic cruise missile, the Smerch and Pinaka multi-launch rocket systems, among others. The post was deleted later in the day, but by then the video had already gone viral on X.

Army sources said that the image of Shaheen was erroneously picked up from the open source for the video that was compiled. The Pakistani military has acknowledged the employment of long-range Fatah series missiles — F1 and F2 — as well as advanced munitions, long-range loitering killer drones, and precision long-range artillery against India between May 7 and 10 in the aftermath of India’s precision strikes on nine terror targets on the night of May 6-7, which has also been confirmed by officials here. Forward area visits

The desert stretches from Jaisalmer to the Kutch region, witnessing a swift and coordinated operational response from the Indian Army, Indian Air Force (IAF) and Border Security Force (BSF). Army officials interacted with troops at Longewala, Rajasthan, and appreciated them for the recent actions. “These joint actions not only blunted enemy intent but also established a new normal in maintaining operational dominance along the western front.” As part of Operation Sindoor, the Indian Army undertook rapid deployment of surveillance assets and air defence systems, in close coordination with the IAF and BSF, one official said adding that the calibrated positioning of weapon systems and other operational enablers, aligned with civil administration support, ensured effective area domination and neutralisation of potential threats. Gen. Chauhan, in a visit to Suratgarh Military Station and Naliya Air Force Station, interacted with the troops and emphasised the importance of “operational readiness and resilience in the face of evolving security challenges”. He was apprised of the air defence systems deployed in the operation.

Bangladeshi migrant workers in Malaysia seek unpaid wages from supplier to Japanese companies

GNS News Agency, May 27

Around 280 Bangladeshi migrant workers in Malaysia are demanding hundreds of thousands of dollars in back wages and other money owed to them after their former employer, a plastic parts supplier to big Japanese companies, closed down. The workers at Kawaguchi Manufacturing’s factory in Port Klang, Malaysia’s largest port city, were left stranded when the company withheld their wages for up to eight months before shutting down late last year. The workers have filed complaints in Malaysia and back home in Bangladesh. Such disputes have become a diplomatic sore point between Bangladesh and Malaysia, drawing scrutiny on a small but powerful group of recruitment agencies and middlemen who monopolise such jobs. Asif Nazrul, an advisor to Bangladesh’s Expatriate Welfare Ministry, met with Malaysia’s Home Minister Steven Sim Chee Keong in Kuala Lumpur last week. Officials were due to meet again on Wednesday in Dhaka, the Bangladesh capital. The interim government that took over in Bangladesh after the ouster of former Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has placed a higher priority on the plight of migrant workers who often get trapped in debt after paying exorbitant recruitment fees to work in dismal conditions for little pay.

Labour advocates say the situation is worsening as more people from across South Asia, sometimes losing their livelihoods owing to climate change, seek work in Southeast Asia. Trade tensions between the U.S. and China have accelerated that trend as factories move from China to places in Malaysia, Thailand, Vietnam and elsewhere.

Workers allege abuse The workers have received just 2,51,000 ringgit (\$USD 58,101) of the more than three million ringgit (\$6,94,444) in back wages that a Malaysian labour tribunal ordered Kawaguchi to pay. Many have found new jobs but still have heavy debts after borrowing money to pay hefty recruitment fees. The workers allege that they were sometimes required to work without breaks for 24-hour shifts and on holidays with no paid overtime, making plastic casings for televisions and air-conditioners. They say Kawaguchi confiscated their passports, provided inadequate housing and delayed their visa renewals. The factory shut down in December, soon after Sony Group and Panasonic Holdings Corp., two of Kawaguchi’s main customers, halted their orders in response to the allegations against their supplier. After the factory closed, the workers say Malaysian officials forcibly sent many of them to another city some 360 km away to toil in new factory jobs without giving them any information. They were kept in filthy shipping containers converted into dormitories. Another 80 workers were told to work in palm oil plantations — but refused. Most made their way back to Port Klang to seek work and chip away at the debts that have been accumulating. It took nearly three months for them to get permission from the Malaysian government to switch jobs. The Associated Press got no response to multiple requests to Kawaguchi for comment. Malaysia’s Labour Department also didn’t respond to requests for comment.

Factories in Malaysia and other countries in Southeast Asia rely on migrant workers, often from Bangladesh, Myanmar and Nepal, to fill labour-intensive jobs in manufacturing, plantations, or construction that local workers won’t perform for the wages offered. “The cost of recruitment and migration from Bangladesh to Malaysia is among the most expensive in the world,” according to the International Labor Organisation’s office in Bangladesh. The official recruitment fee is about \$650 per worker. But all the workers at Kawaguchi said they paid nearly \$5,000. The loans they took to pay such sums has pushed them into debt bondage as they labour to pay off ever mounting debts. In 2023, Malaysian Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim said Malaysia should end use of recruitment agents, describing the system as “modern slavery.” But a 2024 study of Bangladeshi workers in Malaysia found that more than 70% had spent at least half of their wages to pay off recruitment debts. Most have at least two loans and many said they were misled about their wages. Nearly everyone who migrates overseas from Bangladesh, one of the countries most-affected by climate change, has suffered at least one form of modern slavery, like withholding of wages or physical violence, according to a study by the London-based think tank International Institute for Environment and Development.

Panasonic, Sony and Daikin, three of Kawaguchi’s

Analysing poverty levels in India by comparing various surveys



GNS News Agency, May 27

A recent paper has estimated that poverty reduction in India slowed down significantly after 2011-12. While poverty levels of 37% in 2004-05 fell to 22% by 2011-12, it has since fallen only by 18% in 2022-23, the paper finds based on its own calculations. The paper, titled ‘Poverty Decline in India after 2011–12: Bigger Picture Evidence’, authored by Himanshu of Jawaharlal Nehru University, and Peter Lanjouw and Philipp Schirmer of the Vrije University in Amsterdam, noted that India hasn’t had an official poverty estimate since 2011-12. In the absence of an official estimate, a number of unofficial and often contradictory estimates have been made, of which this one is the latest. Three methodologies

The paper notes that the various contradictory estimates can essentially be clubbed into three broad buckets based on their methodology. The most common approach, it noted, has been to use alternative socio-economic surveys of the National Sample Survey Office (NSSO), since there are significant comparability issues between the Household Consumption Expenditure Survey (HCES) of 2022-23 and 2011-12. There are no intervening surveys, either. The HCES for 2017-18 was scrapped by the government, citing “methodological issues”. In the NSSO’s 71st round, which covered the January-June 2014 period, the government introduced a consumption expenditure measure that was derived from a single question in the survey called the Usual Monthly Per Capita Consumption Expenditure (UMPCE). This UMPCE was used for all subsequent rounds of the NSSO surveys as well as in the Periodic Labour Force Surveys (PLFS). However, as the authors correctly note in their paper, this measure can’t be compared to earlier estimates of consumption because it is based on a single question “with no clear definition of what it comprises”. According to this method, poverty estimates range between 26-30% for 2019-20.

The second approach has been used by the economist Surjit Bhalla and his colleagues in 2022 in a paper in which they used Private Final Consumption Expenditure (PFCE) estimates from the government’s National Accounts Statistics (NAS) to derive consumption aggregates after 2011-12. This method basically scaled the consumption expenditure data from the HCES 2011–12 based on the implicit growth rate of PFCE after 2011-12. The third broad approach — and the one used by the authors themselves — is to use survey-to-survey imputation methods. This basically means data gaps in one survey can be filled using information from a related base survey. This method, the authors note, has occasionally been used by World Bank researchers to update the World Bank’s Poverty and Inequality Platform (PIP) database.

Looking at different surveys This approach is significantly prone to somewhat divergent results, based on the different surveys used to complement each other, but are useful in revealing trends in data. For example, the paper notes that one estimate by David Locke Newhouse and Pallavi Vyas used the 2011-12 HCES and the 2014-15 survey on Consumption of Services and Durables to estimate that poverty in India declined from 22% in 2011-12 to 15% in 2014-15. Similarly, Ifeanyi Nzegwu Edochie and their col-

New North Korea warship is damaged at its launch ceremony attended by Kim Jong Un

GNS News Agency, May 27

A new 5,000-ton destroyer key to North Korea’s naval advancement was damaged during its launching ceremony attended by leader Kim Jong Un, state media reported Thursday. The ship slid off the ramp and became stuck after the flatcar failed to move alongside it, throwing off its balance and crushing parts of the ship’s bottom, according to the Korean Central News Agency. The accident at Wednesday’s ceremony at the northeastern port of Chongjin was an embarrassing setback for Mr. Kim, who has emphasized naval advancement as key to his nuclear-armed military. Mr. Kim blamed military officials, scientists and shipyard operators for what he described as a “serious accident and criminal act caused by absolute carelessness, irresponsibility and unscientific empiricism,” and called for a ruling Workers’ Party meeting to address their “irresponsible errors,” KCNA said. The agency reported separately that a plenary meeting of the party’s powerful Central Committee was scheduled for late June. North Korean state media didn’t say whether Wednesday’s incident caused any injuries.

The damaged vessel was likely in the same class as the country’s first destroyer, unveiled on April 25, which experts assessed as the North’s largest and most advanced warship to date. Kim called it a significant asset for advancing his goal of expanding the military’s operational range and nuclear strike capabilities. State media described that ship as designed to handle various weapons systems, including anti-air and anti-ship weapons as well as nuclear-capable ballistic and cruise missiles. Kim also supervised test-firings of missiles from the destroyer afterward, and state media said the ship was expected to enter active duty early next year. Lee Sung Joon, spokesman for South Korea’s Joint Chiefs of Staff, said the damaged vessel was likely equipped with similar systems and remains toppled over in the sea.

Kim has framed the arms buildup as a response to perceived threats from the United States and its allies in Asia, who have been expanding joint military exercises amid rising tensions over the North’s nuclear program. He says the acquisition of a nuclear-powered submarine would be his next big step in strengthening his navy. Outside experts say the destroyer was likely built with Russian assistance. While North Korea’s naval forces are considered inferior to South Korea’s, analysts still view the destroyer as a serious security threat, as it could enhance the country’s offensive and defensive capabilities. Tensions on the Korean Peninsula have escalated in recent months as Kim accelerates the development of his nuclear and missile programs and supplies weapons and troops to support Russia’s war in Ukraine. The U.S., South Korea, and their allies have expressed concern that Moscow could reciprocate by providing North Korea with advanced weapons technology,

leagues in 2022, used the 2017-18 survey on Social Consumption on Health to estimate poverty at 10% for 2017–18, which confirmed the trend that poverty had reduced since 2011-12. In 2025, Sutirtha Sinha Roy and Roy van der Weide used a radical approach to apply the survey-to-survey imputation using a private sector survey. They used the Consumer Pyramid Household Survey (CPHS) for 2019 by the Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy (CMIE) along with the 2011-12 Consumer Expenditure Survey (CES). Their estimate was that poverty was around 10% in 2019.

Himanshu et al also use this survey-to-survey imputation method. However, the authors note that their strategy differs from previous attempts in three aspects. First, they have used the Tendulkar Committee’s poverty lines as opposed to the World Bank’s poverty lines. Second, they have used the employment surveys of the NSSO for imputation. The Employment-Unemployment Survey (EUS) is a companion survey to the 2011-12 CES, and is based on similar sampling design and survey implementation procedures. Further, the PLFS, which replaced the EUS in 2017-18, is modelled on the EUS, the authors note. What this essentially means is that the two surveys Himanshu and his colleagues used to impute data are similar in their methodology and parameters, yielding a more accurate fit in the data. Third, the authors note that, unlike the World Bank studies, their own imputation models are estimated at the State level or include State-fixed effects when estimated at the sector level. Their methodology shows that while poverty based on the Tendulkar Committee poverty lines fell sharply between 2004-05 and 2011-12 — from 37% to 22% — it subsequently has fallen only to around 18% by 2022. Based on these estimates, the authors add, the number of poor persons in India fell only slightly since 2011-12, from 250 million persons to about 225 million in 2022–23.

State-level trends derived from their methodology suggest differing trends across States over this period. Notably, the authors find that Uttar Pradesh, India’s most populous State, seems to have markedly reduced its poverty rate. “However, in other historically poor States, such as Jharkhand and Bihar, progress was much slower,” they added. “It is noteworthy that in several of the large central and southern States, such as Maharashtra and Andhra Pradesh, poverty reduction appears to have stagnated.” Importantly, the authors do acknowledge that “a full resolution of the present debate” on poverty is unlikely to be forthcoming without new government data that can be compared with previous years’ data. However, they also try to back up their findings using other data sources that point to the same conclusions.

For example, they noted that the growth of India’s Gross Domestic Product (GDP), which averaged 6.9% per annum between 2004-05 and 2011-12, slowed to 5.7% between 2011-12 and 2022-23. This, they said, is consistent with a slower decline in poverty reduction after 2011-12. Similarly, they point out that the Wage Rates in Rural India (WRII) data compiled by the Labour Bureau on real wages points to a slowdown in wage rates.

It shows that the annual growth rate of wages fell from 4.13% per year between 2004-05 and 2011-12 to 2.3% per year between 2011-12 and 2022-23. Thirdly, the authors point out that while the absolute number of workers in agriculture declined by 33 million between 2004-05 and 2011-12, and by a further 33 million by 2017-18, this trend has reversed since then with 68 million workers being added to the agriculture sector since 2017–18. One consequence of the rising workforce in agriculture, the authors point out, has been the decline in the growth of agricultural productivity in recent years. Lower productivity leads to lower wages, which leads to higher poverty levels. This paper is hardly going to be the last word on poverty estimates, with many more sure to follow. However, as the authors themselves conclude, there’s more than enough evidence to show that poverty reduction efforts need to be accelerated.



further enhancing the threat posed by its nuclear and missile program.

Banu Mushtaq wins Booker Prize for Kannada short story collection

London: Writer, activist and lawyer Banu Mushtaq’s short story collection ‘Heart Lamp’ has become the first Kannada title to win the coveted GBP 50,000 International Booker Prize in London. Mushtaq described her win as a victory for diversity as she collected the prize on Tuesday night at a ceremony at Tate Modern along with her translator Deepa Bhashti, who translated the title from Kannada to English. The winning collection of 12 short stories chronicles the resilience, resistance, wit, and sisterhood of everyday women in patriarchal communities in southern India, vividly brought to life through a rich tradition of oral storytelling.

Shortlisted among six worldwide titles, Mushtaq’s work appealed to the judges for its “witty, vivid, colloquial, moving and excoriating” style of capturing portraits of family and community tensions. “This book was born from the belief that no story is ever small, that in the tapestry of human experience every thread holds the weight of the whole,” said Mushtaq. “In a world that often tries to divide us, literature remains one of the lost sacred spaces where we can live inside each other’s minds, if only for a few pages,” she said. Translator Bhashti added: “What a beautiful win this is for my beautiful language.”

Max Porter, International Booker Prize 2025 Chair of judges, described the winning title as something genuinely new for English readers. “A radical translation which ruffles language, to create new textures in a plurality of Englishes. It challenges and expands our understanding of translation,” he said. “

Screen time over playtime: the impact of gadgets on children’s mental health



It is a fascinating and complex reality that we live in an era where internet access can sometimes outpace reliable electricity in certain regions, and power shutdowns have become more endurable than the ‘Internet Server down’ message flashing across the screens of our hand-held devices. India has seen a significant surge in internet penetration, becoming the second-largest online market globally after China, with more than 886 million users in 2024, representing 55.3% of the population. This growth is driven by factors such as affordable smartphones and data plans, and the Digital India programme. Internet penetration in India grew from 13% to 5% while in the United States, it grew from 74% to 97% between 2014 to 2024.

Globally, a significant portion of children are online, with about one in three internet users being under 18. In India, children aged between five and 11 constitute roughly 15% of active internet users. While we read this, we also must be cognisant of the fact that India is one of the countries with the highest number of under-18s, poised to be the youngest country in the world by 2025. On average, eight to 12-year-olds spend 5.5 hours a day using screen media, excluding time spent online for educational and homework purposes. For teenagers aged 13 to 18 years, screen time rises to 8.5 hours per day. Screen time in adolescents rose by 52% on average during the pandemic.

The transition from parents urging children to “turn off the TV” to the current landscape where one is unable to turn off the internet even if one wanted to, highlights the rapid evolution of technology and its impact on family life. Books and paper have been replaced by tablets and smartphones, and even a temporary reduction in internet speed has become reason enough for nervous breakdowns and meltdowns in adults and children alike.

This malady of being stuck between ‘needing to be online’ and ‘being barraged by notifications’ has become a predicament for most of us. This experience, unique to the digital age, has become a challenge that pushes the boundaries of human resilience and is also one that we are not adequately equipped to face. Paying the full price of this challenge are our children, with their inherent vulnerabilities, made worse by decreased engagement from parents (who are themselves grappling to find a balance in their lives) and screens gnawing away at their playtime. A growing body of evidence has given us enough reason for concern, highlighting the negative impact of excessive screen usage on physical as well as mental health. Play has long been recognised as a core component of childhood, and indispensable for well-balanced physical and cognitive development. Playing with kitchen utensils and cardboard boxes might seem like a simple activity, but for children, it offers a wealth of joy and opportunities for interaction. It fosters creativity, social skills, problem-solving abilities, and emotional regulation. However, the allure of entertainment-based content has led to a significant decline in traditional play.

The associations between excessive screen time and internalising (e.g., depression and anxiety), externalising (e.g., aggression), suicidal behaviour and sleep problems, and mental health and behavioral issues are well-established. Theoretical perspectives from psychology have suggested that the effects of screen time may depend on the nature of the media content. For instance, chronic exposure to violent, suicidal/self-injury-related, and substance-using content in videogames, on TV/DVDs, and/or on the internet has been proposed to increase the risk of antisocial

behaviour (e.g., aggression, delinquency), suicidality/self-injury, and substance use, respectively. Exposure to violent content can lead to desensitisation among individuals towards both real-life violence and media violence. This, in turn, may increase the probability of aggression due to repeated exposure to violent media and lead to the establishment of stable patterns of aggressive behaviour; reduction in the efficiency of the cognitive control system, as well as an inclination towards seeking short-term rewards, and increased cannabis use and other drug use, which in turn fuels the cycle. Parental use of mobile devices has been shown to considerably reduce parental interactions with young children. Thus, it appears that parental engagement with both television and interactive media, such as smartphones, may reduce the quantity and quality of parent-child interactions, which are crucial for the development of cognitive skills, especially language and executive function. For children less than two years of age, associations with aspects of cognitive development are negative, especially for language and executive function

What happens in adolescence?

Adolescence has been described as a time of increased arousal and vulnerability in emotional and behavioural regulation, which may pose a challenge to managing the escalating demands of specific media screens. Digital media has become an important place to fulfill the core tasks of adolescence including forming identities and forming/redefining relationships with peers (including romantic relationships) for modern adolescents. The findings that were leaked from internal research done by Facebook have given us concrete reasons to worry about our teenagers: 32% of teen girls said that when they felt bad about their bodies, Instagram made them feel worse. Pressure to share only the best moments and to look perfect could pitch teenagers into depression, low self-esteem and eating disorders. Social media content (e.g., idealised body images) may drive young people to make upward social comparisons, likely associated with negative self-evaluation or emotional distress.

However, these findings have been hastily buried with Instagram soon rolling out teen accounts, which purportedly will have in-built automatic protection. The real-world impact of these strategies is yet to unfold. Despite this article’s warnings and critical tone, presenting only negativity would greatly disadvantage readers, and we shall now delve into the positive impact of internet and screen usage. There is little question that educational content (on any kind of screen) has a positive impact on cognitive development. These media are enriching, allowing children to vicariously experience and witness places and events far beyond their normal experiences, and provide opportunities for socialisation beyond geographical boundaries.

There is reason to be hopeful as evidence has shown: children and adolescents who reported that they agreed that their parents had rules about time spent watching television and playing video games were less likely to exceed recommended limits than those who strongly disagreed that their parents had rules. Similarly, when parents reported always or very often having limits on television watching (versus rarely or never) and when parents correctly identified the recommended limits, children were less likely to exceed recommended limits.

Key strategies to protect our children from the negative impact of screen usage include: Role-modelling by parents: Being mindful of their own screen usage and being present, physically and emotionally, during conversations with their wards. Limit-setting: Establishing clear and consistent limits on screen time is crucial. Promoting healthy screen habits: Teaching children about online safety and responsible social media use is essential. Encouraging alternative activities: Promoting physical activity, outdoor play, and creative hobbies can help reduce reliance on screens. Encouraging face-to-face interactions and social activities can foster social skills and reduce isolation. Parental involvement: Co-viewing of media is better than a complete lack of parental oversight. Open communication, validation and support are crucial to encourage help-seeking behaviours.

Progress should not just be fast but future-proof

India’s climate future is not written in the stars — it is written in the rising temperatures, erratic monsoons, and intensifying disasters. The question is: what are we doing about it? The World Bank states that more than 80% of India’s population lives in districts at risk of climate-induced disasters. From unrelenting monsoon floods in the north-east to heat-induced crop failures in central India, these events are no longer isolated incidents — they are systemic threats to economic stability, public health, and national security. Yet, despite mounting evidence, India remains vulnerable due to gaps in risk assessment and preparedness. The lack of a comprehensive framework to evaluate and predict climate physical risks (CPRs) means that adaptation strategies are reactive rather than proactive.

Growing climate physical risksAs climate change accelerates, extreme weather events are becoming more frequent and severe. CPRs extend beyond natural disasters, encompassing acute shocks, such as floods and heatwaves, and chronic stresses, such as shifting monsoon patterns and prolonged droughts. While disaster early warning systems and weather forecasts help mitigate immediate losses, CPRs require a long-term approach. Unlike short-term weather forecasts, climate projections analyse long-term trends, enabling policymakers to prepare for evolving climate hazards.

Global climate action is caught between prevention and cure — mitigation, which reduces emissions, and adaptation, which prepares for its inevitable impacts. While adaptation has long been considered a priority for the Global South, wildfires, heatwaves, and cyclones now also test the resilience of the Global North, making it clear that adaptation is a universal necessity. Yet, funding remains skewed towards mitigation, with most resources directed towards renewable energy and decarbonisation over adaptation measures like resilient infrastructure. However, investing in adaptation is not just about survival but also economically prudent. The UN Environment Programme estimates that every \$1 invested in adaptation yields a \$4 return through reduced economic losses and lower disaster recovery costs.

CPRs are not just about extreme weather events but also about how exposed and vulnerable communities, businesses, and infrastructure are to them. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change provides a clear framework: the expected value of CPR is a function of hazard, exposure, and vulnerability. Hazards include floods, cyclones, and heatwaves. Exposure determines who and



what is at risk. Vulnerability reflects a system’s ability to withstand and recover. Together, these define the true scale of climate risk.To safeguard financial stability, regulatory bodies worldwide are shifting from voluntary climate risk disclosures to mandatory reporting. In India, the Reserve Bank of India is integrating climate risks into its regulatory framework, while the IFRS ISSB S2 sets global standards for disclosing CPRs underscoring that assessing these risks is now central to business continuity, not just environmental responsibility.

Despite the urgency, India’s approach to CPR assessments remains fragmented. While countries such as the U.S., U.K., and New Zealand have national frameworks that directly inform policy and finance, India’s efforts are dispersed across government agencies, research institutions, and private platforms, each using different methodologies and hazards of focus. Although India has studies such as flood maps from IIT Gandhinagar, vulnerability atlases from the India Meteorological Department, and disaster frameworks from the National Institute of Disaster Management, there is no unified system to consolidate these insights. Reliable CPR projections are further hindered by the limitations of global climate models such as Representative Concentration Pathways and Shared Socioeconomic Pathways, which fail to capture India’s hyper-local climate realities. Without a central repository for standardised climate risk data, businesses and government agencies struggle to make informed decisions.Recognising these gaps, India has initiated steps towards factoring in climate hazards in its National Adaptation Plan (NAP) in line with Article 7 of the Paris Agreement, which mandates all nations to establish NAPs by 2025 and show progress by 2030. To facilitate this, India formulated an Adaptation Communication and submitted its first report in 2023. A more comprehensive NAP report is underway, covering nine thematic sectors with district-level granularity.

The churning within the BRS



The Congress is facing a financial crunch which is affecting its ability to implement various welfare schemes, particularly the ones it promised before the Assembly elections. Yet it is the BRS that has been making headlines for all the wrong reasons in a section of the media, which the party terms “anti-BRS” and “pro-Congress”. Reports state that differences have cropped up within the family of BRS president K. Chandrasekhar Rao — namely, between his son and working president of the party, K.T. Rama Rao; his nephew, Harish Rao; and his daughter, K. Kavitha.

Since Mr. Chandrasekhar Rao has stopped taking an active role in party affairs, speculation is rife in political circles that the BRS is planning to hand over the reins of the party to Mr. Rama Rao. This has reportedly upset Mr. Harish Rao, a former minister who has been a steadfast supporter of the party and its president for the last 24 years.

Mr. Harish Rao rubbished these rumours at a press conference. He categorically stated that he had no differences with Mr. Rama Rao or any other leader in the BRS for that matter, and that he would always remain a soldier of Mr. Chandrasekhar Rao. “The decision of the party chief would be of paramount importance to me. I will not hesitate to work with KTR (K.T. Rama Rao) even if he is given the reins of the party,” he said. Mr. Harish Rao also sought to label the whole controversy a “conspiracy” of the Congress aimed at engineering fissures within the BRS.Mr. Rama Rao, Mr. Harish Rao, and B. Vinod Kumar, a senior leader considered close to the party leadership, also met at Mr. Harish Rao’s house for over four hours to discuss the party affairs threadbare. Sources say the meeting was held on Mr.

Going beyond the blame game: understanding sterilisation and its limits



Recently, the Punjab and Haryana High Court examined a case of a child born after a vasectomy and held, with striking clarity, that conception after sterilisation alone could not be held to brand a surgeon negligent. In Chennai, meanwhile, two separate “failed” tubectomy cases were fought in the Madras High Court recently where, in one case, a post-sterilisation baby was regrettably called an “unwanted child”, and the court imposed heavy penalties on the State and doctor. And in the other case, the court imposed upon the operating doctor, a fine of ₹60,000. These divergent tones remind us that failure of sterilisation can flow either from human error or from biology—and that the law sometimes struggles to tell the two apart. Hence, there is a need to understand the process behind the procedures.

India’s contraceptive landscapeIndia pioneered the National Family Welfare Programme in 1952 as the first country to do so, yet today, it houses the planet’s largest population. More recently however falling fertility levels, at least in the southern States, has indicated that we are in the throes of a demographic shift. Contraception is divided into temporary and permanent methods. Temporary methods include combined oral contraceptives, progestin-only pills, the Copper-T intrauterine device (IUD), the quarterly DMPA injection, and condoms (male and female).

Except for condoms, every other form of contraception is made for women. Yet, that lone male option, the condom, carries a priceless bonus by fending off sexually transmitted diseases (HIV, Hepatitis B, Human Papilloma Virus), a protection its female counterpart cannot provide. Between the 1970s and the present, they helped millions of women prevent unwanted pregnancies and septic abortions, pursue higher education after marriage, allowed women to enter paid work, and, by shrinking household sizes, nudged families towards spending on nutrition and education rather than sheer survival.Permanent contraception is surgical. There are two routes: tubectomy for women and vasectomy for men. Tubectomy accounts for 98% of permanent sterilisations and contributes to 62% of all contraceptive use among Indian couples. Around 85% of women undergoing tubectomy in India have the procedure performed at a government health facility.

The fallopian tube—an undulating tunnel of ciliated columnar epithelium and smooth muscle—ferries the ovum toward the womb for embryo formation after intercourse. A tubectomy, done through a mini laparotomy or laparoscopy under spinal or general anaesthesia, severs or seals that conduit. Because the cut is definitive, a woman walks out immediately sterile, yet she continues to menstruate. Usually, it is done during the time of menstruation or immediately within 6 weeks of childbirth. Though it needs an operating theatre, sterile instruments, a skilled surgeon, and an anaesthesiologist, it is still preferred over the far simpler male alternative.The vas deferens—a cord lined by pseudostratified columnar epithelium with stereocilia and girdled by thick muscle—transports sperm from the testis to the urethra in the penis. A non-scalpel vasectomy, usually under local anaesthesia, takes barely forty minutes, rarely needs a hospital bed and lets the patient resume work the next day and resume sexual activity within a week. The

Chandrasekhar Rao’s directions. “There have been reports of bickering and efforts to break the party ever since the party was formed in 2001...” Mr. Vinod Kumar said. “Such efforts and conspiracies gain momentum when the party is out of power. The party leadership is united and working hard to take the failures of the Congress government to the people. We believe that it is better to sweat during peace than to bleed during war.”

Sources admit that there could be minor differences of opinion on the protest programmes being planned against the government. However, they add, rival parties examine such differences with a magnifying glass. They also say that speculation about Mr. Harish Rao breaking away from the party originated long ago, in 2006, when the BRS, which was then known as the Telangana Rashtra Samithi, pulled out of the Congress-led coalition government. It again gained momentum after the 2018 Assembly elections when Mr. Harish Rao was not included in Mr. Chandrasekhar Rao’s Cabinet. It once again resurfaced after the BRS lost power in December 2023, they say.

Meanwhile, Ms. Kavitha raised eyebrows when she stated recently that certain leaders within the party were conspiring against her rise. She said that they may not be “satisfied with my spending six months in jail in the case foisted against me in the Delhi liquor policy issue”. Mr. Kavitha, who heads Telangana Jagruthi, a cultural wing of the BRS, was arrested by the CBI in the Delhi liquor policy case on March 15, 2024, and released on bail on August 27. Unlike Mr. Harish Rao, who sought to clear the air, Ms. Kavitha has clearly embarked on her own path. She has been championing the cause of Backward Classes and women. Ever since the party was ousted from power, she has visited about 50 Assembly constituencies to boost the morale of the cadre. She also recently said that while a “geographical Telangana” State had been created, Samajika Telangana (social justice) has not yet been delivered to the people.These rumours and public statements have created confusion in the BRS and could affect its ability to regain the support of voters. It is important for the party leadership to dispel them and put up a visible united front against the Congress government. Such efforts will make a huge difference to the morale of the party cadre, especially at a time when the Congress is increasingly dependent on flaying the Opposition instead of delivering on the promises it made to the people of Telangana.

testes keep churning out sperm, but the cells are quietly re-absorbed; erections, libido, and testosterone remain untouched. Two main disadvantages exist in comparison to tubectomy: the man must use condoms for roughly three months while residual sperm clear, and he must return for a semen test—an appointment often sabotaged by stigma, forgetfulness or sheer inertia. However, failures are rare (about 1 in 1,200) compared with tubectomy, which is 1 in 200–300.

Whether the scalpel meets the tube or duct, in all hospital facilities performing the procedure, the following routine happens: due counselling is provided and informed consent is verified; the segment is excised; the labelled specimen travels to histopathology, where ciliated folds confirm fallopian tube or thick muscular wall confirms vas deferens under a microscope. Only after this stamp does the patient receive an incentive—Central funds under the National Family Planning Welfare Programme plus a state “top-up” because family planning sits on the Concurrent List.

Where does failure occur?

Contraceptive failure, though statistically rare in surgical sterilisation, must be understood through two distinct lenses: medical negligence and medical mal-occurrence. A failure is termed medical negligence when there is a demonstrable breach in the standard of care—such as improper surgical technique, incorrect identification of ligaments over fallopian tubes or ligation of incorrect anatomical structures, non-adherence to aseptic protocols, or lack of adequate postoperative instructions. In such instances, liability may rest with the healthcare provider. In contrast, a failure arising from medical mal-occurrence is one where all protocols were meticulously followed, yet nature intervenes—such as spontaneous recanalisation of the fallopian tubes or vas deferens.

These are recognised biological phenomena and cannot be ascribed to incompetence or error. Importantly, under the Medical Termination of Pregnancy (MTP) Act, contraceptive failure is considered a valid legal indication for terminating an unwanted pregnancy. The histopathological examination done after surgery to check the surgically removed parts and identify the tissues acts as a safety barrier for the surgeons and a tipping point for the beneficiaries to rectify.Since 2013, the National Family Planning Indemnity Scheme has offered a financial net of ₹2 lakh for a death within seven days, ₹50,000 for one in the next three weeks, ₹30,000 for a proven failure, and up to ₹25,000 for major complications. States often stack extra amounts atop these slabs. Doctors, too, are insured up to ₹2 lakh per claim—recognition that good faith cannot always outwit bad luck.

Every year, India performs roughly 5-6 million tubectomies and fewer than 30,000 vasectomies—each stitched under hard fluorescent lights by obstetricians, surgeons and nurses who rarely see the limelight. Their labour has averted an estimated 350-400 million births since 1980, silently enlarging per capita GDP and futures. A few deliveries slip past the scalpel, and courts sometimes use wounding words. But judging by the long arc, the family planning wall still stands tall—solid and pragmatic.

Kurma mela: The science of the mass nesting of Olive Ridley turtles



The Olive Ridley turtle (*Lepidochelys olivacea*), a vulnerable sea turtle species, made headlines earlier this year: a record-breaking seven lakh turtles had nested at Odisha's Rushikulya beach alone in March. These turtles are renowned for their synchronised mass nesting events called arribada, a Spanish word that means "arrival". For many people, the Rushikulya arribada signalled hope — but for conservation biologists, it raised critical questions about the future of these vulnerable animals and whether human interventions, even well-meaning ones, could change the course of nature itself. While some localised populations of Olive Ridley turtles have expanded, the IUCN Red List has estimated that the number of Olive Ridleys worldwide has dropped by 30-50% since 1960. The Olive Ridleys' primary nesting sites are along the Pacific coasts of Mexico and Central America, although Odisha is also a particularly critical location.

The State's 480-km-long coastline hosts three major nesting beaches: Gahirmatha, between the Brahmani and Baitarani river mouths; Devi, 100 km south of Gahirmatha; and Rushikulya, 320 km further south. Research has found that Olive Ridley turtles that hatch at a nesting site are 'imprinted' with a map of the local magnetic field. Decades later they return with remarkable precision to the site by following this map. The phenomenon is called philopatry: a blend of memory, environmental factors, and the earth's geomagnetic cues. Philopatry is reinforced by a multiplier effect: as females with strong philopatric tendencies increase in number, they reinforce site fidelity across generations.

There are other ecological factors too. Studies on the Loggerhead sea turtles (*Caretta caretta*) have also revealed that their nesting zones are near free swirls of cold water in the seas — called cold-core eddies — that move nutrients up from the deep sea to the surface, including those rich in chlorophyll. Other factors that affect their choice of nesting sites include salinity, land slope, risk of predation, and rainfall. Nesting sites are considered more suitable if more turtles have nested there before — but as turtle populations swell whereas the size of the most favourable nesting grounds doesn't, beaches often become battlegrounds. A population that arrives after another has already nested at a beach might dig up existing nests — female turtles are guided by olfactory cues and female urine — and break the eggs. This happened earlier this year during the second mass-nesting event at Rushikulya.

Eggs that are broken and displaced attract predators. Experts previously believed predators used visual cues to detect turtle nests. More recent research has found that olfactory cues, especially the scent of disturbed soil and broken eggs, are more significant. Thus, a species' most successful survival strategy may also sow the seeds of its decline. In sea turtles, temperature determines the sex of hatchlings. Studies of Loggerhead turtles have found that their populations are more female when they nest on warmer beaches. Researchers are still collecting similar data pertaining to Olive Ridley turtles. With rising temperatures shifting the sex ratio more towards females, the multiplier effect is expected to get reinforced as more females return to mass-nesting beaches in the coming years. How mass nesting begins

For their first arribadas, female sea turtles pick their nesting sites without any discernible pattern and use them irregularly. If a female turtle reaches the reproductive stage of its life before it is able to reach the beach where it hatched, it may establish a new nesting site closer to its foraging grounds. Its hatchlings will be imprinted with this location and they will attempt to return to it later. Put another way, for a sea turtle population to thrive, it needs strays and wanderers like these turtles, which establish new places for the arribada. If they had been forced to stick to one site over millions of years, they would likely have become extinct due to overcrowding in the mass nesting beaches. Modern conservation has helped boost turtle populations, especially by artificially incubating eggs and protecting beaches. The question naturally arises: could these measures be too successful? Because if weaker individuals that would have perished in the wild are now able to survive and reproduce, the population's genetic resilience will drop.

No conservation story is complete without acknowledging the role of local communities. In Odisha, fisherfolk and villagers are vital allies: they guard nests, curb egg poaching, and guide conservationists. But not all human interactions are benign. Turtle tourism has surged in recent years. The influx of visitors creates opportunities to raise awareness but it also stresses these gentle creatures. Crowds gather to watch nesting turtles at night, using bright lights, clicking selfies, and — in some disturbing cases — scooping sand out of the ground to watch the egg-laying or even sitting on turtles for photographs. Such acts disturb nesting behaviour and may have a lasting impact on the turtles' memory, discouraging them from returning to the site. Scientists are also just beginning to understand the cognitive and emotional inner lives of turtles. It's entirely possible that what we think of as harmlessly marvelling at them could be disrupting the ancient rhythms of these mariners. In other words, it's no longer about numbers or rescue operations. The priority is to ensure the longevity of these nesting beaches and to balance tourism with ethical responsibility. Olive Ridley turtles have endured mass extinctions, shifting continents, and rising seas. Their resilience is remarkable — but not limitless. Regardless of whether turtles continue to return to nesting sites despite these disturbances, humans' ethical responsibility is clear: to safeguard the ecological balance that keeps sea turtles going.

What is the 1991 K. Veeraswami judgment all about? | Explained

The story so far: Vice President Jagdeep Dhankar on Monday (May 19, 2025) opined the time has come for revisiting a 1991 judgment delivered by the Supreme Court in *K. Veeraswami* versus Union of India. Insisting upon registration of a First Information Report (FIR) regarding the Delhi cash on fire incident at the residence of High Court judge Yashwant Varma on March 17, 2025; the Vice President said, the 1991 judgment was the genesis of the problem of corruption in the higher judiciary and it was a "judicial leger-demain."

Who was K. Veeraswami?

Kuppuswami Naidu Veeraswami had commenced his legal practice by joining the Madras Bar in 1941. He was appointed as Assistant Government Pleader in 1953 and Government Pleader in 1959. He held the post till his elevation as a permanent judge of the Madras High Court in February 1960. On May 1, 1969, he had become the Chief Justice of the High Court and on February 24, 1976, the Central Bureau of Investigation registered a First Information Report (FIR) against him for the offences under the Prevention of Corruption (PC) Act of 1947. The charge against him was that he had acquired assets worth ₹6.41 lakh disproportionate to his known sources of income not only in his name but also that of his wife Eluthai Ammal and sons V. Suresh and V. Bhaskar between May 1, 1969 and February 24, 1976. A copy of the FIR was filed before a special court for CBI cases in Chennai on February 28, 1976. On coming to know of these developments, the then Chief Justice proceeded on leave from March 9, 1976 and retired from service on attaining the age of superannuation on April 8, 1976. The CBI, however, proceeded with the investigation into the PC Act case and filed a charge sheet before the special court on December 15, 1977.

How did the case reach the Supreme Court?

After the special court took cognisance of the charge sheet and issued summons, the former Chief Justice filed a petition in the Madras High Court in 1978 to quash the criminal proceedings initiated against him. He contended the prosecution was wholly unconstitutional, without jurisdiction, illegal and void. His plea was heard by a Full Bench (comprising three judges) of the Madras High Court and dismissed by a majority decision of 2:1. On April 27, 1979 Justices S. Natarajan and S. Mohan refused to quash the criminal case. They held there was no necessity for the CBI to obtain sanction for prosecution from a competent authority, as required under Section 6 of the PC Act, since Veeraswami had demitted office and was not a Chief Justice on the day when the charge sheet was filed.

However, Justice V. Balasubramanian, the third judge, took a contrary view and quashed the criminal proceedings on the ground that the CBI had failed to call upon the former Chief Justice to account for the disproportionate assets and then record a finding as to whether his explanation was satisfactory or not and the reasons thereof. The Full Bench, thereafter, granted a certificate of appeal to the Supreme Court in view of the importance of the constitutional questions involved in the case. The 1979 appeal was heard and dismissed by a five-judge Bench of the top court on July 25, 1991 with a 4:1 majority. While Justices K.J. Shetty, B.C. Ray, L.M. Sharma and M.N. Venkatachaliah held that the PC Act would be applicable to the judges of the higher judiciary too, Justice J.S. Verma alone dissented.

What did the Supreme Court rule?

Senior counsel Kapil Sibal had appeared for Veeraswami before the Supreme Court and argued that the PC Act would not be applicable to the judges of the higher judiciary since sanction to prosecute was a mandatory requirement under the Act and there was no single authority



who could grant such sanction in the case of High Court or Supreme Court judges. He contended the President could not be regarded as the sanctioning authority since he/she acts upon the aid and advice of the Council of Ministers and therefore, there was every chance of the executive interfering with the independence of the judiciary. On the other hand, the then Solicitor General A.D. Giri and Additional Solicitor General K.T.S. Tulsi defended the invocation of the PC Act against Mr. Veeraswami and said, the top court could lay down guidelines with respect to issues related to obtaining sanction. After hearing them; Justices Shetty, Ray, Sharma and Venkatachaliah held that a judge of the Supreme Court as well as the High Courts would squarely fall under the definition of 'public servant' under the PC Act and that prosecution could be lodged against them after obtaining sanction. Justices Shetty, Ray and Venkatachaliah also held that the President would be authority competent to accord sanction for prosecution of a judge but ruled that no criminal case should be registered against a Chief Justice/Judge of a High Court or a judge of the Supreme Court without consulting the Chief Justice of India. If the Chief Justice of India himself was the person against whom allegations of criminal misconduct had been made, then the consultation must be carried out with other judges of the Supreme Court. The three judges, further, ordered that a similar consultation must be held at the stage of examining the question of grant of sanction for prosecution and that the decision on granting sanction should be in accordance with the advice of the Chief Justice of India. Though Justice Sharma concurred with the other three judges on the issue of applicability of the PC Act to judges of the higher judiciary, he held that the question as to who should be the sanctioning authority need not be answered in Veeraswami's case since he had retired from service before the filing of the charge sheet and his case did not require any sanction for prosecution. Justice Verma, in his minority view, disagreed entirely with the other four judges and said the judges of the higher judiciary would fall outside the purview of the PC Act and it would be completely inapplicable to them. Observing that the Parliament may have to enact a new legislation for dealing with corruption among those holding high Constitutional posts, he said: "Any attempt to bring the judges of the High Courts and the Supreme Court within the purview of the Prevention of Corruption Act by a seemingly constructional exercise of the enactment, appears to me, in all humility, an exercise to fit a square peg in a round hole when the two were never intended to match."

Kerala Congress: New leaders, old troubles



After deliberating for more than six months, the All India Congress Committee (AICC) on May 8 effected a leadership change in the party's Kerala unit by appointing Sunny Joseph as president of the Kerala Pradesh Congress Committee (KPCC). Mr. Joseph, a three-time legislator from Peravoor, has replaced K. Sudhakaran. Incidentally, the announcement came soon after Mr. Sudhakaran publicly asserted that he had no intention of relinquishing the post. However, the AICC was determined to revamp the KPCC given the pressure from senior State leaders. The matter was ultimately resolved through a carefully negotiated compromise: while Mr. Joseph, a trusted associate, was made KPCC president, Mr. Sudhakaran was appointed as a permanent invitee to the Congress Working Committee. The AICC appointed MP Adoor Prakash as convener of the Congress-led UDF and also promoted A.P. Anil Kumar, P.C. Vishnunath, and Shafi Parambil as working presidents of the KPCC.

With Mr. Joseph's appointment, the Congress high command is desperately seeking to resurrect the once-formidable Christian-Nair alliance that helped the party win Assembly elections. Support from the influential Nair community as well as from various Christian denominations, particularly the Syrian Catholics, has eroded over time for the Congress. A section of these communities has switched loyalty to the BJP. Congress strategists believe that Mr. Joseph's nomination will help the party capitalise on his Christian background. His appointment also carries historical significance: this is the first time in over two decades that a Christian leader is helming the party in Kerala. With the post being held by leaders belonging to the Ezhava/Thiyya community for more than a decade, the Catholic clergy has been demanding that a community member lead the KPCC.

Scheme-based workers, the struggle for an identity



The demand of SBWs, of a labour market identity', is a legitimate one

The central government employs millions of regular and contract workers who are recognised as government employees and are in the pay spectrum of the government. The government also employs several types of workers such as Anganwadi workers or AWWs (13,51,104 workers) and Anganwadi helpers or AWHs (9,22,522), Accredited Social Health Activists or ASHAs (10,52,322 workers), and Mid-Day-Meals workers or MDMWs (25,16,688) under The Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) Scheme since 1975, the National Rural Health Mission (NHRM) and the mid-day meals day scheme. Put together, around 60 million workers work in government schemes. These schemes are those which carry out social and economic functions by taking care of children and lactating mothers and nutrition aspects. They are also a bridge between the community and the public health system, improving school enrolment and the nutritional health system.

Though there has been much recognition of their work (by the Prime Minister and even the World Health Organization), these workers face hardship — they have been denied basic labour market rights such as workers' status, minimum wages and social security. Three basic issues among others have affected scheme-based workers (SBW) — an identity as "workers" just like any government employee, minimum wages and social security. They have adopted three strategies to highlight their plight — strikes, legal action and social dialogue.

Major central trade unions (AITUC, BMS, CITU) have organised the SBWs extensively. Since there are no prescribed wage negotiation timelines, trade unions have gone on frequent strikes over the issue of wage revision at random. State governments are more generous depending more on the strength of unions, their proximity with the party in power, and political factors such as elections. In March 2025, Anganwadis in Kerala called off their 13-day indefinite strike. The frequent and large-sized struggles of and by SBWs is a feat of labour mobilisation in modern times as State governments have not always been kind to striking workers. In fact, the Maharashtra government imposed the Maharashtra Essential Services Maintenance Act in 2017 to curb the right of Anganwadis in the State to go on strike. In a sense, the government has recognised the "essential" nature of work done by Anganwadis.

The judiciary's approach At the same time, Anganwadis have been knocking on the doors of the judiciary, with some success after initial setbacks. In *State Of Karnataka & Ors vs Ameerbi & Ors* (2006), the Supreme Court held that as Anganwadis do not carry out any function of the state, and

Soon after the reshuffle, Congress leaders displayed camaraderie. However, this unity was disrupted when Mr. Sudhakaran announced that he was miffed about being removed from the post of KPCC president. He alleged that a faction of leaders, driven by self-interest, had influenced the AICC. While he announced that he remained committed to adhering to the party's directives, Mr. Sudhakaran cautiously suggested that the Central leadership might still consider him for the role of Kerala's in-charge for the 2026 Assembly elections.

Many Congress leaders believe that Mr. Sudhakaran has good reason to be disappointed as his performance was not properly evaluated. The two preceding KPCC presidents faced different circumstances: Mullappally Ramachandran was ousted following the Congress' poor performance in the 2021 Assembly polls, while V.M. Sudheeran made a hasty exit less than a year after the 2016 Assembly polls. Though Mr. Sudheeran officially cited health reasons for his decision, it was an open secret that internal conflicts led to his resignation. The Central leadership perhaps did not have confidence in Mr. Sudhakaran's ability to lead the party to victory in the crucial 2026 Assembly elections. The stakes are high since the CPI(M)-led LDF is aiming for a historic third consecutive term in office. Nearly all the Congress aspirants for the post of Chief Minister apparently wanted Mr. Sudhakaran to be removed.

While some say that the Central leadership did not lay the groundwork for Mr. Joseph's elevation and simply parachuted him to the top, veteran leader A.K. Antony is confident that the new KPCC president will ensure that a UDF government and a Congress leader will be in power in 2026. The leadership matrix no doubt looks flawless on paper thanks to the fine balancing of caste interests — the Congress in Kerala now has a KPCC chief from the Christian community; a Leader of the Opposition from the Nair community, an UDF convener from the Ezhava community, and KPCC working presidents from the Scheduled Caste and Muslim communities.

However, this alone will not fetch votes. To attract voters who had moved away from the party, it is crucial for the Congress leadership to take an unambiguous stand on issues such as the Waqf (Amendment) Act, 2025, and the caste census. Bitter factionalism and multiple chief ministerial aspirants are hurdles for the party. The biggest challenge for the Congress lies in effectively mobilising anti-incumbency at the grassroots level.

do not hold a post under a statute, it did not consider them as workers. This was a judgment that was a blow against the struggles of these workers. But there was judicial relief.

The Court, in 2022, granted that Anganwadis are eligible for gratuity as they are covered under workers/employees under the Payment of Gratuity Act, 1972 (*Maniben Maganbhai Bhariya vs District Development Officer*, 2022). In 2024, the Gujarat High Court (*Adarsh Gujarat Anganwadi Union & Ors. vs State of Gujarat*) observed that Anganwadis perform onerous duties and responsibilities apart from performing important services under the Right to Education Act (RTE) and the National Food Security Act (NSF). It directed the central and State governments to jointly frame a policy under which the AWWs and AWHs could be regularised as Class III and Class IV grade State employees. Until then, they would be paid minimum wages (Class III and Class IV, respectively). The central trade unions have been raising the issues concerning the SBWs at the tripartite forum, the Indian Labour Conference (ILC), which is a social dialogue forum created during colonial rule. It is notable that in the 45th ILC, its tripartite Conference Committee made unanimous recommendations to the central government to treat the SBWs as "workers" and not as volunteers or honorary workers, and pay them minimum wages, pension, health insurance and provident fund, among others. The usual stand The government is concerned with the huge cost implications as the employment of SBWs as government employees is set to grow as the population grows. On the other hand, the Labour Minister, in 2016, said in the Rajya Sabha, that the recommendations require long-time policy formulation and that there can be no fixed timeline for their implementation. Policy delay and avoidance at best — and outright denial policy at worst — has been the clever policy of the central government, irrespective of the party in power.

The government has been dodging these important issues. On the other hand, there are attempts to privatise the Integrated Child Development Services Scheme (ICDS). SBW organisations have been waging relentless struggles at all levels to oppose the privatisation of the ICDS and strengthen the labour rights of SBWs. Their struggle, which involves multiple issues, will go on. It is not "applause" that they seek but "worker" status. It is an existential struggle. It is interesting to note that in both the traditional and modern (gig) sectors, workers are battling for their labour market "identities" as "workers" and earn "wages and not "honorarium". It is not charity that they seek but a legitimate demand for "workers" status by dint of hard work over long hours

Why is there variation in India’s fertility rates? | Explained



The story so far: The Sample Registration System (SRS) Statistical Report of 2021, released by the Office of the Registrar General of India recently, showed that India has maintained its Total Fertility Rate (TFR) at 2.0 — the same as reported in 2020. While the national average for TFR has remained the same, there is a wide regional variation in TFR data for States and Union Territories (UTs) reported independently.

Which State saw highest TFR?

The highest TFR was recorded in Bihar at 3.0 and the lowest was reported for West Bengal and Delhi at 1.4. The data went on to reveal that in the decade between 2009-11 and 2019-21, TFR has been on an overall decline, in States, and nationally, albeit at different rates.

What does TFR measure?

The SRS report calculates TFR to measure the number of children each woman in India is expected to have throughout her reproductive age, which the survey defines between 15 and 49 years. According to the report, this value is derived from other indicators for fertility — more specifically age-specific fertility rates put together through a formula. Age-specific fertility rates measure the number of children women of a particular age range are expected to have. This data is gathered as part of the SRS survey, which is the largest demographic survey conducted by India to measure various fertility and mortality indicators annually. The SRS 2021 survey was conducted across 8,842 sample units in all the States and UTs, and compiles data gathered from a sample size of about 84 lakh people.

What do fertility indicators record?

Within fertility indicators, the SRS report broadly measures the Crude Birth Rate (CBR), Sex Ratio at Birth, General Fertility Rate, Age-Specific Fertility Rate, and Total Fertility Rate, among other indicators. Crude Birth Rate measures number of live births per 1,000 people in the popu-

A Congress self-goal and a bitter fight with Centre: What a fractured political terrain tells us

The Congress should have taken credit for its most experienced and articulate voices being included in the delegations set to travel to 32 countries and the European Union to mobilise global opinion in India’s favour after the Pahalgam terror attack. Whatever be the Congress brass’s view about the way the delegations were put together or the “loyalty quotient” of, say, Shashi Tharoor, the party leaders in the all-party groups are, at the end of the day, tall Congress leaders. Tharoor, Salman Khurshid, and Manish Tewari are former ministers, and Amar Singh is an experienced former IAS officer from the border state of Punjab. Former Union Minister Anand Sharma, also an experienced administrator, is the sole name from the Congress list that the government included in a delegation.

These men have a nuanced understanding of complex affairs in a fast-changing global scenario. Their inclusion enables the Congress to claim legitimately that it is the Grand Old Party of India that really knows the intricacies of “raj kaaj (governance)” and, ultimately, other parties have to turn to it when it comes to the crunch. Even if the BJP was, hypothetically speaking, trying to play mischief by dividing the Congress in the way it went about constituting the delegations, as some in the Opposition party suspect, it could have turned the tables on the ruling party by making a virtue out of a necessity. By openly opposing its own senior figures, the Congress has only scored a self-goal.

It is highly unlikely that those in the delegation would either sing paeans for the government or embarrass it on foreign soil. They are hardly likely to take a line divergent from the official government position, whatever the questions about Operation Sindoor that remain unanswered. Let’s face it, had Tharoor’s name not been included in the delegation, the controversy would not have erupted. The Thiruvananthapuram MP is not a hot favourite with the Congress high command at the moment, given that there were reports not so long ago of his dissatisfaction with the party leadership. Tharoor’s articulation of the government’s stand on Operation Sindoor was better than that of most BJP spokespersons, and that was noted by both the BJP and his own party. This may be a reason why the BJP leadership wanted Tharoor to head one of the seven delegations, with his team assigned the United States, Panama, Guyana, Brazil, and Colombia. Given his unhappiness, it is unclear what Tharoor or the Congress high command will do in the coming weeks. Action against him at this juncture could queer the pitch for the party in Kerala where elections are due next year. It is the one state the Congress has been confident of winning.

Tharoor, who has called for a bipartisan approach on security issues, has carved out a niche for himself in the last few years that goes beyond the Congress. He has a following amongst the intelligentsia, the professional classes, and the youth. He enjoys a constituency in the South, but that does not mean he will launch a new party, which is not so easy to do. Neither is he likely to join the BJP or the CPI(M), and may hope to play the kind of role the government has assigned him now. To put together multi-party delegations should have been a simple exercise, the idea being to constitute a crack team of politicians and security experts who can effectively address the global community. Instead, even before the teams could be officially briefed, all the fault lines were out in the open.

It became a picture of government versus Opposition, Congress versus Congress, with the divisions in the INDIA alliance laid bare. Last week, senior Congress leader P Chidambaram spoke about the fragility of the Opposition alliance. Then Lok Sabha Leader of Opposition Rahul Gandhi’s attacks on External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar, alleging that he had alerted Pakistan about India’s military operation before it commenced, only widened the impasse between the two sides, with the Ministry of External Affairs dismissing the Congress leader’s comments as “utter misrepresentation of facts”. Nor did it help to have BJP spokespersons dub Congress leaders as “pro-Pakistani”, Rahul Gandhi as “new age Mir Jafar”, and the Opposition party responding with a “new age Jaichand” jab at Jaishankar. The government could have pieced together the delegation on

lation, and General Fertility Rate measures live births per 1,000 women of reproductive age (15-49 years). The surveys also measure another indicator — Gross Reproduction Rate, which reflects the number of daughters a woman is expected to have, and who will, in turn, bear children. The report further notes that the TFR of India at 2.0 has come down below the replacement level of 2.1. The replacement level TFR is measured as the number of children each woman should have for each generation to replace the previous generation’s population. According to the TFR data for 2021, just six States had TFR above the replacement level of 2.1. These were Bihar (3.0), Madhya Pradesh (2.6), Jharkhand (2.3), Uttar Pradesh (2.7), Chhattisgarh (2.2), and Rajasthan (2.4). All other States had reported a TFR at or below the replacement level. According to the SRS report, India’s CBR is at 19.3 for 2021, which has declined at a rate of 1.12% every year from 2016 onwards. While all bigger States and UTs across the country are reporting a declining CBR, Uttarakhand was the only outlier, reporting a slight increase in CBR from 2016. Among the States and UTs, the rate of decline in CBR is highest for Kerala, Tamil Nadu, and Delhi, where the CBR is declining at almost twice the rate of the national average.

How do experts read fertility data?

Based on a reading of the numbers, Professor Praveen K. Pathak of Jawaharlal Nehru University’s Centre for the Study of Regional Development, explains, “It clearly tells us TFR has come down below replacement levels and there are remarkable differences in data of States.” He says there is a “clear indication” that in southern States and some States in the north, which are doing socio-economically well, the TFR is “far below” the replacement level, whereas States like Bihar, U.P., and M.P. are reporting much higher TFRs. “The reason being that some of these States still need human development policies, greater female education, and improving healthcare policy action. There are about six to seven States, bigger ones, where these issues persist,” he said. But moving on to the States where TFR has come down below the replacement level, Prof. Pathak cautioned that they might have their own set of challenges. He cited Sikkim, for instance, where the TFR is below 1, which is equivalent to South Korea’s. “It is a reality that in many parts, people simply do not want kids. It may be because of changing family structure, opportunity cost for parents, and increasing stresses associated with caregiving.” While the States with higher TFR need to tailor policies on human development that can bring them closer to the replacement level, the States reporting lower TFR have a “different set of challenges altogether”, Prof. Pathak explained.



Whether it was Indira Gandhi asking for Atal Bihari Vajpayee’s help during the Bangladesh crisis or Vajpayee seeking the CPM’s assistance after Pokhran, earlier political adversaries never allowed their working relationship to break down.

its own without referring to the heads of other political parties. After all, this was not a parliamentary delegation. If sources in government are to be believed, Parliamentary Affairs Minister Kiran Rijji mentioned three to four names of Congress leaders the government wanted in the delegations when he spoke to Gandhi and Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge. However, the Congress sent back a list of four different names. To expect the government to have a quiet word with the Opposition and for both sides to amicably evolve a final view has become a thing of the past. This was not so unusual in the years gone by. There is the oft-cited example of P V Narasimha Rao who, as Prime Minister, persuaded BJP’s Atal Bihari Vajpayee in 1994 to lead the Indian delegation to Geneva, Switzerland, after Pakistan sponsored a resolution at the United Nations Commission on Human Rights criticising the government’s human rights record in Jammu and Kashmir. It was an unusual move to have an Opposition figure lead the official delegation to the UN and depute Khurshid, then MoS External Affairs, under him. It was a signal to India’s neighbours that the government and the Opposition were moving in step on Kashmir. The resolution was defeated.

Vajpayee, when he was PM, also made use of the Opposition to ward off international pressures on him to sign the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty. He called CPI(M) leaders Harkishan Singh Surjeet and Jyoti Basu to ask them what people were saying about the Pokhran nuclear test conducted in 1998. He knew the two Left leaders had opposed the test and, as expected, was told that people opposed it. Why then, Vajpayee asked them, were no voices being raised against it? The politically sharp Surjeet immediately caught on that the PM was asking them, despite their opposition to nuclear tests, to mount an agitation that India should not sign the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT). They realised it would help Vajpayee ward off pressure from the West.

Vajpayee was taking a leaf out of Indira Gandhi’s book. She had reached out to him during the Bangladesh crisis in 1971 and taunted him that his party did not want Bangladesh to be created. “No, no, we are fully with you,” Vajpayee assured her. “But I don’t see any signs of it,” Gandhi responded, indicating the Opposition was not mounting any agitation to mobilise opinion in the government’s favour, something Vajpayee went on to facilitate. All this was possible then because the men and women at the helm, though political adversaries, did not allow the working relationship between them to break down. Today, the relationship between the ruling side and the Opposition is vitiated, bitter and distrustful, with the normal give and take, as and when required, becoming a near impossibility.

What makes this face-off with Pak structurally different is China’s embedded role



The recent bout of hostilities between India and Pakistan has once again exposed the fragility of deterrence in South Asia. This time, however, the conflict cannot be framed solely as a bilateral flashpoint. While the triggers remain familiar — cross-border provocation and military response — the broader context has shifted significantly. The United States, returning to its well-worn role of crisis manager, has momentarily revived the India-Pakistan hyphenation that New Delhi has long worked to dismantle. More consequential, though, is the increasingly visible footprint of China in Pakistan’s military posture. The conflict may have started on the Line of Control, but it now plays out in a strategic triangle, with each vertex holding different stakes and tactics.

India’s retaliatory response has delivered tactical benefits. It demonstrates a credible shift from passive restraint to active deterrence. Domestically, it bolsters political legitimacy. Internationally, it signals that India will not tolerate a return to the era of consequence-free provocation. However, such tactical assertiveness must be weighed against strategic cost. Each military exchange, especially when it invites global mediation, draws India back into a regional frame it seeks to transcend. The goal must be to win engagements without re-entering a cycle that diminishes India’s identity as a global — not merely South Asian — actor. The reappearance of hyphenation in global discourse, particularly through American statements seeking to “own the ceasefire”, is a diplomatic regression. For over two decades, India has sought to decouple its international positioning from Pakistan, leveraging its economic scale, democratic governance, and global partnerships. Yet, crisis has a gravitational pull. Even momentary equivalence — intended as diplomatic symmetry — risks legitimising Pakistan’s parity narrative. India must engage diplomatically but reject frameworks that reduce its global profile to regional conflict management. The message must remain clear: This is not a clash of equals but of a rules-based state and a revisionist actor.

The US’s posture has been cautious but familiar. During the first Trump administration, mediation was often offered impulsively, with Kashmir at times invoked as a bargaining chip in the broader Afghan calculus. The current US administration has reverted to a traditional playbook — urging restraint, activating diplomatic channels, and engaging both sides with public neutrality. While this reflects institutional continuity, it also underscores the limits of trust in India-US relations when it comes to crisis scenarios. Despite deeper strategic ties — spanning defence, technology, and Indo-Pacific cooperation — the US’s reflex remains de-escalation over alignment. For India, this is a reminder that strategic partnerships do not always translate into narrative control. Pakistan has seized the moment to showcase US involvement as a form of recognition. By amplifying external mediation, Islamabad attempts to recast itself not as a provocateur but a co-equal party in a bilateral dispute. India must resist responding on those terms. Strate-

Pakistan Army chief Asim Munir promoted to Field Marshal: What this means

Asim Munir Field Marshal promotion: The Government of Pakistan has announced that the Chief of Army Staff of Pakistan Army, General Asim Munir, is being promoted to the rank of Field Marshal. This makes him the second Field Marshal of the Pakistan Army in its history after Field Marshal Ayub Khan.

Who was the first Field Marshal of Pakistan Army?

Mohammad Ayub Khan, who was the president of Pakistan from 1958 to 1969, was the first Field Marshal of Pakistan Army. However, it is worth noting that Ayub Khan essentially promoted himself to the highest military rank in the Army after having carried out a coup and installing himself as the President of the country in 1958. The next year in 1959, nearing his age of retirement from the Army, Ayub Khan awarded himself the rank of Field Marshal, citing ‘persistent requests’ from members of the Pakistani civil society. A proclamation promoting him was issued by the Presidential cabinet in October 1959.

Did Ayub Khan serve as Pakistan Army Chief after becoming Field Marshal?

No, Ayub Khan had appointed General Musa Khan as Commander-in-Chief of Pakistan Army after he became the President. He was not in active command of the Army thereafter and concentrated on running the country.

How different is Asim Munir’s elevation to Field Marshal from Ayub Khan’s?

The essential difference is that while Ayub promoted himself, Asim Munir has been promoted by the civilian government of Pakistan headed by a Prime Minister. Another major difference is that while Ayub did not command the Pakistan Army as a Field Marshal, Asim Munir will remain the Chief of Army Staff of Pakistan Army till his scheduled date of retirement. He would have retired from Army in 2025 but for a legislation passed by the National Assembly of Pakistan in November 2024, which extended the tenure of the Army, Navy and Air Chiefs to five years from three years. He is now due to retire in 2027.

What is the military background of Asim Munir?

General Asim Munir was commissioned in the Frontier Force Regiment in April 1986, after graduating from the Officers Training School (OTS) in Mangla (Punjab) which has now been shut down. He received the Sword of Honour at the passing out parade. He has attended career courses at the Fuji School in Japan, Command and Staff College in Quetta, Malaysian Armed Forces Defence College in Kuala Lumpur, and the National Defence University (NDU) in Islamabad. He is said to have studied Islamic studies while posted in Saudi Arabia and memorised the Quran. He has commanded the 23rd Battalion of the Frontier Force Regiment as a Lt Colonel and commanded an infantry brigade in the Northern Areas as a Brigadier. As a Major General he served as Force Commander Northern Areas and later as Director General Military Intelligence. On promotion as Lt General he served as DG ISI and was on that post when the Pulwama terror attack took place in 2019. He subsequently served as GOC of 30 Corps in Gujranwala. Prior to his elevation as Chief of Army Staff in November 2022 he

gic maturity lies in letting others claim headlines while securing outcomes. India must continue deepening bilateral mechanisms with key partners like the US, where cooperation ranges beyond crisis flashpoints. That breadth is the best antidote to Pakistan’s narrow frame.

The signalling around the Indus Waters Treaty — raising the prospect of re-evaluating its operational commitments — is a serious escalation cue. The treaty carries immense symbolic weight. India’s statements are likely aimed at increasing pressure without intending immediate disruption. Still, it is a message with regional reverberations. Water is both a national and an ecological security issue, and changes to the Indus framework would invite international scrutiny, including from China. India must wield this instrument with caution — visible enough to signal resolve, but restrained enough to avoid irreversible fallout.

What makes this confrontation structurally different is China’s embedded role. Beijing is not merely a diplomatic shield for Pakistan but a material enabler. Pakistan’s current air capabilities are heavily influenced by Chinese platforms — from the co-produced JF-17 to the advanced J-10C fighters, and from Wing Loong drones to HQ-9B air defence systems. This represents more than procurement; it is doctrinal alignment. Chinese systems allow Pakistan to reduce dependency on Western suppliers while gaining combat parity with Indian platforms like the Rafale. India must prepare for conflicts where adversaries are networked, platforms are interoperable, and escalation is layered with ambiguity. The use of Chinese materiel in the present crisis, if confirmed, changes the rules of engagement. Pakistani J-10Cs, armed with PL-15 long-range missiles and shielded by Chinese air defence systems, narrow India’s traditional air superiority. In any engagement, India risks confronting Chinese-origin hardware, doctrine, and possibly real-time support. The two-front threat, long theorised, now finds real-time validation. Strategic planners must absorb this reality: Pakistan no longer acts alone, and China no longer stays outside.

With this evolving configuration, the risk of episodic conflict becoming the norm is real. Limited engagements followed by quick ceasefires may prevent war, but they also entrench a cycle of confrontation. This rhythm serves neither India’s strategic ambitions nor regional stability. Each flare-up diverts diplomatic bandwidth, distracts from structural reform, and reinforces old narratives. India must aim not just to deter conflict, but to shift the conflict paradigm. That requires both doctrinal innovation and narrative superiority. The global response, too, remains trapped in contradiction. While much of the world acknowledges India’s strategic maturity and global responsibilities, it defaults to treating South Asian crises as bilateral flare-ups needing urgent mediation. This undermines the idea of India as a stabilising Indo-Pacific power. India’s diplomatic task is twofold: To internationalise its strategic vision while localising its disputes. That means engaging global institutions not merely as stakeholders in peace, but as validators of India’s wider role.

Ultimately, this is not a moment of collapse but one of recalibration. India is confronting a new strategic geometry: Crises are triangular, platforms are shared, and narratives are contested as much as borders. The US will remain a tempering actor, but not an arbiter of truth. China will remain a silent catalyst. Pakistan, emboldened by both, will remain a spoiler. India’s task is to respond when needed, restrain when possible, and reinforce its role as a power whose stability is not defined by others’ volatility. In conflict, as in diplomacy, maturity lies not in escalation, but in the control of the terms of engagement.



was serving as Quartermaster General in Pakistan GHQ in Rawalpindi.

Are there any special perks of office which come with the rank of Field Marshal?

The Indian and Pakistani armies follow the British pattern of ranks and privileges and under these, a Field Marshal is considered to be on ‘active list’ till his death. He does not hold any office in official capacity beyond his date of retirement but he is entitled to wear his uniform at any event he deems fit. A Field Marshal wears special badges of rank, has five stars displayed on his vehicle and as per tradition, salutes with the special Field Marshal’s baton raised to the forehead and not the hand, as is the norm in a military salute. India has had two Field Marshals, Sam Manekshaw and KM Cariappa.

What was the military background of Ayub Khan?

Ayub Khan studied at the Aligarh Muslim University in Uttar Pradesh, India, and joined the Royal Military College at Sandhurst, UK, passing out as commissioned officer in Indian Army in 1928. He served in the Punjab Regiment for most of his career till the rank of Lt Colonel but for a short stint in Assam Regiment. Serving as the second-in-command of his battalion as a senior Major, he was appointed as the Commanding Officer of 1st Battalion of the Assam Regiment in WW2 when his CO was killed in battle. He was removed from command shortly afterwards as his General Officer Commanding found him to be timid in com-

Central Government employees retiring day before annual pay hike date to get notional increment



“Central Government employees retiring a day before their annual pay hike date would be eligible to get notional increment for the purpose of calculating the pension admissible to them,” an official order said.The move follows a Supreme Court order in this regard.

"It is advised that in pursuance of the above referred order dated 20.02.2025 of the Hon'ble Supreme Court, action may be taken to allow the increment on July 1/January 1 to the Central Government employees who retired/are retiring a day before it became due, i.e., on June 30/December 31, and have rendered the requisite qualifying ser-

vice as on the date of their superannuation with satisfactory work and good conduct for calculating the pension admissible to them," the order issued by the Personnel Ministry said.The existing rules allow the employees to choose either July 1 or January 1 as their increment date.As specifically mentioned in the orders of the Supreme Court, "grant of the notional increment on January 1/July 1 shall be reckoned only for the purpose of calculating the pension admissible, and not for the purpose of calculation of other pensionary benefits," said the order issued on Tuesday (May 20, 2025).

Referring to another Supreme Court directive, the Ministry said that "one increment will be payable on and after 01.05.2023".“Enhanced pension for the period prior to April 30, 2023, will not be paid,” it said in the order issued to all the Central Ministries.The All India NPS Employees Federation, which is working for the welfare of Central and State Government employees, welcomed the decision and expressed its gratitude to the Centre.The federation's national president Manjeet Singh Patel also requested the government to extend the benefit of the notional increment to the employees who opt for the unified pension scheme under the National Pension System. There are about 48.66 lakh Central Government employees.

IndiGo’s long-haul debut: Thrice weekly flights to Manchester, Amsterdam from Mumbai from early July as part of airline’s internationalisation strategy

IndiGo, aviation, indian expressIndiGo’s move to have a wide-body fleet of its own marked a significant departure from the classic and proven budget airline model that focusses on single-type narrow-body fleet and domestic and short-haul international routes. IndiGo will start operating flights to Manchester and Amsterdam from Mumbai from early July, marking the long-haul debut for India’s largest airline that has been making concerted efforts to rapidly expand its international network and go beyond short-haul international routes. While Manchester and Amsterdam are the initial long-haul routes for IndiGo, the airline is understood to be evaluating multiple other key long-haul markets in Europe and beyond to expand its international footprint.

The carrier’s Mumbai-Manchester service will start on July 1, and the Mumbai-Amsterdam service will begin on July 2. Both will be thrice weekly services and will be operated with the wide-body Boeing 787-9 aircraft that the carrier has taken on damp lease from Norse Atlantic Airways. IndiGo has opened bookings for these services with one-way fares starting at Rs 24,499 for Manchester and Rs 26,999 for Amsterdam.

The aircraft that will operate these flights have 56 business class seats, marketed as IndiGoStretch seats, in a 2x3x2 configuration, while the economy cabin consists of 282 seats in a 3x3x3 configuration. In a first for IndiGo, the airline will offer complimentary hot meals to all flyers on these flights, which is a departure from its model of paid meals. As the airline’s regular fleet does not have ovens on board, it serves only cold meals and instant meals prepared with hot water.Over the past few months, IndiGo signed agreements with Norse Atlantic Airways to damp lease a total of six Boeing 787-9 Dreamliner aircraft, one of which is already operating on its Delhi-Bangkok route. These aircraft will support IndiGo’s debut into the European market, starting with Manchester and Amsterdam, while the airline awaits the delivery of its A321XLR planes from this year and A350-900 aircraft from 2027 onwards.

As part of its “internationalisation strategy”, IndiGo plans to induct extra-long-range narrow-body Airbus A321 XLR aircraft and wide-body Airbus A350 planes to operate medium- and long-range international flights. The carrier evidently does not want to wait for these aircraft to further fuel its international expansion, and therefore decided to enter the long-haul market using damp-leased planes. The airline is understood to be in the market for more wide-body leasing opportunities.



After dominating the Indian skies with a market share of over 60 per cent, IndiGo has been focusing on internationalisation, which entails a rapid expansion of its international network—including foraying into the long-haul segment—given the robust overseas travel demand from India. Over the past two to three years, IndiGo has expanded its international network by adding destinations in regions including Central Asia and the Caucasus, Southeast Asia, and Africa using its narrow-body fleet. Europe, where Air India is the only Indian carrier that operates direct flights, was expected to be the next frontier for IndiGo.“This will be a major milestone in our international growth journey as we move towards our vision to become a global aviation leader, propelling India’s ambition of transforming into a global aviation hub,” IndiGo’s Chief Executive Officer Pieter Elbers said, adding that these routes will also provide seamless connections with IndiGo’s vast domestic network that covers over 90 Indian cities.

IndiGo’s move to have a wide-body fleet of its own marked a significant departure from the classic and proven budget airline model that focusses on single-type narrow-body fleet and domestic and short-haul international routes. The low-cost long-haul model, on the other hand, has seen far more failures than successes globally. IndiGo currently operates a fleet of narrow-body jet and turboprop aircraft, except for two wide-body Boeing 777 planes on lease from Turkish Airlines specifically for flights between India and Turkey.Over the past few years, IndiGo has been pushing its international network expansion to the extent it can with its narrow-body fleet. But instead of entering high-competition and busy routes, the airline has focussed on identifying under-served routes and those with latent demand, while also stimulating demand on certain others.



India Ratings and Research pointed out.On the other hand, the government’s capital expenditure should support certain sectors, such as cement. In April, cement production was up 6.7 per cent, as per this week’s core sector data.

Government launches ‘Financial Fraud Risk Indicator’ to safeguard mobile users

New Delhi: In a key step towards combating cyber fraud and financial crime via mobiles, the Department of Telecommunications (DoT) on Wednesday announced sharing of “Financial Fraud Risk Indicator (FRI)” with its stakeholders.The multi-dimensional analytical tool, developed as part of the Digital Intelligence Platform (DIP), empowers financial institutions with advanced actionable intelligence for cyber fraud prevention.This will enhance cyber protection and validation checks in case of mobile numbers flagged with this tool when digital payment is proposed to be made to such numbers, said the Ministry of Communications.It is a risk-based metric that classifies a mobile number as having been associated with Medium, High, or Very High risk of financial fraud.Leading UPI platforms — PhonePe, Paytm, and Google Pay, which collectively account for over 90 per cent of UPI transactions — have begun integrating DIP alerts into their systems.

IMA intensifies fight against quacks in Telangana



Hyderabad: To further intensify the fight against quackery, the Indian Medical Association (IMA), Telangana chapter, on Wednesday directed its local branches to submit a list of medical establishments that are run by quacks to relevant District Collector and Superintendent of Police and urged them to take swift action.In a letter addressed to its local units, the IMA, Telangana, directed its members approach the District Collector and SP to give proper directions to District Medical and Health Officer (DM&HO) to take action against healthcare facilities that are operated by unqualified individuals.“We think this will yield more results by bringing pressure at the local level. We should also educate our members not to encourage quacks and their establishments. Please represent to the District Collector and SP by giving them a list of medical establishments run by quacks, asking to take action against then in view of the magisterial powers that they have,” the IMA, Telangana in a letter addressed th presidents of its local bodies said. We request you to form a core committee locally to collect the data on malpractices being done by the quacks and even qualified doctors and present the reports to the District Collector and SP to take action,” IMA, TS chapter said.

Are you getting enough protein? How to hit daily protein targets?

Hyderabad: In the last few years, protein has become part of the popular zeitgeist as public health specialists and nutritionists urge Indians to include good quality protein in their diet to fight the metabolic crisis characterized by the rising incidence of diabetes, hypertension and NCDs such as chronic heart and kidney ailments.The urgency in their pleas for increased daily protein intake is due to studies that indicate widespread protein deficiency. The Indian Marketing Research Bureau (MRBS) study on protein consumption indicates that 73 percent of Indians are protein deficient, while other studies claim that 9 out of 10 Indians consume less inadequate daily protein.

What is the ideal protein intake for an average healthy person?

The Dietary Guidelines of Hyderabad-based National Institute of Nutrition (ICMR-NIN), released last year, clearly state that the Recommended Dietary Allowance (RDA) for protein intake is 0.83 grams of protein/kg/day for healthy adults. This means the RDA for protein is 54 g/day for a person of weight 65 kgs, regardless of physical activity or gender.The challenge, however, is to achieve our daily target of protein allowance by ensuring we consume high quality protein, since not all proteins are digested and absorbed with equal efficiency.“An appropriate combination of cereals with pulses in the ratio of 3:1 (raw food weight) can meet all the protein requirements. Addition of 250 ml of milk in our daily diet can further enhance the intake of protein and meet the requirements. For non-vegetarians, high-quality protein from the recommended level of protein can be had from fish, poultry and lean meat or egg consumption,” the NIN dietary recommendations said.

How do vegans get enough protein?



Vegans eating varied diets containing vegetables, beans, grains, nuts and seeds will have no difficulty in obtaining enough protein from their regular diet. Appropriate combination of cereals with pulses in the ratio of 3:1 (raw) is the most efficient way to obtain all the protein content from a vegan diet.Most vegetarian foods have a protein digestibility range of 70 percent to 85 percent and a balanced vegan diet for a moderately active man provides more than 80gm crude protein per day, which translates to approximately 60gm of quality protein that meets the requirements of all the proteins.

What are sources of protein for vegans?

Pulses: Lentils, green gram, horse gram, black gram, chickpeas, kidney beans, cow peas, soyabean and green peas.Nuts and Seeds: Almonds, pistachios, cashews, walnuts, hazelnuts, chia seeds, pumpkin seeds, flax seeds and sesame seeds.What are sources of protein for non-vegetarians:

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



Hyderabad: As different cities including Mumbai, Chennai, urban centres of Kerala and Karnataka apart from Southeast Asian countries like Singapore and Thailand, reporting a fresh wave of Covid-19 infections, experts urge people not to panic but be diligent in adopting precautions.The fresh Covid-19 positive cases are widely believed to have been caused by the JN.1 sub-lineages of SARS-CoV-2 and linked to two deaths in Maharashtra since January.

Experts emphasize the need for the State Public Health wing initiating surveillance, collect samples for genome sequencing and take measures towards general pan-

demio preparedness.Given the significant travel to and from Singapore, Thailand, and nearby countries, there is an increased risk of travelers becoming ill. Consequently, such individuals must take precautions such as proper respiratory etiquette, practicing hand hygiene with alcohol-based sanitizers or soap, covering nose and mouth while coughing and disposing of used tissue papers in garbage bins.“There is a history of seasonal rise of Covid infections in Southeast Asian countries because of congenial weather conditions and densely populated areas. There is always a chance of this virus spreading rapidly through the air. However, one should remember that JN.1 sub-lineages are not very harmful and there is no need for people to panic. Basic precautions will be enough,” says Dr M Raja Rao, Principal of Osmania Medical College (OMC).

Individuals who have respiratory symptoms should wear masks and avoid exposing others in their household or workplace. Those with weakened immune systems should wear masks when in public gatherings and even in closed spaces.Various respiratory infections can cause symptoms similar to those of Covid 19. Some of these infections can be prevented by vaccination. Senior doctors urge senior citizens, pregnant women and individuals with co-morbid conditions to consult their local health centres and attending physicians to learn more about vaccination.

Lancet study flags adolescent health challenges for 2030: Why diet, anaemia and mental health must be in focus

adolescentThe report uses a measure called Disability Adjusted Life Years (DALYs), which are the years of healthy life lost due to sickness, disability or premature death.Poor nutrition, anaemia and mental health will be a challenge for one billion adolescents globally by 2030, according to an analysis by the Lancet Commission.The analysis used data from the 2021 Global Burden of Disease study. New projections suggest that, without political will, policy initiatives and financial investments, adolescents will be exposed to health risks in countries which are already battling multiple disease burdens.

The Lancet Commission estimates that nearly one-third of adolescent girls will be anaemic globally by 2030 while 464 million adolescents (boys and girls) will be overweight or obese (143 million more than in 2015). Similarly, adolescent mental health has seen a significant decline over the past three decades in countries with available data, a trend exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic.The report uses a measure called Disability Adjusted Life Years (DALYs), which are the years of healthy life lost due to sickness, disability or premature death. The DALYs attributable to communicable, maternal and nutritional conditions among girls in India is 14,155 per 100,000 population, while it is 12,310/per lakh in boys which remains above the target of <2,500 per 100,000. The DALYs due to nutritional deficiencies in girls in the age group of 10-24 is 1,358 out of every 100,000 while in boys it is 370.9 per lakh. Altogether 52 per cent girls and 20.8 per cent boys in this age group were anaemic when the target should be less than 10 per cent Also, 43 per cent of girls in the 15-24 age group are

among those who are “Not in Employment, Education or Training (NEET),” posing serious challenges in health and youth engagement.In India, the rate of DALYs attributable to mental health and self-harm in the girls in the 10-24 age group was 2.738 per lakh.Commission co-chair Professor Sarah Baird, George Washington University (USA), said that India has made important policy progress by overturning penal codes for consensual same sex relationships and adding adolescent health as a separate topic in the medical education curriculum. “India has also been identified as an exemplar country for handling teenage pregnancies,” she says.The Commission identified several significant new threats to adolescent health like climate change and the digital revolution. “Today’s adolescents are the first generation who will live their entire life with the average annual global temperature that has consistently been 0.5 degree centigrade higher than pre-industrial levels. And by 2100, 1.9 billion adolescents will live in a world that is expected to warm around 2.8 degrees above pre-industrial times, bringing catastrophic risks for their health such as heat-related illnesses, reduction in food and water quality and availability, and a rise in mental health conditions related to climate events,” the report said.Youth Commissioner Surabhi Dogra says the report factors in air pollution as a non-communicable disease risk factor. She also made a strong case for investing in the future of teen health. “Adolescent workers in informal sectors such as agriculture continue to face exploitation and occupational health dangers. We need to equip them with skills and opportunities to obtain jobs in the green and blue economies,” she adds.

If Pakistan is kept away from the Asia Cup, a public outcry is unlikely



GNS News Agency, May 27

Don't mix sport and politics, says Pakistan cricketer Mohammed Rizwan. It is the kind of statement made by those who understand neither politics nor sport. History has shown that sport is often politics by other means. Perhaps Rizwan fears that owing to his country's politics, international cricket might come to a standstill there. And if India refuse to play Pakistan on neutral territory, there will be a question mark over World Cups too. National coach and BJP politician Gautam Gambhir thinks India should not play Pakistan anytime anywhere. In India's plans to isolate Pakistan, cricket is a useful tool.The Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) has clarified that a decision has not yet been taken on the Asia Cup to be played here in September. But it's difficult to see either Pakistan coming to India or India accommodating Pakistan by playing in the UAE or Sri Lanka. It is too soon, and, as the government has said, Operation Sindoor is ongoing. The current cessation of hostilities is only a 'strategic pause.'

For so long has cricket borrowed metaphors from the military that to see the traffic in the opposite direction (the IPL's 'strategic timeout') is startling. It might not be a bad idea to give cricket between the two countries a break from the jingoistic reactions either side of the border. In the current atmosphere, a public outcry is unlikely.An Asia Cup without an India-Pakistan match is like Hamlet without the Prince of Denmark. It will be interesting to see the politics versus commerce argument unfold, since Sony has paid \$170 million —for media rights for all Asian Cricket Council (ACC) tournaments till 2031. This includes men's and

women's tournaments in the Asia Cup, Under-19 and Emerging Nations competitions, the last of which is scheduled to be held in Sri Lanka next month. So it is a question, as Rizwan might have realised by now, of mixing sport, politics and commerce.There is too the question of the ACC itself, currently headed by Pakistan's Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi who is the Chairman of the Pakistan Cricket Board. The ACC, founded in 1983, was a useful body when Asia didn't have much of a voice in the International Cricket Council. But it might have overstayed its welcome. None of the full members seem to have the inclination of 'spreading the game' in the region with the kind of missionary zeal that was initially apparent.

Fifteen per cent of the broadcasting income from the Asia Cup goes to each of the full members India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, and Afghanistan. India apart, none can afford to let that amount go. If India refuse visas to the Pakistan team – other countries are unlikely to complain to the International Cricket Council now headed by the son of India's Home Minister — the television rights amount might have to be readjusted.Indians keen to send the message to other countries that you support the enemy at your own peril, have made it a patriotic duty to stop visiting Türkiye or Azerbaijan, with a popular booking website saying "In solidarity with our nation, we have discontinued all promotions and offers for travel to Azerbaijan and Turkey." In the same spirit, it is possible that the BCCI might cancel India's tour of Bangladesh in August. A retired army official there was quoted as saying, "If India attacks Pakistan, Bangladesh should occupy the seven states of North-East India. I think it is necessary to start a discussion on a joint-military system with China." Competitive patriotism is a major sport in South Asia.The Asia Cup has been buffeted by political winds before. In 1986, India pulled out of the tournament in Sri Lanka as relations with that country were at a low ebb. Pakistan pulled out in 1990-91 when it was held in India as political relations between the two were strained. In 1993, the tournament itself was cancelled for the same reason.Cricket has a knack of muddling through violence, wrote Gideon Haigh recently, recalling political assassinations or terrorist attacks that have left ongoing cricket unaffected. But this feels different. India hold all the cards, and as recent events have shown, they are not shy of playing them.

Why Manchester United vs Tottenham was one of the most underwhelming European finales in recent memory



GNS News Agency, May 27

On the eve of the Europa League final, Spurs manager Ange Postecoglou had blasted a reporter for a headline which said that the Australian was "teetering between hero and clown". "I'll tell you one thing, irrespective of tomorrow, I'm not a clown and I never will be, mate," he had said. On Wednesday night, Postecoglou edged past the travelling circus that is Manchester United to help Tottenham end their 17-year trophy drought in a final which will be forgotten in three months' time by everyone except the Spurs' fans.

In one of the most dull and meandering finals in recent memory, both teams, who are 16th and 17th in the Premier League table looked like they were playing in a Community Shield clash, rather than one of the top European competitions. Throughout the match, United kept the lion's share of the possession only to pass ponderously to each other in a hope to penetrate a Spurs backline which had the propensity to leak goals. But the white wall held their nerves and while Micky van de Ven made an acrobatic clearance to deny United a sure shot goal and goalkeeper Guglielmo Vicario saved a late Luke Shaw header, Spurs were never really threatened by their more decorated counterparts with the Red Devils showing all the accuracy of a faulty cannon.As opposed to United who had 15 shots but rarely hit the target, Spurs took 3 and scored from one of them as

Ruben Amorim's side's defending frailties were on display once again. After captain Bruno Fernandes, who had a rather forgettable outing, conceded possession to Pape Sarr near the centre, Spurs broke quickly with the Senegal star eventually firing in a cross which Spurs defender Brennan Johnson got something on before the ball deflected off Luke Shaw's arm and went into the United net with Andre Onana scampering to clear it. A messy goal which perfectly encapsulated the nature of the match.The 42nd minute strike was Spurs' last attempt of the match as they went back to defending which would make 2004's Greece proud. United would keep coming at them but with their talisman Fernandes choosing this match to have an off night, the creative bankruptcy of the team was laid bare. Rasmus Hojlund was toothless once again, Mason Mount was invisible while Alejandro Garnacho did little of note in his cameo appearance. It was only when Amad Diallo had the ball in the right wing where United looked mildly threatening but with their main creative output Bruno misfiring, the Ivory coast winger could make little impact in the match.

With the win, Spurs were the latest in a season which will ultimately be remembered for so called underdog teams breaking their longstanding trophy drought joining the likes of Newcastle, Crystal Palace and Bologna. In a sweet ironic twist, former Spurs captain Harry Kane also won his first major trophy in his career when he clinched the Bundesliga with Bayern Munich.As for United, this was their 7th winless match against Spurs, losing the last 4 matches against them, all of them coming this season with Postecoglou's men continuing to be their bogey team. The infamous 'It's Tottenham' speech by Sir Alex Ferguson now seems like lightyears away, such has been the fall from grace by United.However, not taking anything away from Tottenham, the Europa finale offered up exactly what you would expect from two teams who look on course to finish the season just above the relegation. For Spurs though, they have silverware which papers over the cracks for the time being. For United, the cracks have turned into crevices which threaten to engulf Amorim's promising management career.

Man Utd coach Ruben Amorim admits job not being in danger is 'strange'



GNS News Agency, May 27

Ahead of a season-defining Europa League final against Tottenham Hotspur, Manchester United coach Ruben Amorim has admitted that it's strange that he doesn't have the fear of a sacking that other managers in similar positions have faced.Amorim's United go up against Tottenham on Thursday. Tottenham, under Ange Postecoglou have suffered in the English Premier League just as Man Utd have. And yet it is the Australian coach who seems to have his job riding on the result of the game. Amorim, though, knows that even a loss in the final will not mean that his job is in danger. The Portuguese manager has constantly said that his methods need to be accepted by the team and the management and his staunch disregard for league position has ended in a grudging extension of time and further transfer windows."I know that in this kind of club, also Tottenham but especially Manchester United, it's strange because you have some coaches here that lose games and are sacked. It's hard to explain. People see what we are trying to do and see I'm thinking more about the club than myself.

"People, especially the board, understand that we have a lot of issues that in the context are really hard. I don't know how to explain [why] the fans like me at this moment. It's hard to explain. I will try to prove myself to the fans, to the board, but I don't have an explanation for you." Amorim said he is not concerned about his job. "It's a good thing for me – I never worry about that. That is a part of being a coach. And the most important thing, I know what I'm doing. I explained everything before we start, I explain about the storm [that would come].United will face the Spurs at the San Mames stadium in Bilbao, where they beat the home team 3-0 in the semi-final.

We missed Axar badly, says Faf du Plessis

HYDERABAD: Faf du Plessis, captain of Delhi Capitals which was knocked out of contention for a place in the play-offs after losing to Mumbai Indians in the IPL league match in Mumbai on Wednesday night, said the team lost momentum in the last two overs when Mumbai were batting after they bowled well for 18 overs."I thought we were excellent today in the field. The guys showed great fight. Obviously, not the easiest pitch to bat on, so it probably made the bowlers' job a little bit easier. But still, it's a very strong batting line-up (of MI), and I thought we were excellent," du Plessis said in the post-match briefing."And then [we] just let it slip there in the last two overs which... momentum is a real thing in cricket. So I thought the way that they counterpunched there to get almost 50 in the last two overs really cost us the game," he said.

A Suryakumar Yadav knock of two parts, restrained at first before breaking free



GNS News Agency, May 27

The capacity to produce tournament-defining moments has been a hallmark of Mumbai Indians' IPL supremacy. Assured of the knockouts, they would reflect on the last two overs of their innings on a sluggish track, wherein Suryakumar Yadav and Naman Dhir scythed 47 runs off 12 balls to reverse the game's tide irreversibly to their side. Entailed a 59-run cruise, after Jasprit Bumrah and Mitchell Santner tightened the noose on Delhi Capitals' necks, ending their playoff ambitions.Naman Dhir walks with brisk, purposeful strides, as though the dugout was a prison he had escaped. A largely under-utilised batting all-rounder, he has offered only fits and flashes of his exhilarating stroke-making. But late in the Mumbai Indians' innings, with the home-side praying for an injection of pace, he strode in with brisk, purposeful strides and rattled out 24 off only eight balls, in the company of Suryakumar Yadav, himself hitting violent riffs at the end, to power Mumbai Indians' total to 180/5.Until the 19th over of Mukesh Kumar that Naman alone ransacked 20 runs (Suryakumar added seven), batting was a laborious exercise. The ball gripping, turning and holding off the surface, the wrist-spin pair of Kuldeep Yadav and Vipraj Nigam consigning them to a spin-swamp. MI had stuttered to 133 for 7 in 18 overs. Then, just like that, Naman fired his ammunition, transforming the surface to a belter.

The first swipe was the most elegant one, him balancing on his toes and driving over extra cover, with scarcely any violence imparted on the ball. Savagery would wait for the next ball. Mukesh's yorker went awry, but the low full toss still needed some propulsion to the stands. He whirled his wrists furiously, imparting it a helicopter-shot hue. Not quite MS Dhoni like in flourish, but hit with riveting power.Next, he impersonated Hardik Pandya. The shot-ball sat up. There was barely any impetus on the ball to pull it fine or ramp over the keeper. So he stood on the front-foot and threw the kitchen sink at it, as the ball flew flat over long-on, his legs air-borne in the body-crushing intensity of the shot. An exasperated Mukesh, his body flailing, bowled a tired length ball next, which he creamed through extra cover, the strong wrists again providing the power.

The onslaught woke up Suryakumar, who had just

completed his half-century with a brutal six over extra cover off Mukesh's 19th over, off the 37th ball he had faced. More conservative than usual, playing to the situation on a treacherous surface, he broke free in the last over. Dushmanta Chameera's waywardness helped. A slower length ball was smoked over extra cover for a six. The next, a slow full toss was whipped through deep mid-wicket. Chameera's retort — a yorker outside the off-stump — was laser-guided to third-man fence, his first shot behind in the reverse 'V'.

It was not a quintessential Suryakumar knock of improvised wizardry, but one of considerable restraint. Realising the sluggishness of the surface, he eschewed the shots behind the stumps and relied largely on singles. The effort was satisfying, he later said: "Waiting gives you a lot of fruits in life. This is one innings which I was hoping for a long time: a difficult situation, to bat through to the end."The 47 runs the pair looted in the last two overs was the perceptible difference between the sides. But DC would rue on the list of prominent absentees—Mitchell Starc and Axar Patel, the captain — as they find themselves out of the play-off race.

Jasprit Bumrah and Mitchell Santner are the oddest pair for a batsman to face in tandem. Bumrah bursts from his spring-loaded steps, a saunter suddenly becomes sprint, his bowling arm tracing paths than no bowling arm had ever imagined tracing, the shoulders tilting, the ball zipped from directly above his head, and the hyper-extended elbow delaying the release for a crucial fraction of a second. Then the heat, the rage, the deception, the fear in the batsmen's eyes, the inevitability of doom, an inspired Bumrah is one of the most edifying sights on any cricket field.DC's batsmen were caught in a Bumrah-storm, which usually blows in clutch moments. Captain Hardik Pandya brought him as late as the seventh over, because he knew precisely that he could bring on his lead act any time of the innings. He is situation and condition proof. Deepak Chahar and Trent Boult are most lethal with the new ball. Hardik himself is best deployed in the middle overs. But any time is a good time for Bumrah. And so he did, hurrying, harrying, confounding batsmen for time, space and width.

Immediately, the batsmen have to retrain their eyes to Santner's poetry in (slow motion). He is all ice, ambles to the crease, smooth and serene, pauses in his release and tosses the ball like he is throwing a chew bone to his pet dog in a park. But the slow, benign ball suddenly acquires streaks of evil in the air. It drifts in, drops suddenly and breaks away viciously past the right-handed batsmen. The batsmen are caught in a hypnotic web — still limbs, frozen eyes and dazed mind.Whenever DC found a ray of hope, Santner stubbed it out. Their start was horrible, losing three wickets for 27 runs. But when Vipraj Nigam and Sameer Rizvi found some momentum, Santner ejected Vipraj. Later, Tristan Stubbs and Ashutosh Sharma contributed 38 runs. He returned to consume them both in four balls, effectively settling the game and sealing DC's fate. Bumrah then flicked on the afterburners to complete a remarkable turnaround.

'If the board & fans don't want me, I'll leave': Man Utd manager Ruben Amorim after Europa League final loss

GNS News Agency, May 27

Where it was jubilation for Tottenham Hotspur to win their first trophy in 17 years, the problems for their counterpart, Manchester United, do not seem to be reducing anytime soon. The Ruben Amorim side, who sit 16th in the Premier League, lost 1-0 to Spurs in the Europa League final in Bilbao Manager Amorim took over at United last year in November, with the side struggling in the Premier League at 13th in the table. Since then, the club has only succumbed under pressure, slipping down three places with manager Amorim knocked out of the three cup competitions in the process.

However, Amorim still believes he is the right man for the job. "If the board and the fans feel I'm not the right guy, I will go in the next day," said Amorim after the Europa League final. "But I will not quit again. I am confident in my job. As you see, I will not change anything in the way I do things."He added, "In this moment, I am not here to defend myself. It's not my style. I cannot do it, it is really hard for me..... I have nothing to show to the fans and say 'I'm going to improve because of this, I have these problems,' I will not do nothing."

"In this moment, it is a little bit of faith. Let's see. I'm always open, if the board and the fans feel that I am not the right guy, I will go the next day without any conversation



about compensation," said a dejected Amorim. There have also been questions and concerns about Amorim's appointment, with voices suggesting whether United might have gone backwards since Amorim took over the managerial role from Erik ten Hag.Speaking on this, the Portuguese said, "I don't agree (that we are going backwards)," Amorim said. "We've had some bad results but I think we have improved in certain areas. We were competitive in more games that we didn't score in. I understand I'm a young guy. But I also understand that if we have the chances that we had in the second half, if we managed to score one, the game should have been different, this press conference should be so different."

Neeraj Chopra's former coach Klaus Bartonietz back in India to guide coaches and mentor budding throwers

GNS News Agency, May 27

The contrast between Hisar in Haryana and Oberschlettenbach, a village in south-west Germany, is stark. The latter is home to just 130 residents, has scenic hiking trails, forested mountains and old castles. The summers are pleasant. Hisar has a population of over three lakh, a bustling city centre with temperatures touching 43 degrees centigrade in May.For biomechanics expert Klaus Bartonietz, better known as Neeraj Chopra's coach before the legendary Jan Zelezny took over earlier this year, Oberschlettenbach is home. He returned to the German village when his successful partnership with Chopra ended last October, after fetching two Olympic and two World Championship medals.

Seven months later, the 72-year-old is in India as a coaches' coach at the Inspire Institute of Sport (IIS) centre in Hisar, formed via an MoU with the Sports Authority of India (SAI). October to mid-April was a welcome break for Bartonietz. "There's no traffic in Oberschlettenbach. In the middle of the village, water comes out of a fountain, we drink that water. We went to the forest to cut firewood. In March and April, we plant potatoes," Bartonietz said about his life away from coaching. With wife Luba, he also travelled halfway across the world to meet their daughter and her family in Queensland, Australia. His son works in the IT industry in Hamburg. In the mid- 1970s, as a 25-year-old, Bartonietz met Luba, a 20-year-old Russian gymnast, in Dombai, in the foothills of the Caucasus mountains. They have been married nearly four decades.But after the break at home and the extended holiday Down Under, Bartonietz got the itch to coach again. Luba realised Bartonietz was getting restless. It was around this time that IIS president Manisha Malhotra offered him the role of a consultant in Hisar. "Manisha had the idea. Don't let him go so easily out of India. Let him come back and help us to work with our younger throwers. So we thought about such a project,"

Bartonietz told The Indian Express.Among the javelin throwers in Hisar is Deepika, a silver medalist at the 2022 Asian Under-18 Championship, and Jyothi, a former junior national gold medalist. Himanshu, the current Asian Under-18 javelin champion, is also one of the trainees. Bartonietz guides the coaches who train 21 throw-events athletes.He has been at Hisar for less than a week and returns home on Friday to complete coaching assignments he had signed up for earlier. The short visit to the Haryana town is like a recce, to figure out what he is getting into as a long-term consultant of the throws programme."There are five or six athletes who are at a very good level and require very sophisticated coaching so their talent is not wasted. It unfortunately happens too often, everywhere in the world," Bartonietz said. The veteran coach is particularly impressed by the medal-winning potential and backstory of Jyothi and Deepika from Bongaon, a village nearly 50 kilometres from Hisar, where physical education teacher Hanuman Singh set up a javelin academy. "They are already the best in India in their age group. There is no synthetic track in their academy. Next to them, buffaloes go swimming. The good thing is these are kids of farmers, so they get a good environment, healthy food and buffalo milk," Bartonietz said.He is following the East German philosophy, where a coach is responsible for an athlete. Others, like consultants, can advise the coach but not the athlete directly."I, as an outsider, cannot interfere with the process. I have to speak to the coach and then the coach says, 'okay, maybe we do it this way'. With the coaches here (in Hisar), we have already become like a team. I discuss my observations with them."Bartonietz may take up a direct coaching role for athletes who have the potential to excel at a higher level, Manisha said."Ideally, we would like Klaus to train the trainers or coaches because they are the ones who will be there on a day-to-day basis. When you work with developmental athletes, they don't need a coach of Klaus's level. Biomechanics comes at an elite stage.

Anand Pandit explains the fee structure of Bollywood superstars: ‘In a country of 140 crore, only 10 actors are sellable’



In the last couple of years, Bollywood has been questioned in terms of star fees, their entourage and lack of original content. These topics often made headlines with stars charging in crores, producers complaining about their expensive entourage and writers crying for basic pay leading to content crisis. Amid all these discussions, real estate developer and producer Anand Pandit explained the structure of fees of these stars and the lack of originality in the industry despite repeated box office debacles. “A star’s fees should be linked to the money a film collects in its first weekend,” said Anand Pandit in an exclusive interview with SCREEN.

When Shah Rukh Khan made a comeback with Jawan in 2023, it was reported that the actor charged somewhere between Rs 150 crore to Rs 250 crore for the film. Similarly, it was speculated that actor Allu Arjun was paid Rs 300 crore for his film Pushpa 2. When Laal Singh Chaddha flopped, Aamir Khan made headlines for reportedly charging between Rs 100 crore to Rs 275 crore for the film (He, however, later claimed he was never paid a penny for the film after it didn’t work at the box office). These reports sparked debates around stars blindly charging fees for their work while supporting actors struggling for bear minimum. Previously, in a report by Indian Express, it was found out that while these stars were paid in crores, an actor in supporting cast role was offered Rs 6,000 for a day’s job. Films like Bade Miyan Chote Miyan was all over the news for spending over Rs 400 crore in the making of the film. It collected Rs 111 crore.

“We have started spending money on the look of the film and stars of the film rather than spending money on writers. There was a time when films sold solely because they were written by Salim-Javed. They had their names on the hoarding boards. Today, we never see any writer’s

name anywhere. We will have to put a lot of money on writers. We will have to go back to that era where we can give importance to these writers so that the original content returns.”

With films like Laal Singh Chaddha (a remake of Forrest Gump), and Baby John (a remake of Tamil film Theri) miserably failing at the box office, Anand Pandit said Bollywood is only focusing on producing content inspired by Korean, Spanish and South Indian films. “People are not liking these remakes. If we put more efforts on writers and pay them better, I think things will get better.”

“When it comes to fees of these stars, we all know that in a country with a population of over 140 crore people, there are only about ten of them who are sellable. So they are commanding their own prices. It is always a demand and supply. I won’t comment on that they exorbitantly charging. If you afford them and if you think your film can make money after paying them. You go with them. But, I do believe that we should create a system where if a star charges an ‘x’ amount, he should be responsible upto certain extent to bring that much money back to the producer on the opening day or weekend. His fees should be linked depending on the film’s first weekend collection. It will make actors more responsible.” When asked how are these fees decided, Anand shared, “Based on your story and vision, you have this set of actors who you think will fit in the story. Then comes budget. We decide the scale of the film and the budget needed for that. If your budget exceeds then you eliminate some actors who may not fit within the budget. And eventually you reach out to those actors and try to negotiate with them.” He added, “It is always demand and supply. If the actor is willing to work with your production house or director, or story, he will definitely discount his price or he will give some kind of concession on his price. This is how the fees is decided.” In between there were also reports that suggested that big names like Shah Rukh Khan, Salman Khan, Aamir Khan and Hrithik Roshan work on the profit sharing model where they charge a certain percent of their fees and increase their share in the profit sharing margin.

Anand confirmed the news and explained, “There is generally a minimum fee set for actors. Plus profit margin or share in the project. I am not sure who is already on that model but I have heard, and cannot disclose it because of the secrecy. But yes, there are bigger stars who have adopted this model. It is a very wise thing.” Talking to CNBC-TV, Siddharth Roy Kapur shared that the current trend involves a two-part compensation model. “A fixed fee built into the project’s cost and a share in the profits. By lowering the upfront fee, the overall budget becomes more manageable. This is becoming common in the industry.”

Aishwarya Rai Bachchan at Cannes: Actor sports sindoor, stuns in a white saree with ruby necklaces



Fans of Aishwarya Rai Bachchan wait all year long for her appearance at the Cannes Film Festival red carpet and this year too, fans have been waiting for a glimpse of Aish at the French film festival. On Wednesday, Aishwarya walked the red carpet in a stunning white saree as she completed her look with a collection of ruby necklaces. She completed her look with a thick line of sindoor (vermillion) on her head. In some parts of India, sindoor is worn by married women to signify that their marital status. Aishwarya waved at her fans, and also posed with a namaste as she walked the carpet. Fans were elated to see the star and quickly labeled her as the “Queen of Cannes.” One of her fans wrote, “Now that’s what you call a comeback ???? Queen of Cannes for a reason ??” Another fan, who seemed to be very pleased with Aishwarya’s fashion here, wrote, “Finally she slayed and broke her curse. Oh my god! It feels like we just won a war.” In the past, Aishwarya has experimented a lot with her looks at the

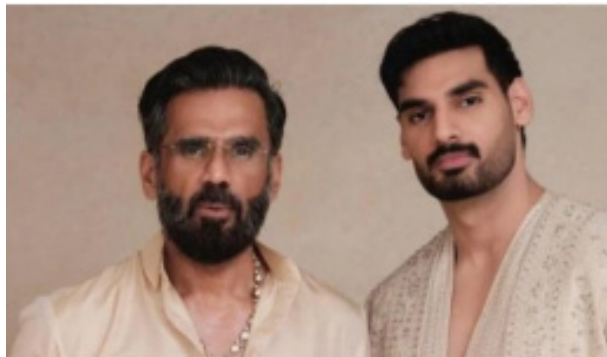
film festival and while some of them have been crowd pleasers, some of her looks have also drawn a polarising response. Aishwarya Rai Bachchan Aishwarya Rai poses on the red carpet during arrivals for the screening of the film “The History of Sound” in competition at the 78th Cannes Film Festival in Cannes, France, May 21, 2025. REUTERS/Stephane Mahe aishwarya rai bachchan Aishwarya Rai poses on the red carpet during arrivals for the screening of the film “The History of Sound” in competition at the 78th Cannes Film Festival in Cannes, France, May 21, 2025. REUTERS/Manon Cruz aishwarya rai bachchan Aishwarya Rai Bachchan poses for photographers upon arrival at the premiere of the film ‘The History of Sound’ at the 78th international film festival, Cannes, southern France, Aishwarya reached Cannes with her daughter Aaradhya on Tuesday. Aishwarya is there as a part of her association with Loreal. She has been attending the festival since 2002 and has appeared on the red carpet almost every year. Aishwarya first attended the festival for her film Devdas with Shah Rukh Khan and director Sanjay Leela Bhansali. “It wasn’t for an individual but the entire team of ‘Devdas’ and it meant a lot to us because it was quite unexpected. Because we were showcasing our film and getting that kind of reception that we did was truly overwhelming. So the first makes it so memorable imagine to have first experience and one like that so that is something and I don’t think anyone in the world can take away from us and that is something that will always make us feel thankful for having that experience for us to cherish and recount forever,” she told IANS a few years ago. The actor and husband Abhishek Bachchan have been surrounded by divorce rumours for months. While the duo has responded with a dignified silence, Aishwarya’s sindoor look as being seen as a response to the naysayers.

‘Dhajjiyan uda dunga’: Suniel Shetty threatens to expose Bollywood folks running negative campaigns against son Ahan

Actor Suniel Shetty voiced his anger at those who’ve allegedly spread negativity about his son, Ahan, in the press. He said that he will expose each and every person responsible for these negative campaigns, and threatened to hold a press conference where he will reveal their names publicly. He said that Ahan has been accused of having a large entourage by individuals who are upset that he chose to do Border 2 instead of their film. He also said that Ahan was replaced in projects because of these negative reports. Ahan is working on Border 2, a sequel to the iconic original war movie, in which Suniel played a memorable role.

In an interview with Zoom Entertainment, he said that he has advised Ahan to treat Border 2 like his final film. He said that the movie will probably be rewatched for years and years on important occasions such as Independence Day and Republic Day, and that it’s important for Ahan to put his best foot forward. Suniel also said that Ahan had numerous offers on the table, but chose to do Border 2 because of his love for the nation and the family’s connection to the series.

He said, “I told him that this movie will keep him



alive (in the minds of the audience) for decades to come, like the first Border has kept me alive. Ahan let go of a lot of opportunities because of this film; he missed out on a lot because of the ego of others. He was thrown out of those films, and he was blamed for it in the press. They said that he has a 10-person entourage; people paid lots of money to get negative articles written about him. Do you think I don’t have connections? Do you think I can’t do the same thing?”

‘Don’t dub Kannada movies in Hindi, don’t release them pan-India’: Sonu Nigam tells BJP MP Tejasvi Surya days after Bengaluru language row



Days after Sonu Nigam was heckled at a concert in Karnataka after he was allegedly asked to perform in Kannada, the singer has now spoken up against BJP MP Tejasvi Surya. On Wednesday, the MP shared a video on X where an employee of a public sector bank, speaking English, and a local customer, speaking Kannada, can be seen arguing. He said that the bank employee’s behaviour was “simply not acceptable” and demanded that bank employees who have to deal with local customers must know the local language. Sonu raised an objection to this and instantly brought up all the international businesses that operate out of Bengaluru. He also said that if the language rules were so strict, Kannada films should not be dubbed in

Hindi, and they shouldn’t be released across the country.

“Don’t dub Kannada movies in Hindi! Don’t release Kannada movies pan-India! Do you have the guts to say this to Kannada film stars, Mr. @Tejasvi_Surya, or you are just another language warrior?” Sonu wrote on X questioning Tejasvi’s intentions.

“Kannada should also be made mandatory in software companies. If American clients conduct business in Karnataka, they should also speak in Kannada. There should be no compromise on this. Alright @Tejasvi_Surya ji? Period.” Sonu wrote in Hindi on X. He then posted another tweet where he questioned if Tejasvi Surya would be able to speak in Bhojpuri, Maithili, and other regional languages during Bihar elections. He accused him of “trying to divide the country on the basis of linguistic and regional differences.” In another tweet, he called him a “disease” and wrote, “A national party like BJP has made @Tejasvi_Surya an MP for the second time, but the spirit of nationalism could not become strong within him. People who hold cheap thoughts like linguism, regionalism, and casteism are like a disease. Whether it’s Tejasvi from Bihar or Karnataka, both are behaving with the same foolishness.”

Earlier this month, Sonu was performing at a concert in Bengaluru when a student started shouting ‘Kannada, Kannada’ at him, as if he was demanding that the singer sing in the local language. Sonu did not appreciate this behaviour, and said, “This is the reason behind the incident in Pahalgam. Please see who is standing before you. I love you guys.” He later shared a note on social media that said, “I told them very politely and lovingly the show has just started, it’s my first song and that I will not let them down, but they have to let me continue with the concert the way I have planned. Every artiste has a song list prepared so the musicians and technicians are in sync. But they were hell bent on creating ruckus and threatening me wildly. Tell me who is at fault?”

It Was Just An Accident movie review: Jafar Pahani’s Cannes drama lays bare humans’ taste for violence, how it hurts themselves



Suddenly, there’s a sickening thump, and the car comes to a halt. The man gets out, looks at something on the ground, his face lit by the headlights. We do not see the exact shape or size of the roadkill, but the little girl mentions the death of a dog, the woman justifies it as an act of god, and this little interlude sets the tone for the rest of the film. Jafar Pahani’s It Was Just An Accident, his second foray into Cannes competition, is about what happens when an unexpected incident rolls over into wholly unexpected territory. Destiny and chance are play, as is, we discover, righteous vengeance.

The man behind the wheel stops off at a garage after the accident. We see a mechanic suddenly start to behave strangely, preventing the wife and daughter, who have stopped to use the restroom, from switching on the main light; he is hiding from something or someone connected to the damaged car. The sense of foreboding that Panahi effortlessly manages to infuse his films with starts building up when the mechanic follows the car, and lies in wait for day to break. At an opportune moment, he grabs the man, bundles him into his van, and takes off into a deserted spot, where he begins digging a grave.

And just like that, It Was Just An Accident, becomes something more. The past comes crowding in. The man who’s been trussed up and blindfolded under suspicion of having done tremendous damage to a group of people who have been living under a shadow all these years. As it keeps

unfolding, the man’s sins keep growing. The most hurt of them all is the mechanic, and as he goes about gathering the other victims, all of whom have suffered a great deal at the hands of the man now under their control, buried memories come up. One is a wedding photographer, another is the would-be bride, and a third is a man who doesn’t seem to have a profession, but is to be found on the streets, exuding aggression.

Pahani’s previous film which he filmed in secrecy, No Bears, was a masterpiece, which lays out the depth of his own isolation, portraying two villages, a border, and people living under fear. This one isn’t as delicately poised, and in places, the film slackens its grip on us. One of the most moving parts involves the man’s pregnant wife and distraught daughter, who are driven to the hospital by this group: they may want revenge, and are enraged enough to want to kill, but when it comes to family, they keep aside their feelings. The difficulty of women being able to speak about male-generated cruelty, even to their closest ones, is striking. The bride-to-be has been brutalised by their is-he-isn’t-he captive, but it takes her almost an hour into the film to share the details with the groom.

The captive himself, instead of being grateful to his captor for taking his wife to the hospital so that she can be safe while giving birth, yells at him for ‘daring to touch his wife’, rather than seeing it as a humanist impulse. There’s mention of Syria and the on-going war and limbs having been lost during the conflict. There’s also Panahi’s incarceration as one of the most vocal critics of the Iranian regime. Currently, the on-and-off ban on him has been lifted, but as he says, it is still as difficult for him to make his film, and travel with them. All these threads are woven into the narrative of It Was Just An Accident, and the film lays bare the extent to which ordinary people become slaves to the seductive idea of violence, so much so that they don’t see how much it can not only hurt other people, but themselves. There are fewer surprises here, as compared to Panahi’s earlier work; some of the humour turns a trifle heavy-handed, but the director does what he does best—capturing the rhythms of life of the ordinary citizens in Iran, as well as those who have been living with trauma.

Miley Cyrus opens up about ‘traumatic’ health scare that nearly made her quit music: ‘Excruciating experience’

Popstar Miley Cyrus recently opened up about the ‘traumatic’ health scare she dealt with mid-performance back in 2023 on New Year’s Eve. The 32-year-old, who has been quite vocal about her personal life after opening up about her dynamic with dad Billy Ray Cyrus, sat for an interview on The Zane Lowe Show and detailed the ‘excruciating’ experience that nearly made her quit the music scene altogether. Miley is currently working on her next studio album, titled Something Beautiful. The album will feature Brittany Howard and Naomi Campbell. Miley Cyrus shares ‘traumatic’ health update

Back in 2023, Miley was scheduled to ring in the new year with country singer Dolly Parton, Paris Hilton and singer Sia. “I had a pretty traumatic experience on a show that I was doing with Lorne [Michaels],” Miley recalled the unexpected and painful moment that happened as soon as stepped in to co-host NBC’s “Miley’s New Year’s Eve Party,” with Dolly Parton. “I had a medical emergency. I had an ovarian cyst rupture,” she added.

At the time, Miley recalled she had no idea what was happening. She just knew something felt horribly wrong. “We didn’t know exactly what was going on,” she admitted. But instead of walking off stage or calling the performance off, she pushed through the pain and completed the show. “It was pretty traumatic because it was extremely excruciating and I did the show anyway,” she said. “But it was really, really hard on me.” According to Hopkins Medicine, while an ovarian cyst is a pretty normal phenomenon in a woman’s body and usually shows up without symptoms, an infected cyst, when it ruptures,

triggers the release of a “life-threatening” immune response to fight harmful bacteria. However, a normal rupture happens when a fluid-filled sac in the ovary suddenly bursts. In such cases, not only does it cause sharp pain but it can also lead to internal bleeding. Cysts are usually harmless and go unnoticed, but a rupture, especially when the body is shaking with great speed, like in Miley’s case where she was performing on stage, can be dangerous. The singer said that the experience rattled her so deeply that she even considered quitting music altogether. “I had dinner with Lorne and he said something that now has stuck with me,” Miley shared. “He goes, ‘Six months, everybody has six months to feel sorry for themselves and then we start to rebuild.’” That one line pretty much changed everything for Miley. Lorne reminded her she wasn’t the only artist to go through a rough patch. “You have no idea how many artists have sat in this chair and told me they were quitting music,” he told her. “Everyone does this.” In the later part of the interview, the singer revealed she has reached the end of her “shut down” period. “What I’ve always realised is that it will quit me before I ever quit it,” she said of music. “That’s not in the cards for me.” While Miley is back in the music scene gearing up for her new album Something Beautiful dropping on May 30th, the ovarian condition is not the only health scare she is dealing with. Earlier, the singer revealed that she has yet another challenge in her life, her battle with Reinke’s edema, a condition where “a very large polyp” on her vocal cord not only gives her a raspy tone and a uniqueness in her voice but also makes singing a physical challenge. “It’s like running a marathon with ankle weights,” she said.