

Cyber Security Bureau warns of action against false New’s peddlers about operation Sindoor

Hyderabad, May 8 Telangana Cyber Security Bureau has warned that strict action will be taken against those who spread misinformation about Operation Sindoor. It has stated that the strict action will be taken against those who spread false propaganda or posts on social media. Informing this, the Telangana Cyber Security Bureau posted a message on its 'X' account, it said if anybody comes across anything that seems to be spreading misinformation about Operation Sindoor, they should lodge a complaint on its WhatsApp number 8712672222. Meanwhile, the police in Hyderabad city are on high alert in the wake of Operation Sindoor. The police have taken action to search for suspicious objects in problematic areas. The CPs of the three commissionerates in the city are monitoring law and order.

Pak attempts to hit Indian military targets last night neutralised: Women officers tell the nation

GNS News Agency, May 8

New Delhi: Colonel Sofiya Qureshi and Wing Commander Vyomika Singh, the two women officers of the Indian Armed Forces whose briefing on 'Operation Sindoor' made a global statement, made a fresh appearance before the press on Thursday, to inform about Pakistan's misadventures on the intervening night of May 7/8 and how they were thwarted by Indian defence system."On the night of 07-08 May, Pakistan attempted to engage a number of military targets in Northern and Western India including Awantipura, Srinagar, Jammu, Pathankot, Amritsar, Kapurthala, Jalandhar, Ludhiana, Adampur, Bhatinda, Chandigarh, Nal, Phalodi, Uttarai, and Bhuj, using drones and missiles. They were neutralised by the Integrated Counter UAS Grid and Air Defence systems," Colonel Qureshi told the press.

She further pointed to discovery of Pakistani projectiles and said: "The debris of these attacks is now being recovered from a number of locations that prove the Pakistani attacks."Colonel Sofiya Qureshi further informed that the Pakistanis were made to pay for their brazen attempt to attack Indian military targets."Air Defence System in Lahore was neutralised this morning by the Indian armed forces," she, while informing that the Indian response was in the same domain and with same intensity as that of

CM Revanth launches HYDRAA police station

Hyderabad, May 8 Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy launched a dedicated police station of Hyderabad Disaster Response and Asset Protection Agency (HYDRAA) at Budha Bhavan here on Thursday.On the occasion, the Chief Minister personally inspected the HYDRAA Police Station and launched its website. He also flagged off 122 Hydra vehicles, including 21 DRF Trucks, 55 Scorpios, 4 Innova, Crysta, 5 Minibuses and Trucks and 37 two-wheelers. Speaking on the occasion, Revanth Reddy stated that the State government has established HYDRAA with the noble aim of preserving the historic city of Hyderabad and has introduced this initiative to revitalise the city. He pointed out that Bangalore is experiencing drinking water shortages due to inadequate protection of water tanks. Similarly, other major cities such as Mumbai and Chennai are encountering floods. Meanwhile, Delhi is declaring holidays for Parliament and schools because of insufficient pollution control measures. As a result, metropolitan areas are becoming increasingly uninhabitable. The Chief Minister warned that without proper environmental protection, Hyderabad may face similar challenges. He emphasized that HYDRAA is not solely focused on demolitions. It also plays a crucial

Indian forces hit air defence systems in Pakistan, says Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri



GNS News Agency, May 8

Pakistan has attempted to engage several military targets in Srinagar, Bhuj, Chandigarh, Uttarai, Ludhiana and Falaudi on the intervening night of May 7, 2025 and May 8, 2025 the Ministry of External Affairs said in a press briefing on Thursday (May 8, 2025). "The debris of these attacks are being recovered now," the Ministry said.Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri, along with Colonel Sofiya Qureshi and Wing Commander Vyomika Singh, confirmed that air defence systems were targeted in Pakistan. "Today morning Indian armed forces targeted air defence radars and systems at a number of locations in

Bodies of three greyhounds jawans killed in maoist IED blast brought to Warangal for postmortem



Pakistan.Wing Commander Vyomika Singh briefed the nation about Pakistan's repeated ceasefire violations at the border and about increased intensity of firing and shelling along the Line of Control (LoC).She said that Pakistan's provocations are being responded to by the Army in equal measure and also informed that sixteen lives have been lost on the Indian side."Pakistan increased the intensity of its firing and was using mortars and heavy calibre artillery in areas in Kupwara, Baramulla, Uri, Poonch, Mendhar and Rajouri sectors in Jammu and Kashmir. India was compelled to respond to bring Mortar and Artillery fire from Pakistan to a halt," she stated.



role in preventing water from pooling on roadways, ensuring the restoration of power, and managing traffic flow during the rainy season.

The Chief Minister urged the HYDRAA officials to treat the people with humanity and compassion and bring their problems to the attention of the government to make alternative arrangements for the poor, while treating the land grabbers strictly.

Pakistan. Indian response has been in the same domain with the same intensity in Pakistan. It has been reliably learnt that an air defence system at Lahore has been neutralised," the Wing Commander Vyomika Singh said during the briefing. The Ministry also said that Pakistan has increased the intensity of unprovoked firing in Uri sector.Meanwhile Mr. Misri said that The Resistance Front (TRF) claimed the terror attack in Pahalgam not once but twice on April 22, 2025 and April 23, 2025. He also called Pakistan the "epicentre of global terrorism" and said that their demand for a neutral investigation into the attack a "delaying tactic". During the briefing, he displayed a picture of Hafiz Abdul Rauf, the Pakistan-based, U.S.-designated terrorist.He said that 16 civilians have been killed in Pakistan shelling along the LoC, adding that Pakistan also attacked a gurdwara in Poonch, in which Sikh community members were killed.Our approach is not to escalate the situation, we only responded to the April 22 Pahalgam terror attack," Mr. Misri said.On de-escalation of the situation, Misri said, "Pakistan escalated the situation, we only responded. Choice is with Pakistan." He said that any further escalation by Pakistan is an escalation and will be responded to appropriately. Further, he dismissed allegations that India targeted Neelam-Jhelam dam and called it a "complete fabrication".

GNS News Agency, May 8

Warangal: The bodies of three Telangana Greyhounds jawans who were killed in an IED blast in Mulugu district on Thursday were brought to MGM Hospital here for postmortem. The deceased jawans, Sandeep, Pawan Kalyan and Sridhar died when they came under the impact of improvised explosive device triggered by Maoists in the forests of Penugolu-Perur spread in Karregutta hills in Wazedu-Venkatapuram mandals of Mulugu district.An RSI Ranadhir who suffered serious injuries was shifted to Hyderabad for better treatment. The incident occurred when the Greyhounds jawans were carrying out regular combing operations in the forests.DGP Dr. Jitender along with additional DSP (Greyhounds) M Stephen Raveendra reached Warangal to pay homage to the deceased jawans.

Former Uppal MLA Bandaru Rajireddy passes away

Hyderabad: Former Uppal MLA Bandaru Rajireddy passed away on Thursday morning after a prolonged illness. He was 80. According to his family, the funeral is expected to be held on Friday.Rajireddy entered politics through the Congress party and served in various positions. He was elected MLA from Uppal in 2009. He did not contest in 2014, instead fielding his brother Bandaru Lakshma Reddy, who lost that election. Lakshma Reddy later contested on a BRS ticket in 2023 and won.Leaders across parties mourned Rajireddy's death. BRS working president KT Rama Rao expressed deep sorrow, recalling Rajireddy as a committed leader who rendered notable service to the Uppal constituency.

High alert on borders: Ajit Doval briefs PM Modi

GNS News Agency, May 8

Ahead of the all-party meeting here on Thursday, National Security Advisor (NSA) Ajit Doval met Prime Minister Narendra Modi and briefed him on the current situation on the Western border and developments after Operation Sindoor.As per sources, the meeting continued for almost an hour at the PM's residence.After the meeting with the NSA, the Union Home Secretary also met the Prime Minister.

The briefing comes as 13 civilians died in Jammu and Kashmir in heavy shelling by Pakistan. As per the government, these are the civilian casualties in ceasefire violations along the LoC by Pakistan, and all are in Poonch. The number of injured has risen to 59. Of these, 44 are in Poonch.There is a heightened vigilance on the western borders of the country, which have been sealed in Rajasthan and other states. Leaves of government staff have been cancelled, and schools and other educational institutions have been shut for the day. Airspace in several western cities has been closed till May 10.

The security and defence systems are in high activity mode. Multi-layered air defence network has been fully activated, several frontline warships are deployed in the Arabian Sea and infantry units along the frontier are fully prepared to deal with any situation.The Centre has convened an all-party meeting to brief the parties on the strategic strikes -- a tri-service military action targeting nine high-value terror sites in Pakistan and Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK).At the all-party meeting, which began at 11 a.m., the Centre briefed political leaders on the military strikes on targets, about the objectives of the operation, the strategic and security impact, and India's pre-



paredness in the event of any retaliatory actions from Pakistan.The government will also brief the opposition leaders on the current situation at the borders and India's preparedness to meet any eventualities.The precision strikes were launched in the early hours of Wednesday and lasted just 25 minutes. Between 1.05 a.m. and 1.30 a.m., 24 missiles were deployed to strike nine terrorist facilities, including Lashkar-e-Taiba's headquarters in Muridke and major terror training sites in Bahawalpur -- long considered breeding grounds for extremist operations.India emphasised that the action was not escalatory but a calculated and proportionate response to the April 22 terror attack in Pahalgam, Jammu and Kashmir, where 26 civilians, including a Nepali national, were killed. "Our actions have been focused, measured and non-escalatory in nature. No Pakistani military facilities have been targeted. India has demonstrated considerable restraint in the selection of targets and method of execution," the government said in a statement.

Telangana Govt is at forefront in addressing employees’ needs: Bhatti

Hyderabad, May 8 : Deputy Chief Minister Bhatti Vikramarka stated that the State government is leading in meeting the needs of government employees and that a committee of officials was formed to examine their demands. He made these remarks during a public meeting organised on the occasion of the foundation laying ceremony for the Medical College building in Khammam on Thursday.The Deputy Chief Minister emphasised that no one needs to worry about the state government's commitment to employee welfare, as assured by Chief Minister Revanth Reddy. He expressed anger over the false propaganda being spread by BRS and BJP leaders through deceptive statements.Despite the state's revenue position, welfare schemes worth Rs. 60,000 to 70,000 crore are being implemented without putting an additional financial burden on the public. Salaries are being paid on the first of every month, and the CM has assured that time will be taken to address employee grievances," Bhatti said. He criticised the previous rulers, saying they incurred debts of Rs. 7 lakh crores, but never paid government employees' salaries on time, often after the 15th of the month. Unlike the previous BRS regime, which instilled fear among employees and neglected development and welfare, the current government is focused on people's welfare, Bhatti Vikramarka said.The Deputy Chief Minister ridiculed those who lost power and are now lying in luxury farmhouses and expensive homes, making baseless statements. "This is not a government that serves rulers or elites; ours is a people's government dedicated to public welfare," he said.

He also highlighted that 9,065 seats across 34 government and 29 private medical colleges are providing free medical education to students from the Telangana State. After Damodara Rajanarasimha became the Minister, eight new medical colleges have been secured and efforts are underway to construct permanent buildings for them, Bhatti said. Stating that the people's government is giving unprec-



edented focus to education and health, he said that those who claim to have fought for Telangana and ruled from 2014 to 2023 spent only Rs. 5,959 crore on the Medical and Health department, whereas the Indiramma government spent Rs. 11,482 crore in just one year -- more than double. He presented these statistics to counter the baseless claims made during a recent public meeting in Warangal, where everything was labeled a failure.

The Deputy Chief Minister accused the BRS regime of neglecting the Rajiv Arogyasri scheme and leaving medical bills pending. "We cleared the pending bills and increased the medical coverage limit from Rs. 5 lakh to Rs. 10 lakh, benefiting 90 lakh families in the state with free healthcare," he said.Under the previous government, only Rs. 54.12 crore was spent annually on Rajiv Arogyasri, while the current government spent Rs. 36 crore in just one year, Bhatti Vikramarka added."The State government is ready to meet any needs of Khammam district. Laying the foundation stone for the Medical College building is a significant step, which will bring multi-specialty healthcare services closer to the people.

Harish Rao slams Congress over delay in AE, JTO appointments



GNS News Agency, May 8

Hyderabad: Former Minister and BRS MLA T Harish Rao came down heavily on the Congress government, charging it with playing with the future of candidates selected for engineering posts in the Irrigation department. He said despite clearing exams, candidates are still left waiting for appointment letters. He demanded that the Congress government immediately issue appointment letters to the selected candidates. In a statement, Harish Rao stated that 224 Assistant Engineers (AEs) and 199 Junior Technical Officers (JTOs), selected during the BRS regime, were

struggling due to undue delay in their appointment under the Congress government. "This is a cruel betrayal of young people who studied hard, cleared exams, and are ready to serve," he said.He condemned the repeated postponement of the appointment, due to unavailability of Chief Minister Revanth Reddy. He said it had become routine for the Revanth Reddy government to offer excuses and avoid delivering on commitments, including postponement of SSC results. "The joy of earning a job is being stripped away by a government more focused on slogans than governance," he said.

Foundation stone laid for Govt medical college building at Khammam

Khammam, May 8 The foundation stone was laid for the construction of the government medical college building in Khammam city on Thursday.

Deputy Chief Minister Bhatti Vikramarka, Health Minister Damodar Raja Narasimha, Agriculture Minister Tummala Nageswara Rao and Revenue Minister Ponguleti Srinivasa Reddy jointly laid the foundation stone for the building.

Indian Chronicle

English Daily

Not just a name

IN codenaming India's precision strike against terrorist hideouts across the Line of Control as Operation Sindoor, the Modi government has done more than avenge the lives lost in the Pahalgalam massacre — it has offered a cultural and emotional balm, a message steeped in symbolism. Sindoor, worn by married Hindu women in many parts of the country, is not just a cosmetic ritual. It is a sacred thread of identity, of love, of continuity. When 26 men — most of them Hindu and many of them married — were brutally slain by terrorists in Pahalgalam, they left behind a trail of grief that no strike can undo. Their widows' sindoor, in a cruel twist, was wiped off with violence. To name the retaliatory strike after this potent symbol is not just poetic — it is profoundly personal. It acknowledges the intimate human loss behind headline numbers. It elevates the mourning of the Pahalgalam widows into national consciousness, reminding us that counter-terrorism is not just geopolitics, but a defence of homes, of relationships, of peace.

And, there's more. When the defence briefing for this operation was led by two women officers — Colonel Sofiya Qureshi and Wing Commander Vyomika Singh — it added another layer of meaning. The state, often accused of being insensitive to symbolic gestures, gave the microphone to the very gender that bears sindoor in some traditional Hindu rites, letting women reclaim not just the narrative, but also the strategic agency.

In an age of surgical strikes and swift digital headlines, Operation Sindoor stands out — as much for its military might as for the layers of thought stitched into its name. It's an ode to those left behind and a message to those who instigate: every act of terror will be answered — not just with bullets, but also dignity.

Manthani Division Media Press Club Extends Solidarity to 'Operation Sindhoor' Champions.



“PS Ashokan“Indian Chronicle“Manthani, May 8:““In a profound expression of patriotism and unity, the Manthani Division Media Press Club on Thursday conveyed its unwavering solidarity with the Indian Armed Forces, Prime Minister Narendra Modi, and Foreign Secretary Vinay Mohan Kwatra, following the resounding success of Op-

eration Sindhoor—a meticulously coordinated counter-terrorism offensive in the Kashmir Valley.““The high-stakes operation was launched in the aftermath of a heinous massacre in Pahalgalam, where 26 innocent tourists fell victim to a barbaric act of terror. Determined to deliver justice and dismantle the enemy infrastructure, Indian forces executed precise and impactful strikes on terrorist hideouts nestled deep within hostile terrain.““Symbolically christened ‘Sindhoor’—evoking the sacred vermilion traditionally adorned by Indian women as a mark of strength, commitment, and auspiciousness—the operation embodied the resolve and valor of a nation unwilling to bow before cowardly acts of violence.““Spearheading the mission were Colonel Sophia Qureshi of the Indian Army and Wing Commander Vyomika Singh of the Indian Air Force, whose exemplary leadership and tactical brilliance orchestrated devastating aerial and ground assaults. With the spirit of divine protectors, they delivered decisive blows to the enemy, razing terror camps and unfurling the Indian tricolour high above the debris of tyranny.““The operation has ignited a wave of national pride, with citizens across the country applauding the bold leadership of the Prime Minister and the gallant efforts of the armed forces. The Manthani Division Media Press Club joined voices with millions in lauding this strategic triumph and hailed the operation as a shining testament to India's unshakable spirit.““Let us advance with unity under the clarion call – One Nation, One Identity – and reaffirm our commitment to the sovereignty and integrity of the Republic,” the Club stated in its message of solidarity.

Vice-Chancellor’s Surprise Visit to Administrative Sections of SV University“



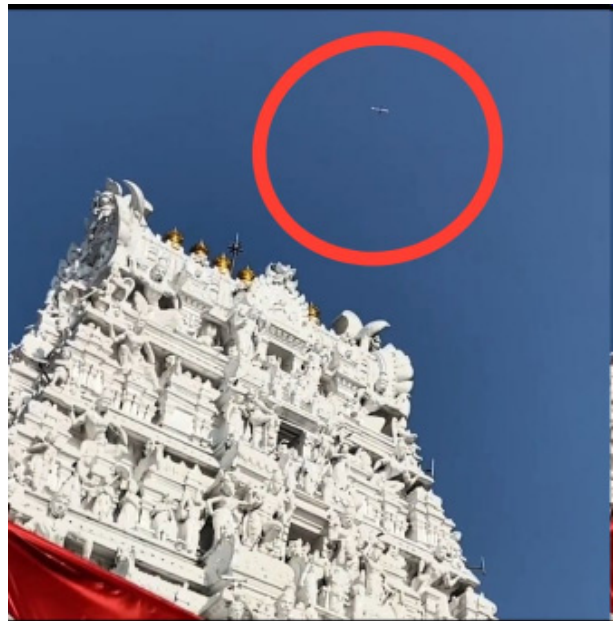
“May 8, Indian Chronicle Rayalaseema coordinator““Prof. Ch. Appa Rao, Vice-Chancellor of Sri Venkateswara University, conducted a surprise inspection of administrative sections including the Examination Branch, Development Section, Finance Branch and EDP Cell.““During his visit, the Vice-Chancellor personally reviewed staff attendance and work practices. He interacted with the employees and emphasized the importance of dis-



cipline and accountability in the workplace. Prof. Appa Rao remarked that “Duty is Worship” and firmly stated that ignorance and negligence of responsibilities will not be tolerated.““He urged all employees to work with sincerity and commitment to uphold the image of the University.““He expressed confidence that through collective effort and dedication, the University can achieve greater recognition and excellence.

Aircraft Sighting Over Tirumala Temple Sparks Concern Amidst Heightened Security“

“May 8, Indian Chronicle, Rayalaseema coordinator““An aircraft was spotted flying over the sacred Sri Venkateswara Swamy Temple in Tirumala on Thursday, causing considerable concern and alarm among devotees. This incident is viewed as a violation of the Agama Shastras, which govern the sanctity and rituals of the holy shrine.““The sighting has occurred at a time of heightened alertness, following “Operation Sindoor,” India's retaliatory strikes on May 7, 2025, against terrorist infrastructure in Pakistan and Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK) in response to the Pahalgalam terror attack of April 22, 2025. This broader security context has added to the anxieties of the devotees regarding the overflight. Tirumala has been under a high-alert status with tightened security measures in place.““The Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams (TTD) has been persistently appealing to the Central Government for several years to declare Tirumala a “no-fly zone.” This request is based on the principles of the Agama Shastras, the unique sanctity of the temple, and the sentiments of the countless pilgrims. Most recently, in March 2025, TTD Chairman Sri B.R. Naidu reiterated this plea in a letter to the Union Civil Aviation Minister.““In response to previous requests, the Union Civil Aviation Ministry had indicated in March 2025 that while there isn't a direct provision for declaring an area a ‘no-fly zone’ under current rules, discussions were underway with air traffic control authorities to explore alternative flight paths that would avoid the sacred Tirumala hills. However, the recurring nature of such incidents continues to be a matter of significant distress.““Security officials have launched an immediate investigation into the circumstances of the



aircraft's passage over the temple to gather further details.““The TTD remains committed to upholding the sanctity of the Sri Venkateswara Swamy Temple and ensuring the peace and spiritual well-being of the devotees. Further updates will be provided as more information becomes available from the investigating authorities.

Award given to officers who showed the best performance.



“Mulugu, Mahipal, Indian Chronicle: The government has presented awards to the Mulugu district SERF officers who showed the best performance in the society established to eradicate poverty in the rural areas of the district. In a program held in Hyderabad on Thursday, State Panchayat Raj, Rural Development, Rural Water Supply, Women and Child Welfare Minister Dhanasari Anasuya Seethakka received the award certificate from the hands of the District Additional Collector Local Bodies, DRDA Project Officer Sampath Rao. Speaking on the occasion, Minister

Summer talent training classes should be taken advantage of. “District Collector Divakara T.S.



“Mulugu, Mahipal, Indian Chronicle: Unemployed youth in the district should take advantage of the talent training classes to be organized at the district headquarters to develop their talents, District Collector Divakara “T.S. said in a statement on Thursday. He said that a 30-day competitive exam training program will be organized under the auspices of the Telangana Academy for Skill Knowledge, and there will be an opportunity for unemployed people who have completed intermediate and higher education.““He said that in the training program that will start on the 19th of this month, training will be provided in arithmetic from 19 to 24, reasoning from 26 to 31, general English from 2 to 6 June, general studies from 9 to 17, and mock tests and revision from 18 to 24. The Collector suggested in the announcement that the unemployed youth in the district should take advantage of this opportunity and enhance their skills and knowledge to prepare for competitive exams.“

Grand Celebrations Held in Manthani to Mark Minister Ponnamm Prabhakar’s Birthday“



“PS Ashokan“Indian Chronicle“Manthani, May 8.““Manthani, Telangana:“The birthday of Telangana Transport and BC Welfare Minister Ponnamm Prabhakar Goud was celebrated with great fervour and enthusiasm in Manthani on Wednesday. The celebrations took place at the Manthani bus stand, where local leaders and residents gathered to extend their greetings and participate in a ceremonial cake-cutting event.““The event was spearheaded by District RTA Member Manthani Suresh, who praised the Minister's distinguished political journey. In his address, Suresh highlighted that Ponnamm Prabhakar began his public service as a student leader with the NSUI and steadily rose through the political ranks to hold several key positions, gaining widespread recognition at both the state and national levels.““Minister Prabhakar's contribution during the Telangana Statehood movement, particularly during the crucial debates in Parliament, will be remembered as a defining moment in his career,” Suresh remarked. He expressed his hopes that the Minister would continue to ascend to higher offices, further strengthening public welfare initiatives across the state.““The celebration was attended by a wide cross-section of community leaders and political representatives, including Tati Sammayya Goud, Goud Sangham leaders Ponnamm Chandraiah Goud, Ponnamm Mohan Goud, Kammagoni Ravi Goud, Tati Santosh Goud, Auto Union leaders MD Shafi, Bolishetti Satish, Bandari Naveen, and Nayee Brahmin representatives Manthani Ramachandram, Manthani Suri, Manthani Pradeep, and Manthani Sai, along with RTC staff and local residents.““The gathering reflected the widespread respect and goodwill the Minister commands among his constituents and well-wishers.

Facilities should be provided for Nancharamma Jatara“

“Telangana Adivasi Erukala Sangham submits a petition to the Collector



““Mulugu, Mahipal, Indian Chronicle: On Friday, the Telangana Adivasi Erukala Sangham district President submitted a petition to the Collector Divakara to provide facilities for the Nancharamma Jatara, which has been taking place in Ramanapuram, Venkatapur mandal, Mulugu district for the last 8 years. Later, Telangana Adivasi Erukala Sangham Mulugu district president Kethirli Bikshapati said that the Erukala Nancharamma Panchakutalayam was built by the Kakatiyas in the middle of the crop fields in Ramanapuram village 812 years ago. The Nancharamma Jatara has been being organized grandly for the last 8 years under the leadership of Lokini Raju, chairman of the Nancharamma Utsava Committee. He said that Panchayat Raj, Rural Development and Women and Child Welfare Minister Seethakka attended the fair last year and performed pujas.

Luckydip completed for Non Minority Admissions



Mulugu, May 08 (Indian Chronicle) ::““The lucky dip process for admissions in fifth grade in the Non Minority school on Thursday at Mulugu Minority Girls' Gurukul School in Devagiri town of Muluga Zone. Lucky Dip has been conducted for admissions under the supervision of Ravinder Reddy, a district minority welfare officer. The Principal Y Srilata said that.. for the 20 seats in the non -minor-

ity quota, the BC category has been replaced by 10 seats for the SC category, 5 to the ST category, 3 to the OC category and 2 seats. Minority district welfare officer Ravinder Reddy said that.. Students in minority Gurukul are provided with quality meals and best education. Students are asked to take advantage of this opportunity. Teachers along with Principal Srilata participated in the event.

Nagari MLA Offers "pattu vastram" to Sri Kamakshi Sametha Sri Sadashiveshwara Swamy



“May 8,Indian Chronicle , Rayalaseema co-ordinator”“Nagari MLA Gali Bhanu Prakash participated in the annual Brahmotsavam of Sri Kamakshi Sametha Sri Sadashiveshwara Swamy Temple located in Puttur town. As part of the festivities, the MLA offered "pattuvastrams" to the deity during the Kalyanotsavam on Thursday.“Upon their arrival at the temple, MLA Gali Bhanu Prakash and his family were warmly welcomed and honored with Purna Kumbham by the temple EO, priests, and festival committee members. The MLA and his family performed special pujas to the deities.“Following the rituals, the temple priests blessed the MLA and his spouse with Vedic chants and presented them with holy prasadam. Speaking on the occasion, the MLA expressed that offering silk clothes to the deities was made possible only by their divine grace and blessings.

Mock Drill at IOCL Chittoor Under Collector & SP Amidst State Focus on Security



from other regions for fuel loading undergo thorough checks, including an assessment of their condition, before departure. He reiterated the importance of maintaining full preparedness for any untoward incident and ensuring seamless coordination with the district administration.“District SP Manikanta Chandolu elaborated on the mock drill scenario, which simulated responses to potential terrorist attacks on storage points within the IOCL facility. He highlighted that strategic energy installations like IOCL could become prime targets for such threats, necessitating a special focus on security arrangements. The SP stated that the drill involved a detailed study of human resource deployment for security, their assigned duties, and their levels of alertness. He urged industrial establishments to prioritize their own security and assured that the police department would always work in close collaboration with them.“The Chief of the IOCL Terminal explained that the facility receives its fuel supply through an underground pipeline from Chennai and has been operational since 2013. He assured the District Collector and SP that comprehensive security standards are diligently followed and clarified that there are no terminal operations during the night.“The mock drill witnessed the participation of IOCL Special Deputy Collector Venkata Siva, Additional SP Rajashekhar Raju, Tahsildar Parthasarathi, and other relevant officials.

“““May 8,Indian Chronicle Rayalaseema co-ordinator”““In light of the state government's heightened focus on security protocols across districts under 'Operation Sindoor', a comprehensive mock drill was conducted at the Indian Oil Corporation Limited (IOCL) facility in Yadamarri on Thursday. The exercise, overseen by Chittoor District Collector Sumit Kumar and District Superintendent of Police (SP) Manikanta Chandolu, aimed to assess and reinforce the existing safety measures at the crucial installation.“Following the mock drill, the Collector and SP held a meeting with Chief Terminal Manager Arun Prasad to discuss various aspects of security, including access limitations within the facility, stringent control over external visitors, and the skill enhancement of the on-site personnel.“Speaking to the press, Collector Sumit Kumar emphasized the need for continuous and thorough monitoring of security standards at the IOCL terminal. He stressed the importance of maintaining a state of high alert to effectively respond to unforeseen incidents. The Collector directed officials to meticulously review pipeline security, maintenance procedures, safety protocols at fuel storage tanks, and the preparedness for handling potential fire emergencies, urging the implementation of proactive precautionary measures. He also called for a close inspection of vehicle entry and exit points, underscoring the necessity of robust security measures. Furthermore, a review of available medical services was conducted, with a directive to ensure the availability of a well-equipped ambulance with modern facilities. The Collector instructed that night duty personnel at IOCL remain vigilant and that vehicles arriving

Mettu Hasini of Manthani Qualifies for International Karate Championship in Malaysia.

““PS Ashokan"Indian Chronicle“Manthani May, 8““Mettu Hasini, a 19-year-old karate practitioner from Manthani, Peddapalli district, has qualified to participate in the prestigious International Karate Championship, scheduled to be held at the HypoCity Council Sports Hall in Malaysia from May 9th to 12th. She will be competing in both the Kata and Kumite categories.““Hasini is currently undergoing intensive training under the mentorship of Sensei Kaviti Sammayya at the Japan Shitoryu Karate Academy, Manthani. Her qualification has garnered praise from leading karate officials including Mr. Bharat Sharma, President of Shikokai Karate India; Mr. B. Mahesh Kumar Goud, President of Telangana Sports Karate-Do Association; Mr. P. Papayya, National Vice President of Japan Shitoryu Karate; Mr. Guntupalli Sammayya, State Executive President; Mr. M. Ramaswamy; and Mr. E. Srinivas.““She has also received commendations from her instructors Na Galli Rakesh, Kaviti Shiva Ganesh, Mooga Shivani, M.D. Taib, T. Harshini, K. Swetha Nandana, K. Vishnu, B. Vishnuvardhan, Nakka Raju, and P. Geya Sriram Teja Sriramulu, who have been instrumental in her preparation for the global stage.



Tuli Research Centre for India Studies Launches tuliresearchcentre.orgDemocratizing Access to India's Artistic, Cultural, and Intellectual Legacies

Hyderabad: The Tuli Research Centre for India Studies (T.R.I.S.) proudly announces the launch of tuliresearchcentre.org, a path-breaking digital platform offering free, open access to the most comprehensive integrated visual-textual knowledge base on India's modern and contemporary fine arts, popular arts, cinema, photography, architectural heritage, graphic arts, animal welfare, and cultural economics and thought, so allowing a new conceptual framework for India Studies.

The platform's launch marks the culmination of Neville Tuli's three-decade-long journey as a cultural institution builder, beginning with the founding of HEART (The Tuli Foundation for Holistic Education and Art, 1995–99), advancing through Osian's Connoisseurs of Art (2000–21) to Vanraja Sanctuary & Hospice (2015-), and culminating now with T.R.I.S. - an institution dedicated to researching upon and sharing an expansive archive, knowledge base, and library for public and scholarly engagement. Tuli's pioneering ideas on education, transdisciplinary knowledge-building, and the fusion of image-text-audio learning within a holistic conceptual framework of theory, experience, and archival preservation have shaped these endeavors. His vision has consistently championed the creation of autonomous spaces of intellectual inquiry, where knowledge is expansive, free, and participatory.Platform Overview: tuliresearchcentre.org

Tuliresearchcentre.org was conceptualized by Neville Tuli post-2020 though it has been evolving for nearly three



decades through his writings, personal research, curation, and transdisciplinary knowledge development. The platform places images on par with carefully curated textual and audio materials. It has been built using the most basic technology of the Excel Sheet, thousands of manually structured and templated Excel sheets of knowledge then transformed into web data by the coding team.This foundational approach allows the platform to power a world-class Search and Filter Engine, with each cultural object and archival document serving as the basic unit. Users are empowered to conduct precise inquiries across multiple fields, retrieving highly tailored results that foster deeper, self-directed exploration.

India’s Best-Selling EV goes PRO JSW MG Motor India launches Windsor PRO at a BaaS price of INR 12.49 Lakhs + INR 4.5/km

Hyderabad:JSW MG Motor India, today, launched MG Windsor PRO that will elevate the business class travel experience with the inclusion of new tech and safety features, along with a new 52.9 kWh battery pack. The MG Windsor has witnessed phenomenal customer response since its launch and the addition of the PRO series will further strengthen its market performance. Launched at an attractive introductory BaaS price of INR 12.49L + INR 4.5/km and ex-showroom price of INR 17,49,800 (Valid for first 8,000 bookings), the MG Windsor PRO promises to accelerate the rapid transition to EVs.

Sr. no
Variant
BaaS Price
Ex-Showroom Price
1
MG Windsor Essence PRO
INR 12.49 Lakhs + INR 4.5/km
INR 17,49,800

JSW MG Motor India has onboarded new financiers, such as IDFC First Bank and Kotak Mahindra Prime to expand the reach of its Battery-As-A-Service (BaaS), an innovative ownership package that has made EV ownership flexible for Indian car buyers. This innovative ownership scheme was first launched in September 2024 and today is supported by six financiers, including Bajaj Finserv, HeroFin Corp, Ecofy, VidyutTech, IDFC First Bank and Kotak Mahindra Prime. The company will offer lifetime battery warranty to the first owner of MG Windsor PRO. In addition, JSW MG Motor India will offer its 3-60 assured buyback plan*** for the MG Windsor PRO which ensures that it will retain 60% of its value after 3 years.

Speaking on the launch of MG Windsor PRO, Anurag Mehrotra, Managing Director, JSW MG Motor India, said, “MG Windsor has been instrumental in accelerating the growth of India’s 4W-EV segment, winning customers over with its compelling value proposition. Positive word-of-mouth



from early buyers fuelled its rapid acceptance, extending its reach beyond metro cities into Tier II and III markets. By introducing a product that stands apart from the conventional, we have successfully connected with a new wave of buyers. Alongside our partners, we remain committed to redefining the Indian auto landscape by delivering relevant innovations at the right time with the right technology. The launch of the MG Windsor PRO reflects our commitment to providing expanded choices, instilling greater confidence in EVs in general, and inviting more customers to venture confidently into the future of sustainable mobility.”

PRO Battery, Interiors & Style: The Windsor PRO, now comes with a larger 52.9 kWh battery pack, offering an extended certified range of 449 km** (MIDC P1 + P2), while delivering 136 PS of power and 200 Nm of instant torque. In addition, the Windsor PRO will offer three new and vibrant colour options, Celadon Blue, Aurora Silver and Glaze Red, along with a new 18" dual tone machined alloys, enhancing its style quotient. The new dual-tone Ivory and Black interiors will entail an all-new cabin experience.

Centre will pay MSP to chilli farmers: Kishan Reddy

Hyderabad, May 8 : Union Minister for Coal and Mines G. Kishan Reddy today said by implementing the Price Deficiency Payment (PDP-Price Deficiency Payment) under the Central Government's Market Intervention Scheme, Telangana chilli farmers would benefit. He said the Union Agriculture Ministry had made it clear that steps were being taken to ensure that chilli farmers do not suffer any loss by providing at least the cost of cultivation. When the situation arises that the crop has to be sold in the market for less than the cost of cultivation. He said the Union Agriculture Ministry had issued instructions to the Telangana Agriculture Department to take steps to this effect. On April 4, 2025, Kishan Reddy wrote a letter to Union Agriculture Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan requesting him to take steps to ensure that chilli farmers in Telangana do not suffer any loss. In the letter, he said the farmers in Khammam,

Mahabubabad, Jogulamba Gadwala, Bhadradi Kothagudem, Jayashankar Bhupalpally, Mulugu, Suryapet, Warangal, Hanmakonda and Nagarkurnool districts mainly grow chilli and were suffering financially as they are getting lower prices than the cultivation price in the open market. He requested Chouhan to help them. Responding to this, the Union Agriculture Ministry has announced that in the financial year 2024-25, this scheme would be applied to 1,72,135 metric tonnes of the chilli crop produced in Telangana , which is 25 percent of the total 6,88,540 metric tonnes of the chilli crop produced in the state . It has been announced that the difference between the market price and the cultivation cost will be paid to the farmers under the Market Intervention Scheme. The MIS price for chilli crop has been fixed at Rs. 10,374 per quintal. It has been stated that the state government will first have to deposit the dif-

ference between MIS and market price in the accounts of the farmers.Reddy said the Central government had taken this initiative after it came to know of incidents where middlemen are buying quintals of chilli for as little as Rs 7.5 to 6 thousand per quintal by cheating the farmers. He said the State government should also consider this matter and focus on the losses being incurred by the chilli farmers“The Central government has explained that the State government will have to bear 50 percent of this cost, and the Central government will reimburse the remaining amount to the State government. It has been clarified that only farmers who sell their chilli crops in recognized APMC markets will benefit under the market intervention schemeWith the aim of ensuring that farmers get a minimum price when crop prices fluctuate, the Central government, led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

OPPO K13 Becomes the Highest Rated Smartphone on Flipkart



Hyderabad: OPPO today announced a major milestone for its latest smartphone, the OPPO K13 5G, which has become the highest-rated smartphone among recently launched devices in its segment on Flipkart, earning an im-

pressive 4.6-star rating just two weeks after its official launch.

Touted for delivering OverPowered performance at an exceptional price point, the OPPO K13 has rapidly won the trust of users across India. From gamers and tech enthusiasts to everyday users, the device is receiving widespread acclaim for its exceptional performance, long-lasting battery life, immersive display, and reliable durability—all at under 20,000. Anshuman Bhatt, Head of e-commerce India (Smartphones and IoT) at OPPO India, “The incredible response to the OPPO K13 on Flipkart reinforces our belief that Indian consumers are looking for high-performance smartphones that don’t compromise on quality or value. Achieving the highest rating of 4.6 in its segment within just two weeks of launch is a proud moment for us and a validation of our efforts to bring OverPowered experiences to the mid-range segment. We’re grateful to our users and partners for their trust, and we remain committed to pushing the boundaries of innovation and accessibility in the online space.”

With its unbeatable performance powered by the Snapdragon® 6 Gen 4 processor, a massive 7000mAh graphite battery, 80W SUPERVOOC™ fast charging, 120Hz FHD+ AMOLED display, Vapor Chamber cooling system, and AI-enhanced camera suite, the OPPO K13 quickly captured the attention of value-seeking smartphone users. Its early success on Flipkart not only reflects the strength of OPPO’s product innovation but also the growing trust of Indian consumers in the brand. With this momentum, OPPO India is set to redefine what users can expect from smartphones in the 15K-220K.

ISNA Diamond and Gold Jewellery Launches its 2nd Exclusive Showroom in Andhra Pradesh



Hyderabad: KISNA Diamond and Gold Jewellery proudly announced the grand opening of its 2nd exclusive showroom in Andhra Pradesh, Srikakulam located beside Gandhi Park, Palakonda Road. The inauguration was graced by Mr. Ghanshyam Dholakia, Founder & Managing Director, Hari Krishna Group.

With Mother’s Day around the corner, consumers can explore a specially curated selection of jewellery, perfect to honour her with a timeless gift of sparkle featuring assured 50% to 100% off on making charges of diamond jewellery. Commenting on the launch, Mr. Ghanshyam Dholakia, Founder & Managing Director, Hari Krishna Group, stated: “Andhra Pradesh is a culturally rich and growing market for jewellery, and we are thrilled to bring our exclusive showroom to Srikakulam. It also aligns with our vision, ‘Har Ghar KISNA,’ where we aim to be India’s fastest-growing jewellery brand, making every woman’s dream of own-

ing diamond jewellery come true.”

Mr. Parag Shah, Director, KISNA Diamond & Gold Jewellery, added: “Our Srikakulam showroom offers designs that reflect local elegance with a modern twist—perfectly timed with Mother’s Day to celebrate her with something truly special. Every design tells a story of tradition blended with modern finesse. We invite you to explore our exclusive collection and make this Mother’s Day memorable.” Mrs. Sarita & Mr. Srinivas Rao Puotnuru Franchise Partner, said: “We are proud to partner with KISNA and bring their trusted legacy to Srikakulam. With a curated range of exquisite designs and special offers, we look forward to serving our customers with warmth, trust, and timeless jewellery.” In line with KISNA’s commitment to giving back to the community, the brand organized a blood donation camp as part of the launch event and also hosted a food distribution drive for the underprivileged.

Miss World contestants to undertake heritage walk in Old City on May 13

Hyderabad, May 8 : Hyderabad’s iconic Charminar and bustling Laad Bazaar are set to captivate the world’s attention as part of the Miss World 2025 festivities. On the evening of May 13, a grand Heritage Walk will be organised in the Old City, showcasing the cultural grandeur, historical significance and vibrant diversity of Hyderabad to a global audience.

Event Highlights: Global participation: Over 120 Miss World delegates from across the globe will participate in the Heritage Walk, interacting with local artisans and exploring the lanes of Laad Bazaar. Live Broadcast: The event will be telecast live in 150+ countries, offering millions worldwide a glimpse into Hyderabad’s rich heritage. Tourism Boost: Aligning with Chief Minister Shri Revanth Reddy’s vision, the state government aims to position Telangana as a top global tourist destination by highlighting its historical treasures. Laad Bazaar: A Cultural Gem With a 400-year legacy dating back to the Nizam era, Laad Bazaar is renowned as the “Capital of Bangles”. Its narrow lanes dazzle with: traditional lacquer bangles: Adorned with intricate mirror work, beads, and embroidery. Pearl Jewelry: High-quality pearls and affordable traditional ornaments. Handicrafts

and Islamic Art: Exquisite Bidriware, hand-painted calligraphy, Ittar (traditional perfumes) and Quranic manuscripts.

Festive Vibes: The market transforms into a cultural hub during festivals like Eid and Ramadan. Charminar: The Heart of Hyderabad Built in 1591 by Qutb Shahi ruler Muhammad Quli Qutb Shah, Charminar stands as a symbol of Indo-Islamic architecture and resilience. Historical significance: Constructed to commemorate the end of a deadly plague, it represents Hyderabad’s founding spirit. Architectural marvel: The 56-meter tall structure with four minarets offers panoramic views of the old city and the Makkah Masjid. UNESCO nomination: Proposed for inclusion in the World Heritage list, it remains Hyderabad’s most iconic landmark.

A Vision for global tourism: The heritage walk is part of a larger strategy to leverage international events like Miss World to promote Telangana’s cultural and historical assets. The State government has rolled out plans to enhance infrastructure and global visibility for sites like Charminar and Laad Bazaar, aiming to attract heritage enthusiasts and shoppers worldwide.

CPI National Secretary Narayana visits fire hit area in Kuntlur



Hyderabad, May 8 (NSS): CPI National Secretary Dr. K. Narayana, CPI MLC Nellikanti Satyam, CPI Ranga Reddy District Secretary Palamakula Jangaiah, CPI State Executive Member Andoj Ravindra Chari, CPI state council Member Mutyala Yadireddy, Panuganti Parvatata and Palle Narasimha today visited the area of the huts that were burnt down in a fire accident in Ravi Narayana Reddy Colony under Kuntlur Revenue limits of Abdullapurmet Mandal from Rangareddy District. Speaking on the occasion, he urged the state government to extend financial aid

to all those who lost their huts in the fire accident. He also urged the state government to sanction houses to all the affected families in the same area after issuing land Pattas to them. In this program, the members of the district executive, local counselor Pabbati Laxman, former counselor Hari Singh Nayak, Navaneetha, Saidulu, Ketharaju Narasimha, Yadagiri and others.

Telangana Jagruti to hold rally in support of Operation Sindoor

Hyderabad, May 8 Telangana Jagruti organisation founded by BRS party MLC Kalvakuntla Kavitha has announced that it would take out a huge rally on May 9 in support of Operation Sindoor, which was started by the Indian Army with the aim of ending terrorism.

Wonderla Holidays offering free entry for mothers across all its amusement parks

Hyderabad, May 8: Wonderla Holidays Ltd is offering free entry for mothers across all its amusement parks this Mother’s Day, inviting families to swap traditional gifts for shared experiences. On May 10 and 11, mothers accompanied by their children will receive complimentary access to Wonderla parks in Kochi, Bangalore, Hyderabad, and Bhubaneswar under a limited-period offer.

In a culture where celebration often means giving something to someone, this initiative urges people to instead give something with them; time. From water slides to thrill rides, the focus is on creating joyful, lasting memories together. Wonderla Hyderabad has recently introduced exciting new attractions, including Scary House and Arcade Games, offering guests even more reasons to enjoy the season. The offer applies to families booking a minimum of three tickets in a single online transaction, including at least one child, with the mother receiving complimentary entry. It is also valid on ticket-and-meal combos, making it a convenient option for a full-day outing. This offer is available for online bookings only. To complement the free entry initiative, Wonderla is transforming Mother’s Day into a joyful celebration filled with connection, delight, and a touch of in-

dulgence across all its parks. From spirited “Mom & Me” games, cake decorating activities and live entertainment, each park offers families unique ways to celebrate together. Select parks will also feature pampering zones with massage chairs and fish spa experiences for participating mothers, while winners of themed contests stand a chance to enjoy a specially curated buffet. Whether it’s a child icing a cake for their mom or sharing a laugh during a friendly challenge, these moments are crafted to honour the everyday magic of motherhood — reminding families that the best memories are made, not gifted.

We wanted to go beyond the usual gifts and do something truly meaningful this Mother’s Day,” said Dheeran Singh Choudhary, Chief Operating Officer, Wonderla Holidays Ltd. “At Wonderla, we believe the best gift you can give a mother is your time. This special offer is our way of encouraging families to step away from the everyday and create joyful, lasting memories together. Sometimes, the most memorable celebrations aren’t about grand gestures, but simply about being together—and there’s no better place to do that than at Wonderla.” All special offers are available through Wonderla’s online booking portal: <https://bookings.wonderla.com>.

Guv attends World Red Cross Day & World Thalassaemia Day 2025 as chief guest

Hyderabad, May 8 The Governor of Telangana graced the special programme commemorating World Red Cross Day and World Thalassaemia Day 2025 as the Chief Guest, held today at the Durbar Hall, Raj Bhavan, Hyderabad. In his address, the Governor underscored the profound significance of these twin observances, describing them as a call to conscience urging society to act with compassion, solidarity, and a deep sense of humanity. He emphasized this year’s theme for World Red Cross Day, “On the Side of Humanity,” and lauded the Indian Red Cross Society (IRCS), Telangana State Branch, for its unwavering humanitarian service since its inception in 1920. He also stressed the growing need for volunteerism across all sections of society to serve the vulnerable and uphold human dignity.

With a membership of over 45,000 across all 33 districts of Telangana, the IRCS has played a vital role in organizing blood donation drives, extending medical and health outreach, supporting orphanages and elder care homes, and providing timely assistance during natural disasters. The Governor appreciated the dedicated efforts of district chairpersons and volunteers who continue to uphold the Red Cross mission even in the remotest parts of the State.

Marking World Thalassaemia Day, the Governor paid tribute to the courage and resilience of young thalassaemia warriors, who depend on regular blood transfusions for sur-

vival. He commended the work of Dhatri, an organization that has brought hope to families by promoting awareness and stem cell donation for those suffering from this genetic disorder. As a gesture of compassion, the Governor personally distributed fruits to thalassaemia patients present at the event. A key highlight of the programme was the formal launch of the Blood Stem Cell Donor Registration drive by the Hon’ble Governor, who appealed to the public to come forward and participate in this life-saving initiative. Responding to the Governor’s call, all eligible staff members of Raj Bhavan, aged between 18 and 50 years, voluntarily gave swab samples and registered themselves as stem cell donors demonstrating the Raj Bhavan Pariwar’s collective commitment to the cause. On the occasion, the Governor also felicitated Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) partners for their sustained financial support to the Indian Red Cross Society in delivering healthcare services, disaster relief, and community development. He acknowledged their collaboration as a vital link between societal needs and transformative humanitarian action. The programme was attended by M. Dana Kishore, IAS, Principal Secretary to Governor, and the General Secretary and the Treasurer of the IRCS, Telangana State Branch, and chairmen of district branches of IRCS, officials of the Red Cross and officers of Raj Bhavan.

Survey should be held on dilapidated buildings: GHMC Commissioner

Hyderabad, May 8 In the wake of the upcoming monsoon season, GHMC Commissioner R.V. Karnan has issued orders to take special measures on dilapidated and dangerous buildings and structures within the Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation limits. He suggested that special surveys should be conducted to identify the dilapidated buildings, structures, old boundary walls and added that the structural safety of the identified buildings should be assessed based on the report of the engineering department of the corporation. He said a final list should be prepared at each circle level as per the report. “If government school buildings in dilapidated condition are identified, they should be immediately informed to the education department officials,” he said. He also said notices should be issued to the identified dilapidated buildings and added that the most dangerous buildings should be immediately vacated or sealed while noting that barricades and warning boards should be installed around the buildings. It was sug-

gested that if the building owners undertake repairs, they should ensure that they comply with the GHMC standards and a special drive should be taken up for the demolition of the dilapidated buildings. He said the details of each building should be updated in a Google spreadsheet and the report should be submitted to the GHMC headquarters. He said the Deputy City Planners, Assistant City Planners of all circles should take immediate action and submit a report and added that the Executive Engineers under the supervision of the GHMC Chief Engineer (Maintenance) should submit a report on the stability and strength of the structure while string that the Zonal Commissioners should review this process in their circles and take action within the specified time. The Commissioner warned that disciplinary action would be taken against the concerned officials if there is negligence or delay in complying with hid orders on the dilapidated buildings and structures as per the rules.

CPI(M) Affirms Unreserved Backing for Nationwide General Strike“District Secretary Y. Yakayya Criticizes Centre’s Anti-Labour Policies During Party Cadre Meet“

“PS Ashokan“Indian Chronicle“Manthani, May 8““A strategic assembly of Communist Party of India (Marxist) [CPI(M)] cadre was convened today at Kakarla Palli village in Manthani Mandal. The session was presided over by CPI(M) District Secretary Mr. Y. Yakayya, who addressed the gathering as the keynote speaker.““In his remarks, Mr. Yakayya articulated strong opposition to the regressive and anti-labour policies allegedly being perpetuated by the BJP-led central government.

He stated that in light of these sustained attacks on the rights and welfare of the working class, national trade unions have jointly declared an all-India general strike on May 20th—a call that CPI(M) unequivocally endorses.““He further asserted that since assuming power for a third consecutive term, the BJP government has consistently undermined the interests of workers and peasants through a series of legislative and administrative actions. Although the

government publicly claimed to have annulled the contentious agricultural laws, Mr. Yakayya accused it of clandestinely attempting to reinstate these statutes under different guises.““Particularly alarming, he noted, is the imposition of four new labour codes, which he described as “legislative nooses” designed to erode foundational labour rights and protections hard-won over decades. He urged the public and progressive organizations to unite in resistance through the forthcoming general strike.

““The meeting witnessed the participation of several senior leaders and party functionaries, including CPI(M) District Secretariat Member Ms. A. Maheshwari, District Committee Member Mr. Budida Ganesh, and local leaders such as Mr. Gorrenkala Suresh, Mr. Arla Sandeep, Mr. Manthani Lingayya, Mr. Budida Rajender, Mr. Bosalli Sadanandam, Mr. Manthani Sammayya, Mr. Budida Ravinder, Mr. Manthani Rajasekhara, among others.

Make meetings & seminars against fascism and imperialist tendencies successful: John Wesley

Hyderabad, May 8 CPM State Secretary John Wesley today called upon the party activists and people of the state to make the meetings and seminars to be held today against fascism and imperialist tendencies a grand success.

In a statement, he said on May 9, 1945, the Red Army of the Communist Parties of the Soviet Union defeated Hitler’s fascism. “On this occasion, the CPI(M) Central Committee has called for organizing meetings and seminars across the country to intensify the working class struggles against fascism and imperialist tendencies. As part of this, the State party Committee is calling for holding the meetings and seminars on May 9 in the Telangana State,” he said.

He alleged that the capitalists and the ruling classes

nurtured Hitler’s Nazism and encouraged him to attack Russia and the Soviet Union by saying that he would eliminate Communism from the globe. He recalled that under the leadership of Stalin, millions of people and the army of the Soviet Union revolted against Hitler and sacrificed their lives. “Three million Communist workers sacrificed their lives, defeated fascism, drove Hitler to Berlin in Germany, and hoisted the red flag there. Therefore, there is a need to continue the struggle against the imperialism even today. Recently, Communist parties met in Russia and decided to take the struggle against fascism forward in the future. Fascist tendencies are emerging in the context of increasing labour struggles. After the revolution was successful in the Soviet Union, fascism was brought forward to defeat it,” he said.

How Mira Bhayandar police secured top position in Maharashtra CM Devendra Fadnavis’s 100-day program



GNS News Agency, May 8

In the recently concluded Maharashtra CM Devendra Fadnavis’s 100-day program, the Mira Bhayandar police topped the list of Commissionerates when it came to performance on 10 key metrics laid down by the government. Incidentally, the Commissionerate is one of the youngest in the state, having been created in October 2020 with Sadanand Date, the current National Investigation Agency (NIA) chief, being the first police chief.

The various police units were ranked on metrics including the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in police investigations, office efficiency, and improving the lives of citizens, among others. Mira-Bhayandar, Vasai-Virar (MBVV) Police Commissioner Madhukar Pandey told The Indian Express about the various measures undertaken by them to ensure their performance was better. The MBVV police introduced the AI challan system whereby all cameras were trained to detect multiple traffic violations like a person riding a bike without a helmet or triple seat riding, and save their registration numbers. These images are automatically captured by the CCTV cameras, which are then reviewed by the police officer, and challans are generated for the erring vehicles. “In other police units, there are officers who manu-

ally spot traffic violations by looking at CCTV footage and then issue a challan. Here, it is done automatically, thereby making better use of resources like the CCTV camera network,” Pandey said. “We revamped our police website and made it mobile-friendly as well, as many come to the website from their mobile phones,” Pandey said. He added that they also have a green website, meaning the infrastructure on which their site is hosted has a negligible carbon footprint. Other environmentally friendly methods include reducing the size of photos on the website from 10 MB to 1 MB, so that people who download them do not need more internet. “We have maintained a pleasant working atmosphere for visitors coming to the police stations, which includes things like having a visitor’s room, good chairs, and purified water,” said the police commissioner.

There are big screens at the station houses guiding visitors on which officer to approach for their particular task, be it passport verification or registration of a crime. There are standees kept outside police stations with QR codes where visitors are asked to provide feedback on their experiences. “While we don’t look at it minutely, if a particular police station or officer is constantly getting negative feedback, we will look into the reasons,” Pandey said. Some offices, like the DCP Zone (III) and ACP (Virar) offices, were functioning from residential premises. The MBVV police got new offices in the Maharashtra Housing and Area Development Authority (MHADA) buildings for these officers. The various vehicles that would be lying outside police stations for years together have been auctioned off or given to the legal claimants by getting orders from the courts to clear the space. In order to deal better with children who are victims of crimes, the MBVV officers received training from a UNICEF panel. Pandey said that a child-friendly room with posters and toys is also in the works at the police stations, where children would feel comfortable opening up.

1993 Mumbai blasts accused Farooq Takla found guilty in passport forgery case

GNS News Agency, May 8

A magistrate court on Saturday sentenced Mohammed Farooq Yasin Mansoor, one of the accused in the 1993 Mumbai serial blasts case, to five years in jail in a case where he forged a passport using someone else’s identity. Farooq, alias Farooq Takla, 66, has been behind bars since 2018 and the punishment will be considered undergone as he has already spent more than five years in jail as an undertrial. Farooq is facing trial for the 1993 serial blasts after he was extradited from the UAE. He was declared an absconding accused in 1995 as he had remained untraced after being named in the blasts as a conspirator. Farooq was alleged to have been residing in the UAE under the assumed identity of Mustaq Mohammed Miya. In 2001, he managed to procure a passport with the fake identity from the Consulate General of India in Dubai. This passport expired in 2002. The CBI alleged that Farooq got another passport issued with the same fake identity from the Consulate in 2011. This passport was valid till 2021. He used this passport to come to India in 2018 as Mustaq and was caught at Delhi airport. The CBI then booked him under charges including under the Passport Act and sections of cheating and forgery of the Indian Penal Code.

“Accused nowhere denied that on 8 March 2018, he came at Delhi airport from Dubai. When the accused denying about the forged passport, he failed to show that on what passport, he went to Dubai and on what passport he again came in India. Accused failed to show that he has a valid passport of his own name on the relevant date of journey. Accused failed to give the details of his passport and other details i.e. when he made application for passport and for renewal of passport and how he went to Dubai without valid



passport or on which passport,” Additional Chief Judicial Magistrate R D Chavan said in the order on Saturday. During the trial, Special Public Prosecutor Rajkumar Meena, appearing for the CBI, submitted that Farooq had written letters addressed to the prime minister, claiming to be Mustaq. It submitted handwritten specimens to claim that the application for a passport was forged and also recorded the statement of the real Mustaq whose identity was used for the passport. The court relied on forensic evidence as well as witness testimonies including the immigration officer at Delhi airport.

“Evidence on record i.e. oral and documentary evidence shows that the accused Mohammed Farooq Yasin Mansoor @Farooq Takla applied for the passport and renewal of passport by using the name Mustaq Mohammed Miya, which is not his real name. The passport application and passport contains false particulars, false information and forged signature. It shows that the accused by hiding his real identity and submitting false information obtained the passport and also got it renewed,” the court said.

BSF seizes 12 gold biscuits worth Rs 1.56 crore along India-Bangladesh border



GNS News Agency, May 8

BSF-India-Bangladesh-BorderThe BSF said the suspects escaped into the crowded Phulbari (Banpur) village in the Darjeeling district of West Bengal, taking advantage of the population density. In a major crackdown on smuggling, the Border Security Force (BSF) South Bengal Frontier recovered gold and silver worth over Rs 1.64 crore in two separate operations conducted Saturday along the India-Bangladesh border in West Bengal.

In the first operation, acting on a credible tip-off, BSF personnel from the 32 Battalion’s Banpur outpost in Nadia district set up an ambush near the border fencing. Around 11 am, they noticed suspicious activity—three people on the Indian side were seen approaching the fencing as a person from Bangladesh threw packets across the border. As the trio moved in to collect them, BSF troops moved to intercept. The BSF said the suspects escaped into the crowded Phulbari (Banpur) village in the Darjeeling district of West Bengal, taking advantage of the population density. Despite their escape, a swift search of the area led to the recovery of 12 gold biscuits wrapped in plastic. The total weight of the seized gold was 1,662 grams, with an estimated value of Rs 1.56 crore. In a separate operation later in the day, BSF jawans from the 143 Battalion’s Tarali outpost intercepted an Indian smuggler at the Nityanandkati check post in North 24 Parganas. He had hidden 10.83 kg of silver ornaments inside the oil tank of his motorcycle. The seized silver is valued at Rs 8.36 lakh.

Both recoveries have been handed over to the authorities concerned, and investigations are ongoing to trace those involved, said the BSF. The BSF, in its release, has encouraged locals to share any information related to smuggling

by calling BSF’s Seema Sathi helpline at 14419 or messaging on WhatsApp at 9903472227. “Tipsters will be rewarded and their identity kept confidential. We are vigilant and determined to protect the border from illegal trade activities,” said a BSF official.

Singer Sonu Nigam booked in Bengaluru for ‘linking Kannada song request’ to Pahalgam attack

Sonu Nigam BengaluruVideo of Sonu Nigam’s reaction quickly went viral and drew sharp criticism, particularly for referencing the Pahalgam terrorist attack.

Sonu Nigam Kannada song controversy; Police have booked renowned singer Sonu Nigam after he allegedly took offence at how he was asked to sing a Kannada song at a Bengaluru event, retorting that “this was the attitude that resulted in the Pahalgam attack”. After a complaint was lodged alleging Sonu Nigam insulted the people of Karnataka with his comment, the Avalahalli police registered an FIR under sections 351(1) (criminal intimidation), 352 (intentional insult to provoke breach of peace), and 353 (public mischief) of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita On April 25, when Sonu Nigam performed at East Point College of Engineering in Avalahalli, an audience member requested that he sing a Kannada song. Nigam, who has sung numerous hit Kannada songs, allegedly took offence at the manner of the request. Video of Sonu Nigam’s reaction quickly went viral and drew sharp criticism, particularly for referencing the Pahalgam terrorist attack. And Dharmaraj A, president of the Karnataka Rakshana Vedike’s Bengaluru district unit, filed a police complaint stating the comments could incite tensions between linguistic groups within Karnataka. “By equating a simple request to sing a Kannada song with a terrorist act, Sonu Nigam insulted the Kannadiga community and conflated their cultural pride and linguistic identity with violence and intolerance,” the complaint read.

Declassified 1993 CIA study on the possibility of war between India and Pakistan



GNS News Agency, May 8

The Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) has recently declassified a National Intelligence Estimate (NIE) prepared by it in 1993 to evaluate the possibility of war between India and Pakistan in the 1990s. The document was cleared to be released in February 2025 and is now available on US government websites. With India and Pakistan locked in yet another confrontation, which may bring the two countries to war or at least on the brink of it, it is interesting to notice that many of the postulates mentioned in the three-decades-old dossier still hold true. While the NIE gave a low probability of a conventional war taking place between the two countries in that period of time, it rates the possibility of war between India and Pakistan as about 1 in 5. It also pointed out that war could still happen due to a variety of factors, one of which could be a “spectacular terror outrage that one side believed the other directed or abetted”.

“Indian security personnel are fighting an insurgency (in Jammu and Kashmir) that appears to have no end. Firing incidents along the Line of Control are common, particularly in the spring when militants begin their seasonal infiltrations across the Line of Control. In our judgment, Indian security forces can prevent Kashmir’s secession or its acquisition by Pakistan, but these forces will not be able to defeat the insurgency in this decade,” the NIE says. It goes on to say that Kashmiri militants have the staying power to tie down substantial numbers of Indian security personnel. “New Delhi will continue efforts begun last spring to establish a dialogue with Kashmiris with the goal of ultimately holding state elections. New Delhi hopes that divisions among the militants and war weariness among Kashmiris will work in its favor. These efforts to restart the political process in the war-torn state probably will falter because Kashmiri moderates have been weakened by New Delhi’s tough security policies and because Kashmiri hardliners are intransigent,” the report says.

It mentions that Pakistan uses the Kashmir issue as a foreign policy bludgeon against India. Whenever discontent in Jammu and Kashmir erupts, Islamabad highlights the problem and demands international action favourable to Pakistan’s interests in the dispute, the report says. Festive offer india pakistan war pointed out that war could still happen due to a variety of factors, one of which could be a “spectacular terror outrage that one side believed the other directed or abetted”. (Express Photo) “New Delhi and Islamabad are unlikely to stop supporting secessionist and other militants in each other’s territory. Pakistan has had a

8 held for killing Mangaluru Bajrang Dal member, police say accused collaborated to eliminate common enemy



GNS News Agency, May 8

The Mangaluru police in Karnataka Saturday arrested eight men in connection with the murder of history-sheets Bajrang Dal member Suhas Shetty and said a probe revealed that he was killed in retaliation to the murder of one Mohammed Fazil in 2022 and an attack on another man in 2023. Shetty was the prime accused in the Fasil murder case. The arrested have been identified as Abdul Safwan, 29, and Niyaz, 28, both residents of Shantigudde; Mohammed Muzamil, 32, from Kenjar, who was recently employed in Saudi Arabia and married just four months ago; Kalandhar Shafi, 31, from Kursugudde, working in Bengaluru; Ranjith, 19, and Nagraj, 20, from Kalasa in Chikkamagaluru; Mohammed Rizwan, 28, from Jokatte, another returnee from Saudi Arabia; and Adil Maharoof, the brother of Fazil. The group comprises drivers, masons, salesmen, and other workers, indicating a network of diverse backgrounds, said the police. A group of assailants, armed with blunt objects, allegedly surrounded Shetty and

more aggressive campaign than has India. Pakistan wants the secession of Kashmir and has a receptive audience there. India has supported ethnic separatists in Pakistan, but the effort has been comparatively small. India has no desire to annex Pakistani territory. Both sides will be wary that extremist attacks could invite military retaliation or US sanctions,” says the report. The NIE says that despite these flashpoints, overall, the possibility of war between India and Pakistan is about 1 in 5 for the following reasons:

Leaders on each side will fear the other’s nuclear weapons potential and thus will be cautious about risking a conflict that could escalate to the nuclear level. Key Indian and Pakistani leaders are deeply concerned that a fourth war cannot be kept limited. The likely deployment of nuclear-capable missiles and development of nuclear warheads before the end of the decade will increase bilateral tensions but should, in the long run, provide a more credible deterrent, particularly for Pakistan. Military leaders will exercise caution because they know they cannot achieve victory at an acceptable cost. Both militaries will remain ill-equipped for war. Budget constraints, supply disruptions, and the burden of internal security duties will continue to undermine readiness. India outnumbers Pakistan in almost every category of military capability – a disparity not likely to change in this decade. India, however, has no overriding strategic interest in initiating a war with Pakistan. Pakistani military leaders probably believe that another conflict with India could well destroy the Pakistan military, if not the state. The NIE also gives out arguments in support of its hypothesis on why war could still break out between India and Pakistan. It states that Pakistani war plans call for pre-emptive strikes against Indian forces if Pakistani leaders are convinced an all-out attack is imminent because Pakistan lacks the strategic depth to absorb such an attack. The report says war could also take place under the following conditions: If India’s military leaders were convinced – rightly or wrongly – that Pakistani units were preparing another conventional assault on Kashmir, they probably would order armoured strike units into wartime positions in Punjab and Rajasthan. That, in turn, would prompt Pakistani counter moves.

A spectacular terrorist outrage that one side believed the other directed or abetted. An Indian military cross-border action, for example, to close infiltration routes along the Line of Control or to punish Pakistan for supporting terrorism. The NIE also touches upon the two incidents, which had taken place a few years earlier, that brought the two countries to the brink of war.

“Indo-Pakistani crises of 1987 and 1990 were symptomatic of the deep suspicions each side harbors about the other’s intentions. In early 1987, India’s BRASSTACKS military exercises precipitated a high-stakes game of military brinkmanship. “Diplomatic intervention by Pakistan’s martial law ruler defused tensions and allowed both sides to step back from the brink. Two years later, Pakistan staged its own major exercise, ‘Strike of the Believers’ (Exercise Zarb-e-Momin),” the NIE says. The NIE says the 1990 crisis stemmed from India’s deployment of additional troops to Kashmir. “The Pakistan Army’s subsequent preparations for a major summer training exercise – probably intended to send a message to New Delhi – and Indian assessments of unusually large Pakistani force deployments in late April caused alarm in New Delhi. India then deployed armoured, artillery, and infantry units closer to the border,” it says.

inflicted fatal injuries before fleeing. Shetty faced five cases against him, including four in Mangaluru city and one in Dakshina Kannada district. Mangaluru City Police Commissioner Anupam Agrawal revealed that the murder of Shetty was a pre-planned act. “The assailants arrived in a Swift car and a Bolero pickup, intercepted Shetty’s vehicle, and brutally murdered him.” According to Agrawal, the conspiracy was orchestrated by Abdul Safwan, who had been attacked in 2023 in a case where Shetty was suspected to have played a role. Driven by fear of revenge, Safwan allegedly collaborated with others, eventually connecting with Adil Maharoof. An alleged deal was struck for Rs 5 lakh to execute the murder, with Rs 3 lakh reportedly paid upfront. As the plan unfolded, Kalandhar Shafi, Rizwan, and Niyaz became part of the conspiracy, said the police. Niyaz then brought in Ranjith and Nagraj, who were familiar with him and had previously stayed at Safwan’s house. The police also said the group had attempted to kill Shetty on two earlier occasions but failed. The vehicles used during the attack were confirmed to have been rented. When questioned about possible links to Fazil’s murder, Commissioner Agrawal noted that Safwan and Adil Maharoof’s motives appeared aligned. Addressing rumours sparked by a viral video, Agrawal clarified that two burqa-clad women seen in the footage were relatives of one of the accused and are being questioned as part of the probe. Fazil, 23, was hacked to death by a gang of four masked men on July 28, 2022, at the Bee Jay’s clothing store in Surathkal. Following Shetty’s murder, Dakshina Kannada district witnessed a shutdown in most parts, following a bandh call given by the Vishva Hindu Parishad (VHP) and the prohibitory order clamped by the district administration.

Take steps to enact Advocates Protection Bill expeditiously, High Court tells Delhi govt

The Delhi High Court recently told the Delhi government to take “expeditious steps” for enacting the Advocates Protection Bill. Justice Sachin Datta gave the directions on April 21 while hearing a petition filed by advocates Deepa Joseph and Alpha Phiris Dayal, seeking direction for the Centre and the Delhi government to consider enacting the Advocates Protection Bill in the Capital. According to a status report filed by the Delhi government on September 9, 2024, the final draft of the Advocates Protection Bill, 2024 has been prepared by the Law Department, and the draft is required to be considered by the Council of Ministers. However, a copy of this draft was not provided to the applicants who had approached the High Court. “In the circumstances, the present application is allowed. The GNCTD (Government of the National Capital Territory of Delhi) is directed to provide a draft of the Advocate Protection Bill, 2024 to the applicant,” said the High Court. It also directed the Delhi government to file a fresh status report by May 28. The High Court, through an order passed on

May 25, 2023, had directed the Delhi government to file a status report in relation to the first draft of the Delhi Advocates Protection Bill, which was prepared by the coordination committee (of all district court bar associations). This draft was sent to the law minister and the chief minister of Delhi. The Law Department then prepared the final draft of the Bill. The draft prepared by the coordination committee recommended police protection, compensation, protection of action in the due conduct of duties by advocates, protection from illegal arrests, and the formation of grievance redressal committees. Advocate K C Mittal is representing this committee in court, and Advocate Nagendra Kumar is its chairman. “Now we are going to get to see the Bill... this will be the future of lawyers’ safety. This was long overdue. We put in a lot of effort to prepare the draft,” said Mittal, who helped the committee draft the bill. He also said that Rajasthan is the only state in the country that has enacted a law granting protection to advocates.

Ukraine and US have finally signed minerals deal. What does it include?



Kyiv: After months of tense negotiations, the US and Ukraine signed a deal that is expected to give Washington access to the country's critical minerals and other natural resources, an agreement Kyiv hopes will secure long-term support for its defense against Russia. According to Ukrainian officials, the version of the deal signed on Wednesday is far more beneficial to Ukraine than previous versions, which they said reduced Kyiv to a junior partner and gave Washington unprecedented rights to the country's resources. The deal itself has not yet been made public, but the Economy Ministry and the Prime Minister's office have offered some details. The agreement — which the Ukrainian parliament must ratify — would establish a reconstruction fund for Ukraine that Ukrainian officials hope will be a vehicle to ensure future American military assistance.

A previous agreement was nearly signed before being derailed in a tense Oval Office meeting involving US President Donald Trump, US Vice President JD Vance and Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy. "We have formed a version of the agreement that provides mutually beneficial conditions for both countries. This is an agreement in which the United States notes its commitment to promoting long-term peace in Ukraine and recognizes the contribution that Ukraine has made to global security by giving up its nuclear arsenal," Ukrainian Economy Minister Yulia Svyrydenko said in a post on Facebook.

The signing comes during what US Secretary of State Marco Rubio said would be a "very critical" week for US-led efforts to end the war that appear to have stalled. Ukraine sees the deal as a way to ensure that its biggest and most consequential ally stays engaged and doesn't freeze military support, which has been key in its 3-year-old fight against Russia's full-scale invasion. "This agreement signals clearly to Russia that the Trump administration is committed to a peace process centred on a free, sovereign, and prosperous Ukraine over the long term," Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent said in a statement.

What does the deal include?

The deal covers minerals, including rare earth elements, but also other valuable resources including oil and natural gas, according to details released by Ukrainian officials. It does not include resources that are already a source of revenue for the Ukrainian State. In other words, any profits under the deal are dependent on the success of new investments. While Trump has repeatedly expressed inter-

est in Ukraine's rare earth elements, it unclear what other minerals might be part of the deal. Earlier this year, Andrii Yermak, the head of Ukraine's presidential office, said it could include lithium, titanium or uranium. The agreement ensures full ownership of the resources remains with Ukraine, according to Ukrainian officials. The state will determine where and what can be extracted. It also does not refer to any debt obligations for Ukraine, the officials have said, meaning profits from the fund will not go toward the paying the US back for its previous support.

What are rare earth elements?

They are a group of 17 elements that are essential to many kinds of consumer technology, including cellphones, hard drives and electric and hybrid vehicles. China is the world's largest producer of rare earth elements, and both the US and Europe have sought to reduce their dependence on Beijing, Trump's chief geopolitical adversary.

How will the fund work?

The agreement establishes a reconstruction investment fund, and both the US and Ukraine will have an equal say in its management, according to Svyrydenko. The fund will be supported by the US government through the US International Development Finance Corporation agency, which Ukraine hopes will attract investment and technology from American and European countries. Ukraine is expected to contribute 50% of all future profits from government-owned natural resources into the fund. The United States will also contribute in the form of direct funds and equipment, including badly needed air defense systems and other military aid. Contributions to the fund will be reinvested in projects related to mining, oil and gas as well as infrastructure. No profits will not be taken from the fund for the first 10 years. Trump administration officials initially pushed for a deal in which Washington would receive \$500 billion in profits from exploited minerals as compensation for its wartime support. But Zelenskyy rejected the offer, saying he would not sign off on an agreement "that will be paid off by 10 generations of Ukrainians."

What is the state of Ukraine's minerals industry?

Ukraine's rare earth elements are largely untapped because of state policies regulating the industry, a lack of good information about deposits, and the war. The industry's potential is unclear since geological data is thin because mineral reserves are scattered across Ukraine, and existing studies are considered largely inadequate. In general, however, the outlook for Ukrainian natural resources is promising. The country's reserves of titanium, a key component for the aerospace, medical and automotive industries, are believed to be among Europe's largest. Ukraine also holds some of Europe's largest known reserves of lithium, which is required to produce batteries, ceramics and glass. In 2021, the Ukrainian mineral industry accounted for 6.1% of the country's gross domestic product and 30% of exports. An estimated 40% of Ukraine's metallic mineral resources are inaccessible because of Russian occupation, according to data from We Build Ukraine, a Kyiv-based think tank. Ukraine has argued that it's in Trump's interest to develop the remainder before Russian advances capture more.

The mechanics of crowd control: anticipation, preparation, prevention

In his 1997 book 'Dominance Without Hegemony', historian Ranajit Guha recounted how Mahatma Gandhi, "perhaps India's foremost ideologue of self-discipline", created an "elaborate" set of rules about how people should behave around him as they travelled the country. To Gandhi, Guha wrote, a haphazard crowd was "unmanageable", "uncontrollable", "undisciplined", and ultimately entailed a "mobocracy". Gandhi demanded "sacrifice, discipline, and self-control" and deplored the "instances of noise and confusion". Yet he often suffered what Guha called a frustration "deeply felt". As anthropologist Ajay Gandhi wrote in a 2013 paper, "For nationalist reformers, proper comportment signalled a people's capacity to be modern and responsible. The 'rogues' ... who could not maintain decorum had to be expelled from official nationalism."

On July 2, 2024, a crowd crush in Mughal Garhi village in Uttar Pradesh's Hathras district, at the end of a conclave organised by self-proclaimed spiritual guru Suraj Pal Singh, left 121 people dead. Subsequent media reports suggested the local police had granted permission for 80,000 people to gather whereas some 2.5 lakh turned up. Even as Mr. Singh departed the venue in his car, "thousands of devotees shouted and ran towards the vehicle, crushing others still seated." Reuters said citing a subsequent first information report. "Some people were trampled after falling in an adjacent field of slush and mud."

On December 4, 2024, actor Allu Arjun made an appearance at the Sandhya Theatre premises in Hyderabad. As the throngs of people who had gathered for a film's premier rushed towards him, a woman was trampled underfoot and her eight-year-old son was critically injured. Members of the duo's family later filed a criminal complaint against Mr. Arjun and his security detail, the theatre's owner, and the film's makers. According to an officer investigating the incident, the actor's security guards blocked exit points from the screening hall to stem the tide of people flowing towards him. On January 29, 2025, a crowd crush during the Maha Kumbh Mela in Prayagraj, Uttar Pradesh, left at least 50 dead and more than a hundred injured. At the 1954 Kumbh, more than 800 people died in a crowd collapse; similar events claimed the lives of 39 at the Nashik Kumbh in 2003, 36 at the Allahabad Kumbh in 2013, and 10 at another Nashik Kumbh in 2015. The 2021 Kumbh Mela in Haridwar is widely believed to have been a 'superspreader' event after the Indian government allowed it to go ahead despite the COVID-19 pandemic.

Before the 2025 Kumbh began, Prime Minister Narendra Modi had said it would happen under the gaze of 2,700 cameras outfitted with artificial intelligence (AI) models able to spot unsafe instances of crowding and alert the authorities, so they could ameliorate the risk, in real-time. Reuters reported that the "software running the cameras" sends updates to a control centre staffed by more than 500 people when it "detects a surge in any one section of the festival city, a fire, or if people cross barricades they are not supposed to." After the incident, State chief minister Yogi Adityanath commissioned an independent judicial inquiry. On February 15, a 'stampede' at the New Delhi Railway Station (NDLS) left 18 people dead and several more injured. Initial reports from the ground indicated the incident involved trains headed for the Mela in Prayagraj. Most recently, on May 3, at least seven people were killed and 80 more were injured during another alleged 'stampede', in truth a crowd collapse, in Shirgao village in the Bicholim taluka of Goa, where several lakh people had gathered for an annual reli-



gious festival at the Shree Lairai Devi temple. Chief Minister Pramod Sawant has since called for a magisterial inquiry and sought help from Prime Minister Modi for the State.

Who is responsible?

"Stampede ... is a loaded word as it apportion blame to the victims for behaving in an irrational, self-destructive, unthinking and uncaring manner. ... It gives the impression that it was a mindless crowd only caring about themselves, and they were prepared to crush people." Edwin Galea, a fire-safety engineering and evacuation dynamics expert, uttered these words to a journalist after the Seoul crowd crush in October 2022 that killed 150 people. Events known as 'stampedes', 'crowd crushes', and 'crowd collapses' all start with crowding, when a large group of people gather in a bounded location and their number continues to increase until it crosses an important threshold. Up to five people per sq. m is okay. Between five and eight, the people are pressed against each other, and beyond eight they are packed so tightly that they may develop trouble breathing. A crowd crush occurs when people are constricted by the mass of others around them and can't move on their own. A crowd collapse happens when one person in this tightly packed mass falls down, with the pressure of others around the individual causing them to fall as well. Seen from above, the crowd seems to progressively implode into a void.

A stampede occurs technically when a crowd of people runs towards or away from something, i.e. when the people are excited or frightened. When people die in a stampede, public conversations concerned with its cause use the word "panic". But experts like Galea have repeatedly concluded that the people who run in a stampede can't be to blame for the people who die in the stampede. As Manchester Metropolitan University professor of crowd science Keith Still said in 2015, "People don't die because they panic. They panic because they are dying." The death, or more broadly some tragedy, happens first — due to a crowd crush or collapse, say — before it becomes compounded by the architecture of the space. If the space doesn't allow people to escape harm quickly, they panic. According to an official estimate, around 66 crore people attended the 2025 Maha Kumbh Mela in Prayagraj, Uttar Pradesh, over 45 days. Say there were 5 crore people at the venue at any point in time. To accommodate them at five people per sq. m, the venue would have had to span 10 sq. km. In reality, the Uttar Pradesh government had created a space 40 sq. km large. This included room for kitchens, parking spaces, bathrooms, roads, hospitals, administrative facilities, and, presumably, some water bodies. But even accounting for all of them, there should have been more than enough square-footage to admit crowding at a manageable level.

Trump Calls For 100% Tariff on Movies Made Overseas



GNS News Agency, May 8

Trump said in a Truth Social post Sunday that he has authorized a 100% tariff on films produced overseas. He said it was a response to tax incentives in countries such as the United Kingdom and Canada that have lured a substantial number of Hollywood films to shoot outside the U.S. The Movie Industry in America is DYING a very fast death," the president wrote. He called international filmmaking incentives "a concerted effort by other Nations and, therefore, a National Security threat. It is, in addition to everything else, messaging and propaganda!"

This year's highest-grossing film, "A Minecraft Movie," was shot in Canada. Some of summer's biggest produc-

tions including "Mission: Impossible – The Final Reckoning" and "Jurassic World Rebirth" were also made primarily or entirely outside the U.S. London in particular has become a thriving hub for Hollywood productions. Disney's Marvel Studios is shooting a pair of upcoming Avengers sequels there. Trump said he authorized the Commerce Department and the U.S. Trade Representative to immediately begin the process of instituting a 100% tariff on movies made abroad. "We're on it," U.S. Commerce Secretary Howard Lutnick posted on X. It is unclear how such a tariff would work because movies aren't physical goods that move through ports like most items subject to tariffs. The Trump administration would need to determine how to value a movie in order to apply the tariffs, as well as what the threshold would be to classify it as an import. If other countries imposed reciprocal tariffs, it could devastate the Hollywood studios, as most big-budget event films earn most of their revenue overseas. Representatives for the Motion Picture Association of America, the trade group for major Hollywood studios and streaming companies, and the White House didn't immediately respond to requests for comment. Trump in January appointed actors Jon Voight, Mel Gibson and Sylvester Stallone as his "special ambassadors" to Hollywood. He said they would help bring back Hollywood business lost to foreign countries. "These three very talented people will be my eyes and ears, and I will get done what they suggest," he said.

Navigating pregnancy sugar level changes and managing gestational diabetes

Gestational diabetes mellitus (GDM) is a type of diabetes that develops during pregnancy, typically around the 24th to 28th week. Unlike type 1 or type 2 diabetes, GDM occurs when hormones from the placenta interfere with insulin, a hormone that regulates blood sugar. This leads to insulin resistance, where the body cannot use insulin effectively, and causing glucose to accumulate in the blood.

Why does it happen?

During pregnancy, the placenta produces hormones like estrogen and cortisol, which help sustain the pregnancy but also block insulin's action. As the placenta grows, these hormones increase, worsening insulin resistance. While most pregnant women develop some insulin resistance by the third trimester, those with risk factors like obesity, a family history of diabetes, or advanced maternal age (over 25) are more likely to develop GDM. Ethnicity also plays a role, with higher risks for South Asian, Hispanic, Native American, and Pacific Islander individuals. Gestational diabetes (GDM) usually doesn't cause clear symptoms, but some women may feel very thirsty or need to urinate more often. Between the 24th and 28th week of pregnancy, doctors test for GDM by having the woman drink a sugary solution and then checking her blood sugar. If needed, a more detailed test is done by giving a 75-gram sugar drink and measuring blood sugar levels at different times. GDM is diagnosed if the fasting blood sugar is 92 mg/dL or higher, or if the blood sugar is 180 mg/dL or more one hour after consuming sugar drink, or 153 mg/dL or more two hours after consuming sugar drink. Uncontrolled GDM can lead to complications for both the mother and baby. Babies may grow too large (macrosomia), increasing the risk of birth



injuries or caesarean delivery. After birth, infants may develop low blood sugar (hypoglycaemia) or breathing difficulties. Mothers face higher risks of high blood pressure (preeclampsia), preterm labour, and type 2 diabetes later in life. To keep blood sugar levels in check, management involves a balanced diet with controlled portions, regular exercise to improve insulin sensitivity, and monitoring blood sugar levels. If needed, insulin injections or medications like metformin may be prescribed.

Before pregnancy, maintaining a healthy weight and staying active can lower the risk of GDM. After delivery, blood sugar levels usually return to normal, but both mother and child have a higher lifetime risk of type 2 diabetes. Regular check-ups, a nutritious diet, and exercise can help mitigate these risks. Gestational diabetes, while manageable, requires careful attention to protect maternal and foetal health. Early diagnosis, consistent monitoring, and healthy lifestyle choices play pivotal roles in ensuring a safe pregnancy and reducing long-term health risks.

Cera has over Rs 600 crore cash, no debt, and big plans, but is the market already paying for it?

Walk into any middle-class home built in the 1990s or early 2000s, and chances are that you'd find a Cera commode or washbasin. It didn't stand out, but it was always there, quietly shaping India's sanitation story. Today, though, the Indian bathroom is no longer just a utility space. It's a canvas of aspiration. Rain showers, matte black faucets, sensor taps, and high-gloss vanity basins now define what homeowners want. And Cera? It's no longer just about sanitaryware, it's pitching itself as a full-fledged "bathroom solutions" brand, competing in both affordability and luxury.

Investors who spotted this early made a fortune. From Rs 15 in the 2000s to nearly Rs 10,000 in mid-2024, Cera became one of those rare, understated compounders. But now, after a 40% drawdown, the stock trades closer to Rs 5,500. Growth has cooled, valuations remain steep, and competition is intensifying. So the question is: Was the Rs 10,000 peak the end of the story, or just a pause before the next flush of growth? For much of its early history, Cera Sanitaryware was a specialist in ceramic sanitaryware: toilets, washbasins, and urinals, the unglamorous essentials of middle-class Indian bathrooms. But as consumer tastes evolved and bathrooms became lifestyle statements, Cera expanded its horizon. Today, it positions itself not as a ceramics maker, but as a full-spectrum bathroom solutions provider, a shift that's as strategic as it is symbolic.

That pivot is no small feat. Just a decade ago, faucets were a marginal contributor. Today, they're almost as important as the company's original breadwinner. And the faucet segment, notably, is growing faster. But product diversification is only one part of the story. The other is the customer mix. Roughly two-thirds of Cera's revenue still comes from retail buyers and homeowners building or renovating, often in Tier-2 and Tier-3 cities where the brand has deep roots. The remaining third comes from institutional clients: real estate developers, hotels, and large-scale contractors. It's a delicate but effective balance. Retail offers quicker cash cycles and steady volume. Institutional orders offer scale and visibility, but come with longer payment terms and tighter margins. Managing both well requires operational discipline, and Cera has walked that tightrope with finesse. Coming out of the pandemic, India's housing market surged. Interest rates were low, residential completions picked up pace, and homeowners poured savings into bathroom upgrades. Cera capitalised on this momentum.

These were standout numbers for a company in a cyclical sector, reflecting both operating leverage and product mix gains. But FY24 brought a cooling breeze. Higher inflation and rising home loan rates softened retail demand, especially in the second half of the year.

Revenue growth slowed to just 4%, reaching Rs 1,871 crore. Gross margins marginally improved, with net profit still rising to Rs 239 crore, supported by tight control on overheads, stable input costs, and a modest price hike. It was, in essence, a year of resilient deceleration. The company didn't break records, but it did protect its core without borrowing and without discounting its brand.

Add to this a net debt position of zero and cash re-



serves of over Rs 600 crore, and you have a business that is not just profitable, but self-sustaining. Cera has the capital to grow, the distribution to scale, and the brand equity to command pricing power. What it chooses to do with that headroom over the next five years may well determine whether it can replicate the kind of wealth creation it delivered in the last two decades.

Early signs from 9MFY25: Muted topline, softening margins. FY23 was a breakout year and FY24 a breather, then the first nine months of FY25 suggest a year of slow grind. EBITDA declined by 6.1%, falling to Rs 232 crore from Rs 247 crore a year ago. PAT dipped 1.8%, coming in at Rs 161 crore compared to Rs 164 crore in 9MFY24. Margins are also under pressure: EBITDA margin fell to 16.8%, while PAT margin softened to 11.6%, both down 40-50 basis points from the previous year. Sequentially, the picture is even more telling. Q3 FY25 revenue dropped 9.3% QoQ, and PAT fell 32.4% compared to Q2, suggesting that consumer sentiment may have weakened further during the festive quarter.

So far, FY25 looks like a year of consolidation, not acceleration. Volume growth is tepid, and while Cera is preserving profitability through operating discipline, pricing power alone may not be enough if demand remains subdued into FY26. Figure 2a: Financial Overview. Source: Quarterly Report Dec'24. Figure 2a: Financial Overview. Source: Quarterly Report Dec'24. Yet, what stands out is this: despite these headwinds, the company remains debt-free and cash-rich, clocking double-digit net margins and healthy return ratios. The faucet engine: Cera's most underrated growth story. If there's one part of the Cera story that hasn't received enough attention, it's this: the company's biggest tailwind today isn't ceramic toilets, it's faucets. In a typical Indian bathroom, every commode or basin might have two or three taps, mixers, or showers around it. From a business standpoint, the market opportunity in faucetware is not just large, it's arguably larger than sanitaryware itself. Cera recognised this early and began expanding into taps and mixers well before most of its ceramic peers did. The move is now paying dividends. In FY24, faucetware accounted for roughly 37% of Cera's total revenue, up from around 25% just five years ago. For context, sanitaryware, still the company's flagship segment, contributed 50%.

More Indian women take up jobs, and still shoulder most household chores



While an increasing number of urban women are entering paid employment, the share of them who do unpaid household work, such as cooking, shopping, and caring for children and the elderly, has also grown. This means that the deep gender divide in doing household chores largely remains unchanged in India. Although more urban men are participating in domestic work now, with the share going up considerably in recent years, the gender divide persists as the share of such women is already very high and growing. Notably, these trends are consistent across most States, with the exception of some north-eastern States, where a relatively higher proportion of urban men participate in household chores. Chart 1 shows the share of urban men and women (above six years of age) who did paid work in India in 2019 and 2024. Among urban women the share increased from 15.5% to 18% — a 2.5% point rise — while among urban men it increased from 58.1% to 61.2%. Paid work includes self-employment, regular wage/salaried jobs, and casual labour.

Chart 2 shows the share of urban men and women (above six years of age) who provide unpaid services for their own use in India in 2019 and 2024. Unpaid provision of services for own use includes household accounting and management, purchasing goods, preparing and/or serving

meals, waste disposal and recycling, cleaning, decorating and maintaining one's own dwelling and gardening. The share of women doing such work increased from 79.3% to 81% in the period, with the share of men increased from 23% to 28.5%. Chart 3 shows the share of urban men and women (above six years of age) who took care of children, the sick, the elderly, and differently abled persons in India in 2019 and 2024. The share of urban women doing such work increased from 25.9% to 31.8% in this period, while the share of men increased from 12.9% to 17.3%. Chart 4 shows the State-wise share of urban men (horizontal axis) and women (vertical axis) who did unpaid domestic services for household members in 2024. All the States show very little variation and tend to cluster closely together. Across most States, the share of urban men who did household chores ranged from 20% to 40%, and the share of urban women ranged from 75% to 85%. Some north-eastern States stand out. In Sikkim, Arunachal Pradesh and Nagaland, over 50% men participated in household chores. Among major States, Kerala leads with 44% men participating in household work. Chart 5 shows the State-wise share of urban men (horizontal axis) and women (vertical axis) who did paid employment and related activities in 2024. Here too, all the States are mostly grouped together. Across most of them, the share of urban men who went for work ranged between 55% and 65%, and the share of urban women ranged between 10% and 25%. Among major States, Tamil Nadu stands out with 25% of women engaged in paid work compared to close to 9% in Bihar and 10% in Uttar Pradesh. The share of women who were engaged in employment was also high in Telangana (24%), Karnataka (22%), and Himachal Pradesh (23%). The relatively higher share of women in paid work in Tamil Nadu, Telangana, Karnataka, and Himachal Pradesh — when considered alongside the fact that over 80% of women in these States also do household chores — shows that many women are juggling both work and domestic responsibilities.

What is GST e-invoicing? What's changed from April 1, 2025?

GNS News Agency, May 8

The Story so far: The GST Council of India approved and rolled out the 'e-invoicing' or 'electronic invoicing' eco-system in a phased manner for reporting of business-to-business (B2B) invoices to GST portal. As there were no existing standards/formats then, a standardised format was introduced across the country, after having several consultations with trade/industry bodies as well as Institute of Chartered Accountants of India. Since then, several changes were also being made to the GST e-invoicing rules and regulations. Before getting into the details of what is GST e-invoicing and how this works, let's first check out the new rules.

From April 1, 2025, business houses with an Annual Aggregate Turn Over (AATO) of ₹10 crore and above must report/upload e-invoices to the Invoice Registration Portal (IRP) within 30 days from the date of issue of the document. Earlier, this rule was meant only for business houses with an AATO of more than ₹100 crore. As the turnover threshold has been reduced drastically, large number of business houses must comply with this 30-day deadline. Currently, there are no strict regulations on the deadline of reporting invoices. Therefore, a few businesses upload invoices in a delayed manner, thereby creating discrepancies in Input Tax Credit (ITC) claims and overall tax compliance. But now, the in-built validation in the IRPs will not allow users from reporting e-Invoices after the 30-day window. Late submissions would automatically be rejected, with consequences leading to potential penalties and financial setbacks. From April 1, it is mandatory for all taxpayers, irrespective of turnover, to use Two-Factor Authentication (2FA) system for e-invoice and e-way bill generation.

What is GST e-invoicing?

GST e-invoicing involves reporting of B2B invoices and export invoices issued by taxpayers, to their customers, on the Union Government's e-invoice portal and getting a unique Invoice Reference Number (IRN). This doesn't mean that the invoice would be generated by the government portal itself. Further, e-invoice doesn't simply mean that the invoice would be in a soft copy version such as PDF. According to the GST portal, "It's a faceless system with major thrust on API integration so that the eco-system can exchange the data electronically."

Nokia to upgrade Vodafone Idea's optical transport network for 4G, 5G expansion

New Delhi: Telecom major Nokia on Monday said it will upgrade and expand Vodafone Idea Limited's (VIL) optical transport network across key metro and circle locations in India. The upgrade will increase its capacity, supporting 4G data growth. In addition, Nokia's equipment will modernise the network, providing flexibility and efficiency, and boost VIL's 5G rollout, the company said in a statement. "With Nokia's advanced optical network solutions, we are excited to build an agile, high-capacity and future-ready network that will support India's digital transformation and drive innovation across sectors," said Jagbir Singh, CTO at Vodafone Idea Limited. Among the comprehensive optical suite of products deployed to enable this network overhaul include Nokia's 1830 Photonic Service Switch (PSS) platform, and its CDC-F 2.0 wavelength switching technologies. Nokia's future-ready solution will also enable VIL to efficiently scale its network from C-band to C+L band as required, avoiding the need for any forklift changes in platform or architecture.

According to the company, this deployment will lead to reduced VIL's operational costs. Additionally, the project prioritises sustainability, incorporating energy-efficient solutions and automation-enabled deployment processes to minimise the carbon footprint. "Our cutting-edge 1830 PSS technology will ensure their readiness to deliver multi-terabit data growth and support upcoming quantum-safe services

for their enterprise customers," said Sang Xulei, Vice President and Head of Network Infrastructure at Nokia Asia Pacific. The company will also deploy its market-leading photonic service engine (PSE-Vs) super-coherent optics, industry-leading Dense Wavelength Division Multiplexing (DWDM) and optical transport network (OTN) to ensure VIL's customers continue to experience great connectivity even during peak usage times. This significant milestone with VIL, further cements Nokia's leadership in India's optical transport market and commitment to enabling next-generation connectivity in India, Xulei added. Vodafone Idea Limited holds a large spectrum portfolio including mid band 5G spectrum in 17 circles and mmWave spectrum in 16 circles.



Naseeruddin Shah writes: The Mughals you don't know



Aurangzeb row, Aurangzeb tomb, Maharashtra government, Aurangzeb history, who was Aurangzeb, Aurangzeb tomb, Nagpur violence, Aurangzeb tomb protest, Aurangzeb tomb row, Muslim upliftment, delimitation, Indian expressslf DNA testing were around in Aurangzeb's time, it would probably have revealed that he had less Mongol, more Rajput blood in him. It was impossible not to be amused with Balbir Punj's impassioned take-down of Aurangzeb ('The Aurangzeb we know', IE, March 27) and the Mughals (read Muslims) and one should offer thanks that he is not and probably never has been a teacher or a student of history! If he were, he would know that Islam did not appear in India with the Mughals but centuries before them on the Malabar coast, and there's definitely no record of temples being destroyed or the citizenry being compelled to embrace the new religion at that time. And if he delves into his own lineage, I think the odds would be stacked against him: He would discover that he too is a sixth-generation Hindustani, born and brought up here just as Aurangzeb was. Does that make him an invader too?

In a series of staggering generalisations, Punj blames the disappearance of non-Muslim communities from neighbouring countries on the "invaders" who left those countries and came to India. The Mughals, according to him, brutalised our country by succeeding "to an extent in their objective of obliterating the symbols of local inclusive plural culture and decimating the followers of indigenous faiths". He doesn't stop there, he attributes the death of pluralism, secularism and co-existence in foreign lands like Bangladesh, Afghanistan and Pakistan (overlooking India, that is Bharat, of course) to the disappearance of Hindu-Buddhist-Sikh communities in those countries. One cannot help but wonder if he is really serious in making these assertions, because we all know what the cause of the soon-to-be total disappearance of pluralism, secularism and co-existence in our own country today is. He resents Aurangzeb being praised and set up as a "role model" for Muslims in India, which he most assuredly is not. I very much doubt if there is a single Muslim in India who hero-worships or iden-

tifies with him, whereas valiant Babur yes, Humayun no because he ran away, Akbar is respected (thanks largely to Prithviraj Kapoor), Junkie Jahangir possibly, and the lover of beauty Shah Jahan most definitely, but not Aurangzeb. I expect that as a teacher of Mass Communication, Punj should know the difference between celebrating a person and speaking objectively of him. Making light of the glorification of Nathuram Godse, not even mentioning V D Savarkar whose portrait now adorns Parliament house, next to Gandhi ji's, and being magnanimously forgiving about the British despite their ruthless loot-maar, and nurturing the saplings of division and hatred among Hindus and Muslims, illustrate the deep-seated biases Punj suffers from, and reveals his agenda. The glorification of Sambhaji is for him totally justified but I wonder if he knows what Guru Golwalkar and Savarkar himself had to say about that historical personage. The celebration of some people clearly passes muster while the objective analysis of others gets him in an uproar. It doesn't do for an academic to be so blinkered. Considering that demolishing temples seemed to be the favorite pastime of the Mughals, doesn't Punj realise he's contradicting himself by asking "how millions of Hindus and thousands of temples survived if Islamic invaders were so intolerant?" And he doesn't bother to explain how the "abysmally small" number of invaders managed to influence and rule over more than half the Subcontinent and continue to rule for centuries when their administrative abilities were so poor. But the real conundrum here is why only the Mughals, who came to settle and not to plunder, have become the target of unceasing opprobrium by our so-called patriots. No doubt temples were destroyed in their time, just as cathedrals and mosques were destroyed in the USSR and a mosque in China today has actually been turned into a urinal. The truth is that temples were also built or patronised by Mughal rulers and, except for Aurangzeb who was undoubtedly a bigot and a rabid fundamentalist but also an ascetic (which incidentally does not detract from his administrative abilities), the other Mughals are recorded as being pretty much secular. The Mughals, instead of looting and scooting, stayed on and left behind treasures of architecture, literature, painting, music and poetry. That they are confused with marauders like Timur, Nadir Shah and Mahmud Ghaznavi who only came to plunder is not surprising, considering the Islamophobia prevalent the world over today, nor is the fact that only the Mughal dynasty is the target of venomous hatred by our jingoists. The Mamluks, the Slave Dynasty, the Khiljis, the Tughlaqs, the Lodis are not mentioned because the world is unaware of their doings. The world knows only the Mughals so they must be run down. And the Mughals were Muslim, ergo all Muslims are invaders. And incidentally, if DNA testing were around in Aurangzeb's time, it would probably have revealed that he had less Mongol, more Rajput blood in him.

Women rulers as RSS heroes: A surging vote bank finds space in Sangh politics



At a time when women have emerged as a crucial electoral constituency with all political parties vying for their votes, the RSS too is increasingly celebrating womanhood by dovetailing its ideology to female leadership. In the past few years, the organisation has trained its focus on celebrating the birth anniversaries of women rulers of medieval India who either fought the Mughals or the western imperial powers. Hence the RSS has celebrated the birth anniversaries of Ahilyabai Holkar, Rani Durgawati and Rani Abbakka. While Holkar and Durgawati had fought Muslim rulers, Abbakka had battled the Portuguese. Plus, the three had another thing in common for the Sangh — their role in "guarding" Hindu religion.

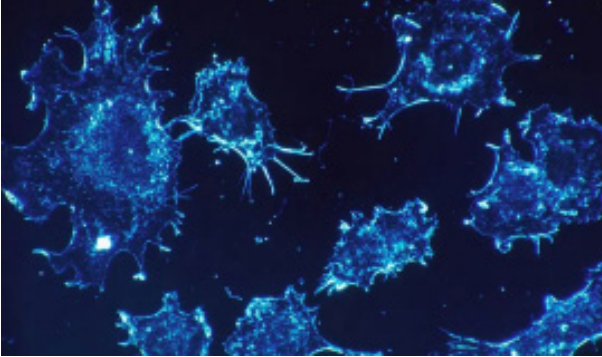
At the recently concluded meeting of the Akhil Bharatiya Pratinidhi Sabha (ABPS) — the highest decision-making body of the RSS — Sangh Sarkaryawah (general Secretary) Dattatreya Hosabale issued a statement marking the 500th birth anniversary of Rani Abbakka. "Ullala Maharani Abbakka, Bharat's great woman freedom fighter, was a master administrator, an invincible strategist, and a highly valiant ruler. ... Maharani Abbakka exemplified Bharat's tradition of inclusivity by promoting the establishment of several Shiva temples and pilgrimage sites. During her rule, she ensured that all religious communities were treated with equal respect and fostered comprehensive development across various segments of society," Hosabale said. Rani Abbakka is considered the first Tuluva queen of Ullal who fought the Portuguese in the latter half of the 16th century. She belonged to the Chowta dynasty, an indigenous Tuluva dynasty that ruled over parts of coastal Karnataka. Last year, the RSS had announced a year-long celebration of the 500th birth anniversary of the 16th-century central India ruler Rani Durgawati. The celebrations projected Rani Durgawati, a

Rajput married into the Gonds, as a tribal icon "who fought Muslim invaders".

"Rani Durgawati had a multi-faceted personality. She was a Rajput married to a tribal Gond. She protected her people from the attacks of the invaders. Despite being a woman, she defeated Muslims thrice," said Pramod Pethkar, publicity in-charge of the Vanvasi Kalyan Ashram, a Chhattisgarh-based outfit under the RSS umbrella. Durgawati is known to have valiantly fought the invading forces of Mughal emperor Akbar. After her forces were eventually defeated in an open-field battle, Durgawati is said to have taken her own life with a dagger. Her death is commemorated as Balidan Diwas. Ahead of the Lok Sabha polls last year, the Sangh had similarly announced year-long celebrations of Malwa queen Ahilyabai Holkar's 300th birth anniversary. Born in 1725, Holkar became the queen of the Malwa region under Maratha rule in 1767 following the deaths of her husband and father-in-law. Holkar is revered as a feminist figure in history who pioneered education for women at a time when it was forbidden, and had worked on women's empowerment during her three-decade reign, which is regarded as among the most prosperous periods for central India. Holkar's importance to the Sangh is also linked to its temple politics as the Malwa kingdom is known to have renovated temples across the country, most importantly the Kashi Vishwanath temple, where a legal battle is currently ongoing over the Gyanvapi mosque. An RSS functionary, however, said these commemorations were not merely aimed at celebrating womanhood but all the "unsung heroes" of India's struggle against "foreign invaders". "The RSS has since the very beginning celebrated the contributions of rulers who fought the Mughals or the British. Unfortunately, the historical narrative of mediaeval India is dominated by Mughals. The Sangh aims to popularise the contribution of these great Indian personalities who have fought for the nation's freedom. We celebrated the anniversary of Lachit Borphukan, who defeated the Mughals, with equal enthusiasm," the functionary said. The development is also connected to recent Sangh efforts to shake off criticism that it is a male-centric organisation. In 2022, for the first time, the RSS had a woman chief guest, mountaineer Santosh Yadav, at its annual Dussehra celebrations. This came two months after general secretary Dattatreya Hosabale regretted the lack of women's partici-

Scientists develop method to expose cancer cells to immune system

New Delhi: An international research group has developed a new method to help the immune system recognise and attack cancer cells by leading them to expose themselves. Researchers led by Israel's Weizmann Institute of Science (WIS) said cancer cells typically evade detection by displaying very few suspicious proteins that the immune system can identify and target, Xinhua news agency reported. In the study published in the journal Cancer Cell, the team, including from the US and Germany, disrupted protein production in cancer cells, forcing them to produce abnormal, recognisable proteins, which could trigger a strong immune response capable of destroying cancer cells. In mouse models, the approach has been proven effective in activating immune cells to target and destroy cancer cells, inhibiting tumour growth. Combining this method with existing immunotherapy has led to tumour eradication in around 40 per cent of the mice, said Yardena Samuels, who led the research. "An existing type of immunotherapy that was not at all effective against the kind of melanoma we tested suddenly became very effective when tested in mouse models after the translation process in the mice's cancer cells was disrupted," Samuels explained. "This combined treatment managed to eradicate



or greatly reduce the tumour in around 40 per cent of the mice," she added. Researchers believe that this breakthrough could improve cancer treatments, especially for patients with cancers that have few mutations. "Finding a new predictive measure for the effectiveness of immunotherapy will allow doctors to offer the treatment to patients who, until now, were not candidates," Samuels said. The team is now exploring how this technique can be applied to other types of cancer, including breast, pancreas.

Meta ‘disagrees’ with CCI fine over WhatsApp privacy policy, plans to appeal



A day after being fined by the Competition Commission of India (CCI), Meta said it “disagrees” with the body’s decision over WhatsApp’s controversial 2021 privacy policy update and plans to appeal it. On Monday night, India’s competition watchdog said it was imposing a Rs 213.14 crore penalty on the social media giant for “abusing” its dominant position in relation to the messaging platform’s privacy policy update from three years ago. The concerns revolved around how the privacy policy was implemented, and user data was collected and shared with other Meta companies. “...the 2021 update did not change the privacy of people’s personal messages and was offered as a choice for users at the time. We also ensured no one would have their accounts deleted or lose functionality of the WhatsApp service because of this update,” Meta said in a statement on Tuesday, following the CCI’s decision.

“The update was about introducing optional business features on WhatsApp, and provided further transparency about how we collect and use data. And since that time, WhatsApp has been incredibly valuable to people and businesses, enabling organisations and government institutions to deliver citizen services through COVID and beyond, and as well as supporting small businesses, all of which furthers the Indian economy. WhatsApp is able to do all of this because it offers services supported by Meta,” it added. Beyond the monetary fine by CCI, The Commission also issued cease-and-desist directions, asking Meta and WhatsApp to implement certain behavioural remedies within a defined timeline. As per the CCI’s order, WhatsApp will not be allowed to share user data collected on its platform with other Meta Companies for advertising purposes, for a period of five years. The CCI said it has concluded that the policy update on a “take-it-or-leave-it” basis “constitutes an imposition of unfair conditions” under the Competition Act. Regarding data sharing between Meta companies, the Commission said that sharing of WhatsApp users’ data between Meta companies for purposes other than providing the messaging service “creates an entry barrier for the rivals of Meta” and “results in denial of market access in the display advertisement market”. “Meta has engaged in leveraging its dominant position in the OTT (over the top) messaging apps through smartphones to protect its position in the online display advertising market,” in contravention of the Competition Act, the CCI said. The CCI also said that

WhatsApp’s privacy policy should include a detailed explanation of the user data shared with other Meta Companies, which should specify the purpose of data sharing, linking each type of data to its corresponding purpose. “Sharing of user data collected on WhatsApp with other Meta Companies... for purposes other than for providing WhatsApp services shall not be made a condition for users to access WhatsApp Service in India,” the CCI said. How WhatsApp’s 2021 privacy policy courted controversy In January 2021, WhatsApp had notified users that it was updating its privacy policy – which was mandatory for them to accept – with an expanded scope of data collection and data sharing between Meta companies. While users in India could not opt-out of the updated policy, WhatsApp’s users in the European Union could due to the bloc’s strong data privacy laws.

After the policy update caused furor – with several users quitting the app en masse to join rivals like Signal and Telegram – the CCI, in 2021, initiated suo motu proceedings and ordered its investigative arm, the Office of the Director General, to investigate the policy. WhatsApp and Facebook had challenged the probe in the Delhi High Court in 2021, saying that the issue related to privacy policy was already pending before the Supreme Court and High Court at the time. In 2022, the court junked further appeals filed by the companies challenging the probe, saying that WhatsApp occupies a dominant position in the market and has a strong lock-in effect which renders its users incapable of shifting to another platform despite dissatisfaction. The problems with WhatsApp’s privacy policy, especially since Meta (Facebook at the time) bought the platform in 2014, have existed since at least 2016. Two years after WhatsApp was acquired by Meta, WhatsApp announced that it would start some level of data sharing with Facebook including phone numbers and last seen activity. Users, however, had 30 days to opt-out of sharing data with Facebook for ad targeting purposes. Meta’s acquisition of WhatsApp was allowed in regions like the European Union on the basis of its commitment to preserve the privacy of its users. However, the European Commission believed the policy update could violate users’ privacy and fined the company €110 million for providing incorrect or misleading information during the Commission’s 2014 investigation under the EU Merger Regulation of Facebook’s acquisition of WhatsApp. The 2016 policy was challenged in India as well, but is currently pending at the Supreme Court. The 2021 policy update builds on the 2016 version, however, there was one key difference: when they were shown the update in January 2021, there was no longer an opt-out option, meaning that WhatsApp metadata sharing with Meta companies was all but mandatory. WhatsApp messages are end-to-end-encrypted, meaning that the platform can not see the messages being sent on the platform. However, with each message, there is metadata associated, which is not encrypted and could reveal sensitive information about a person. Due to Europe’s General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), WhatsApp has to allow users in the region to opt-out of the service. However, that was not available to users in India.

GDP growth to decline to 6.8% this fiscal, says Crisil

GDP growth to decline to 6.8% this fiscal, says Crisil This growth estimate is lower than the 7.2 per cent growth estimated by the Reserve Bank’s Monetary Policy Committee earlier last month. Rating agency Crisil has said real GDP growth is likely to moderate to 6.8 per cent in FY25 from 8.2 per cent in FY24 with high interest rates and lower fiscal impulse (owing to reduction in the fiscal deficit) weighing on growth. This growth estimate is lower than the 7.2 per cent growth estimated by the Reserve Bank’s Monetary Policy Committee earlier last month. However, growth will become more balanced as agriculture and private consumption — last year’s laggards — are poised to rise, it said. “High rural demand and easing food inflation are expected to lift consumption,” Crisil said in a report on near-term interest rates.

Real GDP growth moderated to 6.7 per cent on-year in the first quarter this fiscal from 7.8 per cent in the previous quarter. Crisil expects CPI inflation, which was at 6.21 per cent in October, to soften to 4.6 per cent this fiscal from 5.4 per cent last fiscal. According to the rating firm, food prices should start easing at least sequentially in the second half of this fiscal given the healthy monsoon season. “Easing food inflation and benign non-food inflation is expected to bring down headline CPI inflation,” it said. CPI inflation accelerated to a 14-month high of 6.2 per cent in October from 5.5 per cent in the previous month. “We expect the MPC to cut repo rate by 25 bps in December. The MPC is waiting for food inflation to ease before cutting policy rates. Persistently elevated food inflation in September and October is a worry. The RBI will also monitor risks from geopolitical uncertainties and international commodity price movements. That said, the easing of food inflation by the end of this fiscal should initiate a rate cut,” Crisil said.



The MPC kept policy rates unchanged in its October meeting but changed the stance to ‘neutral’ from ‘withdrawal of accommodation’ The Union Budget has targeted a reduction in the Centre’s fiscal deficit to 4.9 per cent of GDP this fiscal from 5.6 per cent last fiscal. “In the first six months of this fiscal, the fiscal deficit stood at 29.4 per cent of the budget target, compared with 39.3 per cent in the same period last year. Capital expenditure as a proportion of budget target has been lower relative to last fiscal,” it said. Gross market borrowing is estimated at Rs 14 lakh crore for fiscal 2025, 9.2 per cent lower on-year. The government plans to make 47.2 per cent of the budgeted borrowings in the second half. In November, domestic G-sec yields are likely to be influenced by factors such as FPI inflows and outflows, crude oil price movements, the rupee-dollar equation and domestic inflows into the debt market. “The 10-year G-sec yield is expected to hinge on FPI flows, crude prices, global interest rates, the CPI inflation print, the policy decisions of the RBI’s MPC and the Federal Open Market Committee (FOMC), global cues and liquidity concerns,” Crisil said in its three-month view.

Vitamin B12 supplement containing cyanocobalamin is as toxic as cyanide

Whenever we come across any statement on social media that may impact health, we ensure to always get it fact-checked by experts. We did so again, this time when we read that vitamin B12 supplements containing cyanocobalamin are as toxic as cyanide. According to physician Dr Dennis Walker, if your B12 supplement ingredient says “cyanocobalamin”, throw it in the trash. “The ‘cyano’ portion of this is most disturbing. This breaks down into cyanide, which is deadly and toxic at high levels. Instead of cyanocobalamin look for vitamin B12 in the form of methylcobalamin, or hydroxycobalamin. No cyanide, and absorbs just as well,” said Dr Walker. Symptoms of vitamin B12 deficiency include anaemia, feeling tired or weak, trouble while walking, weight loss, irritability, poor appetite, and diarrhoea. Notably, vitamin B12 supplements are advised when one is found to have a deficiency. “It is believed that vitamin B12 supplement plays a crucial role in energy metabolism and nervous system function,” said Dr Aniket Mule, consultant internal medicine, Wockhardt Hospitals, Mira Road. Cyanide is a toxic, carbon-nitrogen chemical compound that is lethal and exists in many forms, including gas, liquid, or solid.

So, is there any truth to this claim?

Dr Vichar Nigam, consultant, internal medicine, Manipal Hospital, Kharadi, Pune contended that cyanocobalamin is “safe” for long-term use. “There are two com-



monly used vitamin B12 supplements: cyanocobalamin and methylcobalamin. Cyanocobalamin is a synthetic form that is absorbed better than methylcobalamin, though it doesn’t stay in the body as long. This makes it helpful for conditions where vitamin B12 absorption is low, like pernicious anaemia,” said Dr Nigam. As for cyanide concerns, Dr Nigam said that the amount is negligible in B12 supplements. “Aluminum from B12 supplements can be a problem for people with kidney issues, but cyanide from cyanocobalamin isn’t a health risk,” stressed Dr Nigam. According to Dr. Harish Chafle, senior consultant intensivist chest physician, bronchoscopist, and sleep disorders specialist, Gleneagles Hospital Parel, cyanide binds in vitamin B12 so that it “does not serve as a source of cyanide exposure and cannot harm you.”

Ignoring family history and four other things cardiologists would never do



You (or the Internet) ask, and we try to get the answer. So, after telling you whether a woman in a coma gets periods, if you can get a heart attack during an angiography, and things a chiropractor would never do, we tell you five things a cardiovascular expert (in this case, Russian cardiologist Dmitry Yaranov) would never do. We double-checked with an Indian cardiologist. “Maintaining a healthy heart involves a multifaceted approach that includes regular exercise, a heart-healthy diet, and careful management of various risk factors,” said Dr Guru Prasad Sogunuru, senior interventional cardiologist, Gleneagles HealthCity Chennai.

Avoiding regular exercise and a heart-healthy diet: I wouldn’t lead a sedentary lifestyle or eat a poor diet. Most heart issues stem from lack of physical activity and unhealthy eating. I’d aim for at least 150 minutes of exercise weekly and focus on a diet rich in fruits, vegetables, lean proteins, and whole grains. Concurred Dr Sogunuru and shared, “Regular exercise strengthens the heart, improves circulation, and helps regulate weight, blood pressure, and cholesterol levels. Coupled with a heart-healthy diet rich in

fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and lean proteins, exercise supports cardiovascular health by reducing LDL cholesterol and preventing plaque buildup.” Refuse proven preventive medications: I wouldn’t ignore medications like statins, blood pressure meds, or SGLT2 inhibitors, which have a proven record for preventing heart failure and improving heart health, especially for those with risk factors like diabetes. “Proven preventive medications, such as statins, are essential for individuals at high risk of heart disease, helping to manage cholesterol levels effectively,” said Dr Sogunuru.

Ignore family history and genetics: I wouldn’t overlook my family’s heart history. “Genetic screening, now widely available in primary care and cardiology offices, helps assess risk and guide personalized prevention strategies,” said Dr Dmitry Yaranov. Dr. Sogunuru agreed that, indeed, family history and genetics could influence heart disease risk, necessitating early screening and proactive measures if there is a familial tendency. Neglect sleep and stress management: I wouldn’t downplay the importance of quality sleep or stress reduction. Both are critical for long-term heart health and prevention, said Dmitry Yaranov. Poor sleep and chronic stress can elevate blood pressure and contribute to heart disease, said Dr Sogunuru. Using toxins like smoking and excessive alcohol: I would never use herbs, vitamins, or even medications without first eliminating toxins like smoking and excessive alcohol. Removing these toxins is the biggest bang for your buck regarding heart health. While smoking damages blood vessels and increases disease risk, excessive alcohol raises blood pressure and cholesterol, said Dr Sogunuru. Dr Sogunuru said that in addition to these measures, regular health check-ups, monitoring blood pressure and cholesterol, and maintaining a healthy weight further enhance heart health.

Whiskey-Drinking Rocker to West Africa’s Most Dangerous al Qaeda Leader



Ag Ghali went on to become the leader of one of the most dangerous al Qaeda franchises in the world, banning music in a swath of West Africa the size of Montana and commanding an army of extremists responsible for tens of thousands of deaths. Ag Ghali’s gunmen even ambushed Tinariwen band members and abducted the guitar player. “I could not believe it,” said the band’s former manager, Manny Ansar, who went clubbing with ag Ghali in Mali’s capital, Bamako, 30 years ago. “It was a huge shock when I saw footage of him walking over corpses.” Ag Ghali has turned West Africa into the primary battlefield where the West and local governments have clashed with Islamist extremists. His 6,000 fighters have rampaged through villages and battled French soldiers, American Green Berets and Russian mercenaries.

It is a fight the 70 or so year-old ag Ghali is winning. His militants have become so powerful that there is a risk that Mali, his home country, or neighboring Burkina Faso could become the world’s first nation ruled by al Qaeda. Ag Ghali’s journey from World Music promoter to Islamist warlord followed as unlikely a trajectory as his friends’ rise from fireside jam sessions to the global stage. This account of his transformation draws on interviews with former friends, Tuareg rebels, Tinariwen band members and managers and government officials, as well as U.N. reports, U.S. diplomatic communications and contemporaneous photos. Desert boys As a young man, ag Ghali was a Tuareg first and a Muslim second. The Tuareg, a Berber ethnic group, have been romanticized in the West for their indigo garb and nomadic lifestyle, wandering the Sahara with their camels, goats and sheep, across what is now Mali, Burkina Faso, Niger, Algeria and Libya. They resisted almost 70 years of colonial domination by France. After Mali gained independence in 1960, they staged a failed rebellion against the new government. Ag Ghali was nine years old when his father, prominent among Tuareg families, was killed in the uprising. As he grew up, ag Ghali joined a legion of Tuareg volunteers, under the patronage of Libyan strongman Moammar Gadhafi, seeking independence from Mali. A 1992 photo of Ibrahim ag Alhabib playing guitar in Mali. Gadhafi used the Tuareg to further his own geopolitical ambitions, dispatching ag Ghali and others to fight the Israelis in Lebanon and the French in Chad. In the 1980s, Gadhafi asked ag Ghali to supervise Tuareg recruits at a camp near Tripoli, Libya. Among the volunteers were musicians, including Ibrahim ag Alhabib, whose father, like ag Ghali’s, had been killed in the 1960s Mali rebellion. As a boy, ag Alhabib had been captivated by a guitar-strumming cowboy in a Western screened at a makeshift desert cinema. He fashioned his first guitar out of an oil can, stick and bicycle-brake cable. As he mastered the instrument, ag Alhabib absorbed the music of Elvis, James Brown, Malian star Ali Farka Touré and Arab pop musicians. Around the campfire at night, ag Alhabib and other Tuareg musicians forged their own desert-blues sound. Ag Ghali saw music as a way to rally support for Tuareg independence. He helped supply ag Alhabib and the musicians with electric guitars and amplifiers, a warehouse for rehearsals and a concrete stage to perform, said Philippe Brix, the band’s second manager.

Ag Ghali “understood the power of guitar music as a communication tool,” said Brix. “It was his masterstroke.” The musicians named their band Kel Tinariwen, the Desert Boys. Pierre Boilley, a Tuareg-focused academic, said he hosted ag Ghali at his Paris apartment in 1989, where his guest spent evenings sipping whiskey and plotting a Tuareg uprising. Ag Ghali eventually soured on Gadhafi, who put his own agenda ahead of Tuareg independence. “Gadhafi had promised for years to help,” Ansar recalled ag Ghali saying. “But he kept on sending us to fight other wars.” In June 1990, ag Ghali and his fighters left Libya and slipped into Mali. They raided military posts during the day and sang fireside at night.

Bootleg cassettes of “Bismillah” passed hand to hand in Malian settlements, and the song became an anthem of the Tuareg liberation movement. It was ag Ghali’s song, said Abdallah ag Alhousseyni, a guitarist in the group since its early days. “One can say Tinariwen was behind the up-

rising,” the band’s bass player, Eyadou ag Leche, later told the French newspaper Le Monde. After initial battlefield wins, ag Ghali negotiated a 1991 peace that led to increased Tuareg autonomy from Malian authorities. It was the start of a two-decade alliance between ag Ghali and the Bamako government. The fighting over, Malian President Moussa Traoré asked Ansar, a Tuareg and popular man-about-town in Bamako, to host ag Ghali for a dinner. Ansar archived Tuareg music as a hobby, and he hit it off with ag Ghali, who thought Tinariwen needed a manager. The following year, ag Ghali invited Ansar to the Algerian Sahara and introduced him to band members, who were playing guitar on a carpet in the shade of a tree. “I am entrusting this band to you,” Ansar recalled ag Ghali saying. Traoré was overthrown by the military in 1991, in response to the killing of pro-democracy protesters. The new president, Alpha Konaré, hoping to keep a lid on the restive Tuaregs, gave ag Ghali a spacious villa in Bamako. Soldiers involved in the 1991 putsch led by Malian Lt. Col. Amadou Toumani Touré against President Moussa Traoré. Both leaders cultivated ties with Iyad ag Ghali before he launched an Islamist insurgency against the government two decades later. Ag Ghali invited Tinariwen’s founder to live in the house. The band stayed up late rehearsing and Ag Ghali sang along, keeping the beat on a water can. President Konaré asked ag Ghali to join him on official trips to the United Arab Emirates, Algeria and elsewhere. The desert rebel began wearing a Rolex watch, Weston loafers and Smalto suits, gifts from their international hosts, Ansar said. Ag Ghali and Ansar cranked Bob Marley songs as they drove to nightclubs, where Ag Ghali chain-smoked Marlboros, but drank only orange juice, Ansar said. In 1999, a group of conservative Pakistani preachers arrived in ag Ghali’s hometown of Kidal, in northern Mali, and his life changed.

Ditch the Rolex The Pakistanis, bearded and dressed in white, marched through Kidal, exhorting residents to strictly follow the tenets of Islam. Some Tuareg women booed them. Ag Ghali, though, was intrigued and invited the Pakistanis to his home. Over the following months, he spent more time praying and reading the Quran. He grew a beard and began wearing the same white garb as the preachers. “I’m ditching my Rolex and my shoes,” Ansar recalled ag Ghali saying. “I can’t wear them anymore.”

Ag Ghali’s growing attraction to an extreme version of Islam and his love of Tuareg music coexisted peacefully for a while. In 1999, the same year the Pakistani preachers came to town, he urged Ansar to organize concerts of Tuareg music, which eventually morphed into the Festival in the Desert. Among those who attended the first festival in 2001 was U.S. Ambassador to Mali Michael Ranneberger. He was mesmerized by the swaying Tuareg dancers and stary nights in camel-skin tents, according to his written recollections. Later that year, “Bismillah” appeared on Tinariwen’s first commercially released album. Others are credited for the song, but band managers said ag Ghali wrote most of the lyrics. In 2003, Vicki Huddleston, then U.S. ambassador to Mali, arranged a meeting with ag Ghali, part of a Bush administration effort to track radicals after the Sept. 11 attacks. “We had intelligence al Qaeda was about to open a new front” in the region, said Huddleston, who suspected ag Ghali was behind the move. Huddleston was charmed by the charismatic, “good-looking guy” wearing a turban that “made him look the part of a romantic Tuareg.” But when he denied flirting with radicalism, she said, “I knew he was lying.” Ag Ghali eventually renounced the music festival he had championed. “Stop this,” Ansar remembered him saying. “You are bringing non-Muslims for debauchery.” The festival’s popularity, and Tinariwen’s, swelled. In 2010, the band performed alongside Shakira and Alicia Keys at the World Cup in South Africa.

Tinariwen performing at the FIFA World Cup Kick-Off concert on June 10, 2010, in Johannesburg, South Africa.

In 2011, Tinariwen released its Grammy-winning album, “Tassili,” and Libyan leader Gadhafi was overthrown. Tuareg fighters left Libya and flooded into Mali. Many younger Tuareg turned on ag Ghali, seeing him as a sellout who lived in luxury and coziered up to Mali’s government. Sidelined by former comrades, ag Ghali founded his own Islamist militant group. The slow-motion implosion of West Africa soon followed. The last Festival in the Desert held in Mali took place on the outskirts of Timbuktu, where Tinariwen shared the stage with Bono, of the Irish band U2. The final curtain fell on Jan. 14, 2012. Two days later, ag Ghali’s former Tuareg rebel group launched a rebellion, later seizing Timbuktu, Gao and Kidal. Bono, in black shirt, with Manny Ansar, bottom, before flying out of Timbuktu, Mali, in 2012 after playing the Festival in the Desert with Tinariwen. Within months, ag Ghali’s new Islamist group and another extremist force, al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb, drove the Tuareg into retreat. After seizing Timbuktu, ag Ghali banned what he called the “music of Satan.”

Pahalgam attack aftermath: Pakistan shuts ports for Indian-flagged vessels amid New Delhi’s crackdown on trade with Islamabad



pahalgam terror attackThe ban comes into effect immediately amid heightened tensions between the two countries following the Pahalgam terror attack on April 22 that claimed the lives of 26 people, mostly tourists. In a retaliatory move, Pakistan Saturday imposed a ban on Indian-flagged ships from entering its ports, news agency PTI reported. This comes a day after New Delhi imposed a ban on the import of goods from Pakistan and barred entry of its vessels into Indian ports.The ban comes into effect immediately amid heightened tensions between the two countries following the Pahalgam terror attack on April 22 that claimed the lives of 26 people, mostly tourists.

The Ministry of Maritime Affairs, in a notification, said that it took the step of banning the Indian ships in the con-

text of the current situation, keeping in mind maritime sovereignty, economic interests and national security. “Indian-flagged ships will not be allowed to reach any Pakistani port. Similarly, Pakistani-flagged ships will not visit any Indian port,” the ministry stated, as per the PTI report.Earlier on Saturday, India imposed a ban on the import of goods coming from or transiting through Pakistan as well as the entry of ships bearing the flag of Pakistan into its ports. It also barred Indian-flagged vessel from visiting any ports in Pakistan.

India also halted the exchange of mail and parcels with Pakistan, through both air and land routes, as it imposed fresh punitive measures on Islamabad

The first set of measures included suspension of the Indus Water Treaty, scrapping of all visas, and sending back all Pakistan nationals (except for the ones with long-term visas) among others. India also reduced the strength of the Pakistan High Commission by almost half, closed the Attari-Wagah border, and sent back defence officials in the Pakistan mission. About 16 Pakistani news YouTube channels have also been banned.Meanwhile, the Pakistan Army tested its surface-to-surface ballistic missile with a 450-km range on Saturday. The missile, known as the Abdali Weapon System, was tested as part of its military drill “Exercise Indus.” An official in Delhi called it a “reckless act of provocation and a dangerous escalation by Pakistan in its hostile campaign against India.”

Warren Buffett to step down as Berkshire CEO after 60 years at helm, passes baton to Abel

Warren Buffett is ending his career as perhaps the world’s most famous and revered investor, saying he will step down as chief executive of Berkshire Hathaway at the end of 2025, and hand over the reins to Vice Chairman Greg Abel.The move caps an era for Berkshire after Buffett’s extraordinary 60 years at the helm, which made him a household name, a multi-billionaire and an American success story.“I think the time has arrived where Greg should become the chief executive officer of the company at year end,” Buffett, 94, said on Saturday as he wrapped up Berkshire’s annual meeting in Omaha, adding he would still “hang around and conceivably be useful in a few cases” but that the “final word” would be Abel’s.The announcement prompted an outpouring of praise for Buffett from CEOs and investors.

“Warren Buffett represents everything that is good about American capitalism and America itself – investing in the growth of our nation and its businesses with integrity, optimism, and common sense,” said Jamie Dimon, CEO of JPMorgan Chase & Co. Tim Cook, chief executive of Apple, in a post on X said: “There’s never been someone like Warren, and countless people, myself included, have been inspired by his wisdom. It’s been one of the great privileges of my life to know him.”Buffett’s move will propel Abel into the spotlight at Berkshire. Abel, who has long been identified by Berkshire to be Buffett’s successor, may not have the star power of Buffett although he is expected to preserve the culture of the conglomerate.Buffett said Abel and most of Berkshire’s board of directors hadn’t been aware of his plans prior to the announcement, though Buffett had told his two children who are directors. Berkshire’s board of directors will meet on Sunday to discuss the transition, he said.Abel, 62, has been a Berkshire vice chairman since 2018, and was named Buffett’s expected successor as chief executive in 2021.

“I couldn’t be more humbled and honored to be part of Berkshire as we go forth,” Abel told shareholders.Buffett also said he had “zero” intention of selling any of his Berkshire stock, nearly all of which will be donated after his death.“The decision to keep every share is an economic decision because I think the prospects of Berkshire will be better under Greg’s management than mine,” Buffett said.The decision to step down caps a remarkable 60-year run where Buffett transformed Berkshire from a failing textile company into a \$1.16 trillion conglomerate with businesses across the US economy.Buffett’s own fortune totals \$168.2 billion according to Forbes magazine, nearly all of which is in Berkshire stock.Cole Smead, chief executive of Smead Capital Management, said after Buffett’s announcement he turned to his father Bill Smead, who founded the firm, and said: “Well, it’s the end of an era. It’s sad, but it’s life.”Berkshire’s stock price has risen 19% this year, compared with a 3% drop in the Standard & Poor’s 500.Many investors have viewed the conglomerate and Buffett’s stewardship as a safe haven from uncertainty about the economy and US President Donald Trump’s tariff policies.“The question going forward is: will Berkshire still have a Buffett premium when Buffett is not there?” said Cathy Seifert, an analyst at CFRA Research. “You’re buying a stock and you’re also getting the investing prowess of a legend. With that legend gone, what is the value?”Abel had already been taking on many of Buffett’s responsibilities, including for capital allocation.

SBI expects slower loan growth of 12-13% in FY26 amid tariff-related risks

The country’s largest bank State Bank of India (SBI) has revised its loan growth target for the current financial year (FY2026) downward to 12-13 per cent from an earlier projection of 14-16 per cent, amid tariff related uncertainties, its Chairman C S Setty said In the quarter ended March 2025, the bank profit after tax (PAT) declined by 10 per cent to Rs 18,643 crore.“Our earlier (loan growth) guidance was 14-16 percent and we are moderating that to 12-13 percent (for FY26). The system level credit growth probably would be 10-11 percent,” Setty told reporters after announcing the quarterly results.Last month, US President Donald Trump had announced sweeping reciprocal tariffs on America’s major trading partners. The announcement, which sent ripples through financial markets across the globe, including in India, has increased the risk of global growth slowdown and an escalation of trade wars.Setty said that the Indian economy is less impacted by the tariffs as it is primarily a domestic consumption driven economy and its exports to the US is also limited.“But I think uncertainty on tariffs is going to impact the overall economic and investment scenarios. So from that background, we believe that there would be some moderation in the credit growth (in FY26),” Setty said.In the financial year ended March 31, 2025, the bank’s gross advance grew by 12.03 per cent

and deposits rose by 9.48 per cent.The bank’s corporate loan book expanded by 9 per cent and its retail portfolio grew by 11.4 per cent.Its corporate loan pipeline stands at Rs 3.4 lakh crore. Setty does not see any change in investment strategy of corporates on account of imposition of tariffs by the US.“Everybody is watching how the global environment unfolds. The new investment announcement may not come immediately. But whatever commitments are there, we are seeing that nobody is going back on that,” he said.The bank reported a 10 per cent drop in its net profit to Rs 18,643 crore in the quarter ended March 2025, compared to Rs 20,698 crore in the year-ago period. In the Q4 FY2024, the bank had a one-time write back on account of provisions in non-performing assets (NPA), which was not there in Q4 FY25. This resulted in a decline in profit in the March 2025 quarter.For fiscal 2025, its net profit increased by 16.08 per cent to Rs 70,901 crore, compared to Rs 61,077 crore in FY2024.The bank’s net interest income (NII) grew 2.69 per cent to Rs 42,775 crore, compared to Rs 41,655 crore. Domestic net interest margin (NIM) declined by 32 basis points to 3.15 per cent from 3.47 per cent. Setty sees some pressure on margins going ahead as the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) is expected to cut the repo rate in the upcoming policies.

Laughter yoga: Here are simple routines to get happy hormones going



world laughter day, laughter yogaAs happy hormones like dopamine, serotonin, endorphins and oxytocin are released, they help in ridding the body of toxins and boosting the immune system.Nothing beats the happy hormone gush you get when you laugh but even laughter yoga, a practice that combines intentional laughter with simple breathing exercises, can be a good stress-relieving medicine as well.When we induce laughter, we literally move our diaphragm, which in turn stimulates the lungs and oxygenates the blood better. All the five lobes of the lungs can work full capacity. This is borne out by a study in 2022 which showed that simulated laughter therapy brought about significant changes in lung function. As happy hormones like dopamine, serotonin, endorphins and oxytocin are released, they help in ridding the body of toxins and boosting the immune system. Laughter increases our appetite and also our capacity to digest, thereby strengthening gut health. Most importantly, laughter therapy is a non-invasive and non-pharmacological alternative treatment for stress and depression as proven by many studies.

Cancer patients in UK to get immunotherapy drugs in single injection: Is this a faster therapy?

cancer, cancer treatment, immunotherapy,Nivolumab is one of the important immunotherapy drugs for cancer treatment. No more IV drips, cancer patients on immunotherapy can now take the drug in a single injection. The National Health Service (NHS), UK has introduced this quicker way of administering nivolumab — a drug that targets a protein to help the immune system fight cancer better – for 15 kinds of cancer, including skin, bladder and oesophageal.Unlike the traditional hour-long IV drip, this under-the-skin injection takes just 15 minutes, sometimes as little as five minutes, for fortnightly or monthly doses. According to Dr Indoo Ammbulkar, HOD, Medical Oncology, HCG Cancer Centre, Mumbai, the particular drug can reduce the frequency of injections, hospital visits and costs.

How can the new injection be a game-changer in immunotherapy?

Nivolumab is one of the important immunotherapy drugs for cancer treatment, particularly for renal cell cancer, melanoma, lung cancer, head and neck cancer, urothelial, colorectal, hepatocellular carcinoma, and esophageal carcinoma. As per the CHECKMATE 67T trial, not only can it be given via a subcutaneous route, its safety profile is similar to when the drug is administered the conventional way.It has been well-tolerated with some adverse reactions like fatigue, musculoskeletal pain, pruritus, rash, and cough. Largely it is efficacious and saves the patient’s time and logistic issues.

How does single-injection immunotherapy work?

Nivolumab blocks the PD-1 protein, which is a checkpoint that can prevent the immune system from attacking cancer cells. By blocking PD-1, nivolumab helps the immune system recognize and attack cancer cells more ef-

Laughter also improves general health outcomes by lowering blood pressure, decreasing inflammation and pain. In fact, it releases endorphins, which are naturally occurring analgesics.

HOW TO PRACTISE LAUGHTER YOGA?

1) Choose a quiet space preferably where there is better ventilation. To start the laughing process, start by clapping and screaming, “ho ho ha ha ha”.

2) Lion laughter: Thrust out the tongue, widen the eyes, and stretch the hands out like claws while laughing. Start by taking a deep breath, then exhale while sticking out your tongue and making a “ha” sound. Then, take another deep breath in and exhale while making a “ha-ha-ha” sound like a lion’s roar. Repeat this exercise five times.

3) Laugh with the mouth closed and hum.

4) Open your mouth wide and laugh without making a sound.

5) Begin with a simple smile and then slowly begin to laugh with a gentle chuckle. Increase the intensity until you’ve had a hearty, belly-hurting laugh. Then gradually slip back into a smile again.

6) Take a deep breath, then let it out. Read the alphabets out one by one but stretch the intonation. For example, “A-ha-ha-ha, B-ho-ho-ho....”7) Make laughing a group activity. Look at each other. Sometimes making funny gestures work to trigger spontaneous reactions. This shared activity also reminds participants how important it is to appreciate others. Join the tip of your index finger with the tip of the thumb, making a small circle. Use it like it were a camera lens, looking at people around you as you smile and laugh together.



fectively. This is a faster way of administering the drug and helps in advanced cancers.

How important is immunotherapy in cancer care?

Immunotherapy has changed the scenario of cancer treatment in the last decade. In the last five years, developments have been quicker. It is not only used in advanced stages but in early stages too. For example, immunotherapy has added years to lives of patients in advanced stages of certain cancers like those of the lungs and skin.We recommend immunotherapy in early stages of lung and triple-negative breast cancers, even before surgery. If the patient shows a good pathological response, it leads to better survival chances. We will see a lot of cancer patients survive.

What about costs?

The cost of immunotherapy drugs continues to be high in India. Everything depends on scale. But fewer hospital visits can make the treatment journey more convenient and potentially more economical over time.

Karnataka youth dies after drinking five bottles of alcohol: Why heavy drinking is simply poison for the heart

Do not bet on a bottle of alcohol, which studies have proven to be toxic to health. A 21-year-old man in Karnataka has died after he drank five bottles of liquor neat over a Rs 10,000 bet with his friends. The incident also proves how binge-drinking at one go can be a major risk factor for a sudden cardiac arrest.

“While occasional alcohol consumption in moderation may not pose major health risks for many, binge drinking — defined as consuming a large quantity of alcohol in a short time — can have serious and immediate consequences for heart health,” says Dr Mukesh Goel, Cardiothoracic and Cardiovascular, Heart and Lung Transplant surgeon, at Apollo Hospital, Delhi. This pattern of drinking overwhelms the body’s ability to cope, leading to a cascade of harmful effects on the cardiovascular system. He lists the effects:Heavy drinking at one session heightens the risk of heart attack and stroke within hours of consumption. It triggers the release of certain hormones that cause constriction of blood vessels, thus increasing the blood pressure abruptly. This stresses the arteries and the heart, increasing the risk of heart attack or stroke. Rapid consumption can raise blood alcohol concentration (BAC) to dangerous levels, which impact key organs and their functioning, like breathing, heart rate and body temperature regulation.Heavy alcohol consumption is linked to abnormal heart rhythms, even in healthy individuals. Alcohol is a diuretic and quickly depletes electrolytes and fluids in the body. In this case the person drank neat, which means he was severely dehydrated. Electrolytes are crucial for maintaining a stable and regular heartbeat, Any imbalance dis-



rupts the electric impulses in the heart, leading to sudden cardiac arrest.

Alcohol can interfere with oxygen delivery to the heart tissue, increasing the risk of angina (chest pain) or myocardial infarction Increased Risk of Blood ClotsBinge drinking can make blood platelets more prone to clumping together, increasing the chance of dangerous clots that can block blood vessels in the heart or brain.Liver dysfunctionThe liver can only metabolise a limited amount of alcohol per hour. Excessive intake overwhelms the organ. As it struggles to handle the toxins produced during this process, they pile up quickly, damaging liver cells.lcohol depresses the central nervous system, which can slow down brain function and impair motor skills. In extreme cases, this sluggishness of the brain can lead to unconsciousness, coma, even death.

Hyderabad scientists achieve lasting cornea repair using stem cells

Hyderabad: A novel and ground-breaking surgical technique developed by eye researchers from Hyderabad-based L V Prasad Eye Institute (LVPEI), involving the application of stem cells to repair the cornea, is providing lasting restoration of corneal surface and good long-term vision rehabilitation among rehabilitation among patients.The cornea, which is the clear, transparent outer layer at the front of the eye, can get severely damaged during accidents such as chemical burns, abrasions, contact with foreign body, potentially leading to blindness. To combat the challenge of severe corneal damage, LVPEI researchers had developed a novel technique wherein stem cells from the unaffected eye of the individual are collected, processed

and transplanted to the affected eye.The long-term impact study of this novel procedure, conducted by LVPEI researchers and published in American Journal of Ophthalmology (April/May 2025), indicated that 76 percent of the patients who underwent this treatment, showed improved visual acuity over an 18-month period.In the study titled ‘

Five to twelve year outcomes of Autologous Simple Limbal Epithelial Transplantation: Long-Term Corneal Epithelia Imaging and Pehontypic Analysis’, Dr Swapna S Shanbhag and Dr Anahita Kate along with others at LVPEI, reported that treatment showed restoration of corneal epithelium in 68 percent of eyes with ocular burns.

‘Net master’ Ayush Shetty trumps OG ace of dribble game, Kidambi Srikanth, in dogfight to enter Taipei Open quarterfinals



GNS News Agency, May 8

“Daily for 30-40 minutes, even back then, his mind was set on perfecting the net,” he recalls about what in it-self isn’t particularly strange. “He would declare that out of 10 attempts, at least 7 times he would get himself a point on the net chord! And he would make it. That much precision he trained for,” the former coach says, revealing the cheeky skill to nick the tape and ensure it tipsles over to the other side. Ayush now trains at the bigger Prakash Padukone academy with Sagar Chopda and Vimal Kumar, having helped him add variations from the back court to his game. But Krishna Kumar, a coach known for his technical finesse, insists this ‘dribble game vs self’ is something that can be traced back to Mangalore, where he started.

On Thursday at the Taipei Open, playing another net-master, Kidambi Srikanth, Ayush won 21-16, 15-21, 21-17. Ayush had messaged Krishna Kumar a day earlier to say, ‘This time I will beat him easily.’ However, Srikanth, not quite back to his old levels but definitely playing sharper than he had in recent times, was no easy opponent. In what turned into a dogfight at the net between two absolute connoisseurs of that delicate dribble, Ayush, merely 19, prevailed against the pro at 30. To Ayush’s credit, though, he barely scored any from net chords; it was the net game where he proved to be better on the day. It was a rare and pleasantly surprising solid attacking performance from Srikanth, i.e. very few smashes sprayed out of bounds. But at the net, his stomping zone from where he reached World No. 1 and won more titles than any other Indian male in singles, Srikanth, was forced to blink. Still, his attack promises some spark in the coming months. On Thursday, however, Ayush prevailed in 61 minutes. It was particularly notable because Srikanth brought the game to the net, focusing on his variations and short length attack. Both Indians were smashing with a whip – Ayush, of course, with a harder hit from his 6’4” range. But at the eyeball confrontation, Ayush managed the tumbles on the front court that forced Srikanth to lift. The Ayush big smash took care of the rest.

“Ayush would request me to train for half an hour be-

fore everyone else. Just to perfect the control of the forecourt. Practising net chords is rare, but the emphasis on net was because he realised if he could create good openings at the net, then the attack could get going,” Krishna Kumar recalls. The men’s singles game has moved on from silken strokes and style, and perhaps the Ayush-Srikanth match was a pointer into just how one-dimensional the game gets with a slam-bang attack, though both have some delectable deception. When Srikanth wasn’t killing on his follow-up stomp strides with the backhand, he got drawn into the dribble trouble. With his reach and racquet skill, Ayush can play from a little further behind while still asserting control. It’s the Viktor Axelsen game-in-the-making: testy dribbles, force a lift, one stride back for a whiplash smash. But training for what is more forearm, not the shoulder, was foresight on Ayush’s part. “He was exceptional on net chords played on purpose. It was hours playing 11-point dribble-games which became a habit, and now seeking perfection,” the coach adds. Vimal Kumar, though, is sure to replay the day’s match and show Ayush how Srikanth flicks the shuttle back to open up the court, something the youngster needs to learn.

As such, with Srikanth not giving up, and moving well on the court for his cross smashes and own net fest kills, things reached the decider pretty quickly. After Ayush accelerated at 15-15 in the opener and took the first, Srikanth amped his attack to level sets. From 10-13 down, Srikanth wasn’t fading out and levelled at 14-14. It was at 15-14 that a stroke of ill-luck struck Srikanth, and he had no recourse to reviews. Returning from the midcourt, Srikanth watched as one push zoomed past his outstretched racquet, and the shuttle fell out. Srikanth celebrated. But the linesperson and chair umpire ruled it as Srikanth’s racquet nicking the shuttle on the way, awarding the point to Ayush. The older Indian was gobsmacked – on his haunches, arguing, but not being heard for a whole 2 minutes when even the chief referee refused to reconsider with the net umpire weighing in for status quo.

As happens in such cases, the unfairness of it, as he perceived, wrecked his concentration, and he lost the set 21-17 from 16-14, which could well have been 15-15. A tame parry into the net ended Srikanth’s resistance. Nicking an opponent’s outstretched racquet was certainly not a skill he trained for, Krishna Kumar laughs. “When I sat for his matches, he certainly could win net chords at will. But his bigger skill was if he got pushed to the corner, Ayush could get the shuttle back 8 out of 10 times, or 9,” he says. A lot of 1 vs 2 would see Ayush scrambling to the corners. “He has this tremendous skill to change direction when in danger, and it’s no weak return. But at the net, while Srikanth is older and experienced, Ayush is younger and sharper-skilled,” he says as Ayush prepares to take on Brian Young in the quarters next.

PCB reschedules Thursday’s PSL match between Karachi Kings and Peshawar Zalmi



GNS News Agency, May 8

The Pakistan Cricket Board rescheduled Thursday’s Pakistan Super League (PSL) match between Karachi Kings and Peshawar Zalmi in Rawalpindi after Indian military strikes in the country in retaliation to the April 22 terror attack in Pahalgam. “The Pakistan Cricket Board, in consultation with all the stakeholders, has decided to reschedule tonight’s HBL PSL X match between Peshawar Zalmi and Karachi Kings. The PCB will announce the revised date in due course,” the cricket board said in a media statement. The Indian armed forces launched precision missile strikes on nine terror targets in Pakistan and Pakistan Occupied Jammu and Kashmir, including the strongholds of Jaish-e-Mohammed in Bahawalpur and Lashkar-e-Taiba in Muridke.

The strikes were in response to the attack in Pahalgam in which 26 people, mostly tourists, were gunned down.

On Thursday, there was a change in venue for the Indian Premier League match between Mumbai Indians and Punjab Kings as well when the fixture, scheduled for May 11 in Dharamsala, was shifted to Ahmedabad owing to the closure of the hill town’s airport in the wake of military action against terror infrastructure in Pakistan. The IPL confirmed the development with an official statement. “IPL Match No. 61 between Punjab Kings and Mumbai Indians, originally scheduled to be played in Dharamsala on Sunday, May 11, has been relocated to the Narendra Modi Stadium in Ahmedabad. The venue change has been necessitated due to logistical challenges. The match will begin at 3:30 PM IST as per the original schedule,” the statement read.

The Dharamsala airport has been closed for commercial flights at least until May 10 in the wake of India’s military strikes on terrorist infrastructure inside Pakistan and Pakistan Occupied Jammu and Kashmir in retaliation to the April 22 Pahalgam terror attack. Punjab Kings play Delhi Capitals in Dharamsala on Thursday. It remains to be seen how both Punjab Kings and Delhi Capitals are ferried out of Dharamsala with the flight operations shut in the picturesque town. With Chandigarh airport also closed, teams need to find a way to get to Delhi.

‘You’ve been an absolute inspiration to me’: Shubman Gill shares heartfelt note after Rohit Sharma’s retirement



GNS News Agency, May 8

Shubman Gill, Rohit Sharma’s ODI deputy, posted a heartfelt note after the latter called time on his Test career on Wednesday. “India is grateful for what you have done in tests as a player and a captain. You’ve been an absolute inspiration to me and everyone that has played with or against you. There are things that I’ve learnt from you that I am going to remember forever,” Gill wrote in an Instagram story. “Happy retirement to @rohitsharma45 one of the best captains that I’ve played under. Thank you Cap!,” he added. As reported by the Indian express on Wednesday, Gill is the front-runner to captain the men’s Test team after incumbent Rohit’s retirement. On a day The Indian Express reported that the selectors had decided to remove Rohit Sharma as captain because of his poor form in Test cricket, Sharma took to Instagram to announce that he was stepping away from Test cricket. Shubman Gill Rohit Sharma retirement Shubman Gill’s Instagram story for Rohit Sharma.

“Hello everyone I would just like to share that I am retiring from Test cricket. It’s been an absolute honour to represent my country in whites. Thank you for all the love and support over the years,” Rohit said along with a photo of his Test cap in an Instagram Story. The Indian Express understands that the senior selection committee headed by former India all rounder Ajit Agarkar is of the opinion that 25-year-old Gill is the ideal candidate to take over as Test captain. However, the selectors will discuss the same with the BCCI before making a formal announcement. If appointed as Test skipper, Gill’s first assignment will be the five-match Test series in England. Festive offer Rohit’s retirement announcement came after a wretched tour of Australia earlier this year resulted in a second defeat at the Melbourne Cricket Ground. In the last 11 Test innings, Rohit Sharma has an average of 6.63, having managed to score only 73 runs. Rohit’s longest outing was his latest hit in the second innings at MCG in a 340-run chase, facing 40 deliveries for nine runs.

‘Your journey has been a remarkable one’: Sachin Tendulkar lauds Rohit Sharma after Test retirement



GNS News Agency, May 8

Indian icon Sachin Tendulkar on Thursday lauded Rohit Sharma after he announced his retirement from Test cricket on Wednesday. Tendulkar, who handed Rohit his debut Test cap at the Eden Gardens in 2013, said his journey had been a remarkable one and wished him well for the future. “I remember presenting you with your Test cap in 2013 at Eden Gardens and then standing with you on the balcony of Wankhede Stadium the other day – your journey has been a remarkable one. From then to now, you have given your best to Indian cricket as a player and as a captain. Well done, Rohit, on your Test career, and best wishes for what lies ahead,” Tendulkar posted on X on Thursday.

Rohit made a brilliant Test debut in the two-match series against the West Indies in Kolkata, hitting 177 in his maiden appearance and following it up with a 111 not out in Tendulkar’s last Test in Mumbai. I remember presenting you with your Test cap in 2013 at Eden Gardens and then standing with you on the balcony of Wankhede Stadium the other day – your journey has been a remarkable one. Rohit Sharma announced his retirement from Test cricket on Wednesday, a day it was revealed by The Indian Express that he would not be captaining the Indian cricket team for the England series.

“Hello everyone I would just like to share that I am retiring from Test cricket. It’s been an absolute honour to represent my country in whites. Thank you for all the love and support over the years,” Rohit said with a photo of the Team India Test cap on his Instagram Story. The announce-

ment comes after a wretched tour of Australia earlier this year resulted in a second defeat at the Melbourne Cricket Ground on Monday. In the last 11 Test innings, Rohit Sharma has an average of 6.63, having managed to score only 73 runs. Rohit’s longest outing was his latest hit in the second innings at MCG in a 340-run chase, facing 40 deliveries for nine runs.

It was a personal decision, BCCI had no role in it: Rajeev Shukla on Rohit's Test retirement

New Delhi: Rohit Sharma retiring from Test cricket was a personal decision and there was no pressure put on him by the BCCI to take that call, its vice-president Rajeev Shukla said on Thursday. Rohit announced his retirement on Wednesday ahead of the five-match Test series in England beginning on June 20. “As far as Rohit Sharma’s retirement from Test cricket is concerned, he has made his own decision.

“It is our policy that the players who take the decision of retirement — we do not put any pressure on them, nor do we suggest anything, nor do we say anything,” Shukla told PTI Videos. Rohit is an undisputed white-ball great but he could not replicate that success in the 67 Tests he played. Shukla said his contribution to the five day game was immense. “The more we praise him, the less it is. He is a great batsman. The good thing is that he has not yet decided to retire from cricket (will play only ODIs). So we will definitely take advantage of his experience and talent,” said Shukla. With Rohit stepping down, it remains to be seen who is elevated to India Test captaincy. Jasprit Bumrah, K L Rahul and Shubman Gill are among the contenders. When asked about potential names in the fray, Shukla said that the matter lies strictly with the selection committee. “There should not be any speculations. The selectors will decide and tell you who the captain is... it is solely and purely their call.”

Punjab Kings vs Delhi Capitals toss delayed in Dharamsala due to rain

GNS News Agency, May 8

The toss of the IPL match between Punjab Kings and Delhi Capitals at Dharamsala was delayed on Thursday due to rain. Punjab Kings need a win in this match to become the first team to qualify for the playoffs while Delhi Capitals will also look for a victory to keep them in contention. So far, two matches of this season have already been washed out with Punjab’s match against Kolkata Knight Riders at the Eden getting abandoned while Delhi Capitals match against Sunrisers Hyderabad was also called off.

What was predicted?

Early morning thunderstorms and afternoon showers have been marked on the forecast for Dharamsala on May 8, Thursday. However, no rain is expected later on in the evening when the temperatures will dip below 19 degrees Celsius as the skies are predicted to remain clear, according to Accuweather.com.

What happens if the rain washes out the fixture?

In case of a washout, both teams split one point each. This will mean PBKS will have 16 points from 12 matches while Delhi Capitals will also have 14 from the same number of matches. If the match goes on as scheduled, it’ll still have 60 minutes buffer time before overs are reduced. A minimum of 5 overs is required to get a result with the cut-off time for this being 10.56 PM with the game needing to be finished by 12.06 AM on Saturday. Punjab Kings:



Priyansh Arya, Prabhsimran Singh, Shreyas Iyer(c), Josh Inglis(w), Shashank Singh, Nehal Wadhwa, Marcus Stoinis, Azmatullah Omarzai, Marco Jansen, Yuzvendra Chahal, Arshdeep Singh, Vijaykumar Vyshak, Suryansh Shedge, Harpreet Brar, Xavier Bartlett, Praveen Dube, Musheer Khan, Vishnu Vinod, Yash Thakur, Aaron Hardie, Kuldeep Sen, Harmoor Singh, Pyla Avinash, Mitchell Owen Delhi Capitals: Faf du Plessis, Abhishek Porel, Karun Nair, KL Rahul(w), Axar Patel(c), Tristan Stubbs, Vipraj Nigam, Mitchell Starc, Dushmantha Chameera, Kuldeep Yadav, T Natarajan, Ashutosh Sharma, Mohit Sharma, Mukesh Kumar, Ajay Yadav Mandal, Darshan Nalkande, Jake Fraser-McGurk, Sameer Rizvi, Donovan Ferreira, Tripurana Vijay, Manvanth Kumar L, Madhav Tiwari, Sediqullah Atal

‘Polygraph finished, passed on all fronts’: Hans Niemann claims ‘lie-detector’ test failed to prove over-the-board cheating

GNS News Agency, May 8

American Grandmaster Hans Niemann claimed on Wednesday that he has undergone a lie detector “Polygraph” test, as challenged by Russian GM Daniil Dubov and “passed it on all fronts” as the test failed to prove any over-the-board (OTB) cheating done by him. Announcing on X, he wrote, “Polygraph finished, passed on all fronts. Have you ever cheated over the board? No Verdict: True. I think it’s time for a rematch with Dubov. I’ll be in Moscow again in 2 weeks!” In another post, he wrote, “Mental gymnastics of my detractors: “You refused the polygraph that proves everything” Then switching to “polygraphs are pseudoscience this proves nothing”. Some people will always twist everything to fit their perspective. The only constant is that the chess always speaks for itself.”

What was the challenge?

Niemann was supposed to undergo a lie-detecting polygraph test after losing an 18-game blitz match against Dubov. Niemann had challenged Dubov to a showdown in Russia to settle their World Rapid and Blitz dispute, with the condition that the loser had to answer one question with a polygraph test. In March, Niemann faced Dubov and lost the 18-game challenge by a margin of 8.5-9.5, resulting in him facing the polygraph test. This came after Dubov’s ‘no show’ at the World Rapid and Blitz Championship against Niemann, citing that he fell asleep. Following the incident, Niemann extended an open challenge to Dubov. “Happy to play Dubov in a blitz match under ANY conditions. I will pay for his travel/accommodation and offer a \$10,000 reward to



a charity of his choice if he wins,” Niemann had posted on X. Dubov accepted the challenge after Niemann’s quarterfinal loss to Norway’s Magnus Carlsen but with specific conditions. In an Instagram post, Dubov proposed a lie detector test for Niemann. “I’m ready to play, under the following conditions: You agree to a lie detector test with a trained professional... Test to feature only questions about cheating, with the results to be communicated to the community at large. If the test comes out clean, I will admit my decision was rash and play a 24-game blitz match against you, 8 games a day, \$2,000 per point,” Dubov wrote. Later, Magnus Carlsen added fuel to the controversy by suggesting that Dubov’s absence may have been deliberate to ‘prove a point.’ That came amid lingering tensions after Carlsen accused Niemann of cheating in 2022. Although Carlsen later retracted his claims following a \$100 million defamation lawsuit from Niemann.

Kamal Haasan reveals his new nickname for Mani Ratnam; Simbu shares why he's never late to Thug Life director's set: 'It's not because I am scared of him, but...'



Often criticised for allegedly arriving late to sets and having conflicts with the makers of his films, Simbu recently praised Mani Ratnam for his professionalism. Mani Ratnam's Thug Life marks Kamal Haasan and Silambarasan's first on-screen collaboration. Despite belonging to different generations, there is something interestingly similar about Tamil stars Kamal Haasan and Silambarasan TR (popularly known as Simbu); both of them pretty much grew up on movie sets after having made their film debuts as child artistes. While Kamal Haasan entered the world of cinema at the age of six, playing a key role in director A Bhimsingh's Gemini Ganesan and Savitri-starrer Kalathur Kannamma (1960) – which earned him the Rashtrapati Award – Simbu made his first screen appearance at the tender age of one in his father T Rajendar's Uraivi Kaatha Kili (1984). Since then, the two have come a long way.

Another factor that unites them is their shared admiration and deep respect for legendary filmmaker Mani Ratnam. While the two are gearing up for the release of Mani's Thug Life, which also marks the two actors' first on-screen collaboration, Kamal and Simbu recently opened up about their experience working with the veteran director. Talking about Mani's dedication to filmmaking, Kamal also revealed the new nickname he has given to the director

because of his habit of arriving on set even before sunrise.

"While working on Thug Life, I was so happy to see him with the same enthusiasm that I saw in him while we were doing Nayagan (the 1987 gangster drama that marked the director and actor's last movie together). I have started calling him Anjara Mani Ratnam (Anjara in Tamil means 5.30) because he starts the shoot at 5.30 am. He would reach the set at 5 itself. Imagine the plight of the cameraman (Ravi K Chandran), who has to be there at least 15 minutes prior. Everyone welcomed this new name I gave him by applauding. I told him I won't come at 5.30, and the best I can do is 7 am. I said, 'At 5.30, it will just be the two of us, sitting there and talking. No one else will be around. So, you do you; I will come by 7.' He is not just an early bird; he is a bird with wings larger than most birds," Kamal quipped during a promotional event organised by Raaj Kamal Films International, the co-producer of Thug Life.

Simbu, meanwhile, heaped praise on the filmmaker for his professionalism and shared why he is never late to a Mani Ratnam set. The actor has frequently faced criticism for allegedly arriving late to sets and having conflicts with the makers of his films. "Many have asked me how I go on time to Mani sir's sets and if he is strict or if I am afraid of him. It's not because I am scared of him. Yet, I have never been late to his set even once. There have been days when I reached before he did. The reason is we are actors... When we agree to act in a movie trusting a director or the producer, they should complete the movie on time," Simbu pointed out as Kamal patted him in appreciation for speaking out.

He continued, "The director should come on time. Only then would the actors come on time. When Mani Ratnam comes to the set, he won't sit around thinking, 'What or how to do something?' He would know exactly what he needs and what needs to be done. And thus, he won't waste an actor's time or call sheet, would complete the movie on time, the payment would come on time, and the movie would also be released on the scheduled date. If a man has perfectly followed all these years, which actor would feel like not reaching his set on time?" Adding to Simbu's statement, Kamal Haasan mentioned that he too faced the same with people asking him why he would go to K Balachander and Balu Mahendra's sets on time, but when certain others told him to come at 9, he would reach only by 10. "I didn't react back then (like how STR did now) because they walked around carrying staffs. But all they had were staffs (like sceptres), but it's people like them (Balachander, Balu and Mani) who ruled cinema. When we work with people like them, an alarm automatically goes off inside us."

Prakash Raj says Fawad Khan's Abir Gulaal should release: 'Let people decide...govt allowing bans to create fear in society'

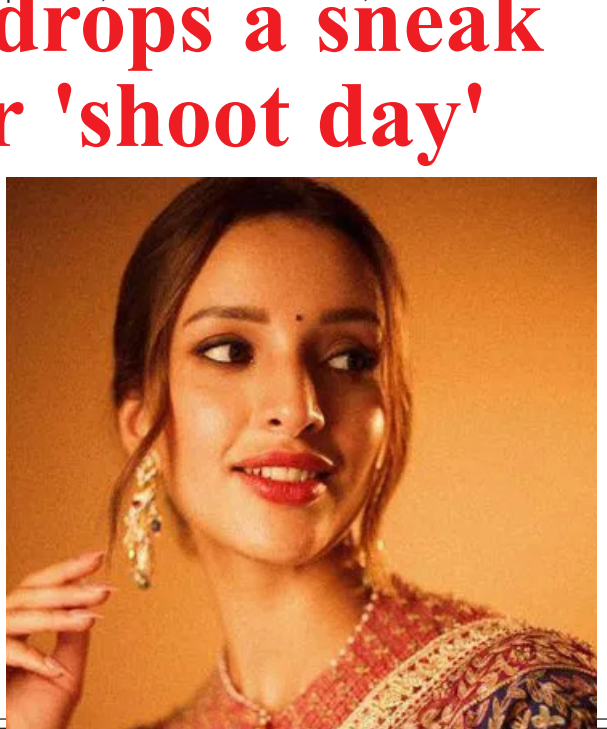
Prakash Raj says Vaani Kapoor and Fawad Khan's Abir Gulaal should not be banned in India. Prakash Raj says Vaani Kapoor and Fawad Khan's Abir Gulaal should not be banned in India.

Prakash Raj firmly stands against the ban of any film, irrespective of its ideology. He said public sentiments are getting hurt at the drop of a hat these days. The actor quoted the examples of Deepika Padukone-starrer Padmaavat (2018), Shah Rukh Khan-starrer Pathaan (2023), and more recently, Prithviraj Sukumaran's L2: Empuraan and Fawad Khan-starrer Abir Gulaal.

"I'm not for any banning of films, whether it's right-wing or a propaganda film. Let people decide. People have the right. You can't ban films, unless it's pornography or about child abuse. But thought process? So what? Let them come, no," said Prakash, reacting to the ban of Aarti S Bagdi's romantic drama Abir Gulaal, starring Pakistani actor Fawad Khan in the lead role. He further said in the interview to The Lallantop, "Today, anybody can get hurt. 'I'll chop off the nose of Deepika Padukone! I'll behead her!' Useeey kya hoga (what effect would that have?). Shah Rukh Khan... just because of a colour? Besharam rang na... they can make a hue and cry about anything they don't like." Prakash Raj was referring to the Shri Rajput Karni Sena threatening to chop off Deepika's nose if her film Padmaavat is released, which allegedly distorted Rajput history. He also referred to a section of society objecting to the saffron bikini worn by Deepika in the song "Besharam Rang" from Siddharth Anand's spy thriller Pathaan. "The present power is letting it happen. They're giving them enough support to let it happen, to create a fear in society," argued Prakash. "Certain films are not being made in this country. They will not let it because there's censorship. There was state censorship. Now, they've clearly brought it to Central censorship. They decide what's made. Film industry is a very vulnerable industry. There's money. So their whole idea is to bring



so much of fear so that the next generation decides not to even write what they otherwise would. They don't want this discourse," added the actor. Prakash Raj quoted the example of L2: Empuraan, which was cleared by the Central Board of Film Certification. But after objections were raised towards the alleged depiction of the 2002 violence in Godhra, Gujarat, lead actor Mohanlal issued an apology. Certain films were made to the film subsequently. "The Kashmir Files will release. But some other films won't. There's a conscious attempt that every party will do. Today, it's BJP, but it happened before also. Every powerful central government is always intolerant of questioning. That's why anybody you give too much power to, will become intolerable," added Prakash.



Triptii Dimri drops a sneak peek into her 'shoot day'

Mumbai: One of the most bankable actresses in Bollywood, Triptii Dimri used social media to drop a sneak peek into her 'shoot day'. She shared a photo on her Instagram stories revealing the shoot location for her upcoming project. The 'Animal' actress seems to be filming in one of the chawls in Mumbai. Following this was an image of one of the crew members carrying food on the set. However, Triptii did not reveal which project she is busy with at the moment.

The stunner is juggling multiple projects at the moment, one of them being Vishal Bhardwaj's "Arjun Ustara", opposite Shahid Kapoor. While it was being speculated that the drama has been pushed, allegedly due to the box office debacle of Shahid's last release "Deva", Tripti cleared the air saying that these are mere speculations.

Recently, a netizen reached out to the 'Bulbul' actress on Instagram, asking for an update on "Arjun Ustara". To this, Triptii replied saying, "No no not true, we're shooting."

When Mohanlal jumped from sixth floor without stunt double for a villain role: 'He also performed a mid-air somersault before landing'



Actor Shankar once shared a story about how Mohanlal fearlessly jumped off the top of a six-storey building without using a stunt double for a scene in one of their earlier films. Actor Shankar once talked about Malayalam superstar Mohanlal's dedication towards cinema.

With the release of director Tharun Moorthy's Thudaram, Malayalam superstar Mohanlal's physical agility has once again become the hot topic, with many heaping praise on him for acing difficult stunts with precision. While a younger Mohanlal frequently received and took on roles that allowed him to push the boundaries of his flexibil-

ity, such opportunities have been rare in his recent films, leading many to assume that age has diminished his ability to perform complex moves. Nonetheless, the 64-year-old actor has emphatically proven that age is just a number with Thudaram, particularly with the shot featuring him jumping through a picture window and breaking its glass, underscoring that he is still capable of pulling off the unimaginable. Regardless, this is not the first time he has courageously done such risky action sequences. In fact, actor Shankar once shared a story about how Mohanlal fearlessly jumped off the top of a six-storey building without using a stunt double for a scene in one of their earlier films. "In cinematographer-turned-director J Williams' Hello Madras Girl (1983), Mohanlal was the villain and I was the hero. There is an action scene involving me and Mohanlal where our fight leads us to the top of a building," Shankar said during a chat with Silly Monks Mollywood. He added, "As we were fighting, Williams asked us to stop. He told us to jump from the top of the six-storey building. I objected to this, but the director insisted and told us that all security arrangements had been made. Despite everything I heard, I started to feel scared because I had never done it before. But then Mohanlal agreed to jump. That's when I also said ok. Not only did Mohanlal jump, but he also performed a mid-air somersault before landing. I just leapt straight across. From that, one can understand his dedication towards cinema." Both Mohanlal and Shankar made their on-screen debuts together in director Fazil's romantic tragedy Manjil Virinja Pookkal (1980), with the former playing the main antagonist in the movie headlined by the latter and Poornima Bhagyaraj. Interestingly, they appeared in as many as 30 films together. Their last on-screen collaboration was in Rosshan Andrews' Casanovva (2012).

'Never refer to this movie again': Aamir Khan outrightly rejected idea of Imran Khan-starrer Jaane Tu Ya Jaane Na's sequel, reveals director

As the Hindi film industry sees a decline in romantic films, fans often turn to old films to relive the magic of the genre. Many also express a desire to see sequels of beloved romantic films. One such film that continues to receive love is Imran Khan's Jaane Tu Ya Jaane Na. In a recent interaction on the YouTube channel Aamir Khan Talkies, Imran and the film's director Abbas Tyrewala sat down for a conversation and discussed the possibility of a sequel to Jaane Tu Ya Jaane Na.

Talking about the same, Imran said, "When I am walking, people come and grab me by the shirt and ask, 'Are you guys going to make Jaane Tu Ya Jaane Na's sequel?'" Abbas chimed in, "That's my Instagram DM every day." Abbas Tyrewala revealed that he had once pitched the idea of a sequel to Imran Khan's uncle and the film's producer, Aamir Khan. He said, "Very shortly after the film's release, I went to Aamir with an idea of the sequel — at some point Jai and Aditi (Imran and Genelia D'Souza's characters in the film) would fight. I told him, 'Let's start the sequel at the point when Jai and Aditi are on the trial of their separation. Jai will bump into Meghna (Jai's former love interest in the film) at a party and he is drunk.'" Aamir, however, wasn't pleased with the idea. Recalling his reaction, Abbas said, "Aamir told me, 'Never refer to this movie again."



I don't want to hear anything about the sequel if that's the way you are going with it." Abbas himself admitted to lacking the willingness to make a sequel to the beloved film. "I don't know how to reboot fairytales. I haven't seen them working well," he said. The actor-filmmaker, however, did express interest in a reunion of the film's cast. Released in 2008, Jaane Tu Ya Jaane Na marked Imran Khan's debut in films. The movie was a massive hit at the box office and also received critical acclaim.

Robert Downey Jr. and Marvel legends show up for Thunderbolts screening

The 'new Avengers' Thunderbolts* have officially entered the MCU and received a warm welcome from their upcoming threat, Doctor Doom, played by Robert Downey Jr., along with a bunch of Marvel icons who showed up to celebrate the movie's successful premiere. According to Variety, the Jake Schreier directorial grossed over \$31.5 million on Friday in its domestic run, including preview screenings from 4,330 theatres. Earlier, Schreier confirmed that his group of misfits is set to join the 2026 movie lineup. Thunderbolts* brings together a team of antiheroes, led by Bucky Barnes (Sebastian Stan), Yelena Belova (Florence Pugh), John Walker (Wyatt Russell), and Red Guardian (David Harbour). There are plenty of new faces as well, and Downey, who left the MCU after Endgame in 2019, is now set to return as main antagonist next year.

Downey Jr. shared a photo of himself on Instagram with Chris Hemsworth (Thor), Anthony Mackie (Captain America), Vanessa Kirby, and other stars after they enjoyed a special screening of Thunderbolts*. "So cool, fresh and deep", the former Tony Stark, aka Iron Man, gushed, congratulating the new cast. "Just wow!!! Dinner and a show with the Old Avengers," he wrote. Back in April, Marvel confirmed the lineup of Avengers: Doomsday, though half of the 60-member roster will be unveiled later. Those whose names are already official joined the success party, including Paul Rudd (Ant-Man), Anthony Mackie, and Winston Duke (M'Baku from Black Panther). Special attention was also on Marvel newcomer Simu Liu (Shang-Chi). Meanwhile, Channing Tatum, alongside upcoming Fantastic Four stars Vanessa Kirby and Ebon Moss-Bachrach, also graced the party. Earlier, there was a lot of buzz regarding the leaked post-credit scene of Thunderbolts*, which was later confirmed to be shot for Marvel's next biggest project for 2026, bringing on board the cast of Avengers, Thunderbolts*, X-Men, and its upcoming first Marvel family, the Fantastic Four. During the final sequence of Thunderbolts, we see our new superheroes, who have successfully disguised themselves as the new Avengers, watching Val, aka Valentina Allegra de Fontaine, played by Julia Louis-Dreyfus, take credit for saving the country from Void, aka Pullman's alter ego. While they all spend some normal time, talking and doing dishes, a spaceship enters showing the arrival of the Fantastic Four.

However, according to Jake Schreier, who spoke to EW recently, "The scene was actually filmed for the upcoming Avengers: Doomsday." So yes, he did confirm a



few Reddit theories floating around since the post-credit scene went viral. According to him, the final scene was shot at the very last moment. "I was very happy to be there and lucky to be there," Schreier said. "It was so fun to see your characters go off into this bigger context. We've been living in our own contained world, but it was really fun to see them there."

Dhanush surprises the audience at A R Rahman's concert in Mumbai

Mumbai: Actor Dhanush surprised the attendees at Grammy and Oscar-winning music composer A R Rahman's concert in Mumbai. The gig, which was a part of Rahman's 'The Wonderment Tour', was held at the DY Patil Stadium in the Nerul area of Navi Mumbai. The event witnessed a spectacular celebration of music, emotion, and unity, registering a massive footfall of over 40,000 attendees. Held as a marquee event as part of WAVES Summit 2025, the concert proved to be a genre-defying experience that fans are calling a "once-in-a-lifetime moment."

The evening began with dynamic performances by The Yellow Diary, Anubha Bajaj, and Riday, who set the tone with their fresh and much loved songs. Playback singers Sukhwinder Singh, Jonita Gandhi, AR Ameen, and Zana Bhosle, along with Rahman, took over the stage and served a delectable musical treat to the audience. Ashwin Mukundan, Project Director, reflected on the night, as he said. "This was more than just a concert, it was a celebration of creativity and the power of music."