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Uphold the spirit of Forest Rights Act

The debate between environment and development has resurrected following the Telangana government's action of cutting down trees in the Kancha Gachibowli forest area in Hyderabad. The point of discussion, environment Vs development, itself is deeply problematic given the narrowed understanding or contested meaning of the term development.

The model of development pursued by most nations has come at the irreparable loss of the ecology and environment. The total forestland which the Telangana government claims is 400 acres. This indeed a huge tract of dense forest with rich biodiversity and wildlife. In the Lok Sabha on 24 March 2025, the Union Minister for Environment, Forestry and Climate Change (MoEFCC) stated that during the period from 2014-15 to 2023-24, the forest area measuring 1,73,396.87 hectares has been approved for various non-forestry purposes including infrastructure projects under the provisions of Van (Sanrakshan Evam Samvardhan) Adhiniyam, 1980".

The diversion of forestland for developmental activities includes infrastructural projects of railway lines and corridors passing through the wild jungles of different parts of the country's forest ecosystem. This draws to the attention of legislations aimed at protecting and preserving forests, wildlife and biodiversity. Laws such as Indian Forests Act, 1927, Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972, Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980, and Biological Diversity Act, 2002, aim at maintaining the status quo of the colonial mode of forest governance. These legislations and their implementation on the ground have restricted the access of forests and other natural resources to the traditional forest-dwelling communities and Scheduled Tribes.

Modified motorcycle silencers shatter peace in Hyderabad colonies, residents demand stricter action



GNS News Agency, May 31

Hyderabad: Motorcycles fitted with modified silencers are robbing the peace of citizens in the residential colonies despite the traffic police taking up special drives to curb the menace. The residents complain of noise pollution from modified silencers fitted to motorcycles shattering their peace. "Senior citizens and children get irritated and disturbed by the deafening noise. For fun or status symbol, the youngsters are tampering with the silencers but it is turning out to be a punishment for the people," said Mohd Saleemuddin, an IT professional from Tolichowki.

The traffic police are conducting special drives against the violators and booking cases. To send a warning to deter the motorcycle owners, the police are also bulldozing the seized silencers. "We appreciate the efforts of the police. But to be frank, it is not solving the problem. In colonies the thunderous sound wakes up infants from sleep. Imagine the trauma a baby faces due to the sound pollution," complained Yasmeen Begum, a resident of Kalapather. Senior citizens, patients, infants and those in need of rest within the privacy of their homes are worst affected. The situation turns horrible during the night when there are no traffic policemen around. "Groups of youngsters speed around the colonies especially around playgrounds in the residential areas for fun," Mohd Shareef, a senior citizen from Jangammet Falaknuma said.

Psychologist Fatima Shaik said the constant exposure to high-decibel sounds force the body release stress hormones, leading to feelings of anxiety, irritability, and sleep disruptions. "The noise makes it hard for children to concentrate, leading to struggles with focus and poorer academic performance. Over time, this constant noise exposure can contribute to attention disorders and emotional instability," she said. The citizens demand the police higher ups involve the law and order patrolling teams to curb the menace. "Cases should be booked under BNS Act and Environmental laws against the violators and the vehicle seized. Mere Motor Vehicle Act cases will not help in curbing the problem," said Kareem Ansari, a social worker from Shaheennagar. As per the Motor Vehicle Act, 1988, police can take action against bikes which produce noise level of above 80 decibels—Health problems association with sound pollution: Physical: Respiratory agitation, racing pulse, high blood pressure, headaches and, in case of extremely loud, constant noise, gastritis, colitis and even heart attacks. Noise can cause attacks of stress, fatigue, depression, anxiety and hysteria in both humans and animals Noise above 45 dB stops one from falling asleep or sleeping properly. Loud noise can have latent effects on behaviour, causing aggressive behaviour and irritability Affects ability to focus, which can lead to low performance over time, also bad for memory, making it hard to study

Canara Bank waives average monthly balance requirement across all Savings Bank accounts

Hyderabad: Canara Bank has announced the complete waiver of the Average Monthly Balance (AMB) requirement across all Savings Bank account types, which includes savings accounts, salary accounts and NRI SB accounts. Effective June 1, this initiative ensures there is no penalty for minimum balance requirement across a wide variety of SB accounts. As a result, no SB customer of the bank will face penalties or fees for not maintaining a minimum balance in their SB accounts.

All Set for AP LAW CET and PGLCET Exams: S.P.M.V.V VC V. Uma



•First Transgender Candidate to Appear for LAW CET""May 31,, Indian Chronicle, Rayalaseema co-ordinator"" Professor V. Uma, Vice-Chancellor of Sri Padmavati Mahila Viswavidyalayam (SPMVV), Tirupati, along with LAW CET Convener Professor T. Seetha Kumari, today announced that all arrangements are complete for the AP LAW CET and PGLCET 2025 examinations, scheduled for June 5, 2025. ""This year, a total of *27,253 candidates* have applied for the examinations. This includes *19,973 candidates* for the 3-year LL.B course, *4,794* for the 5-year LL.B course, and *2,486* for the PG LL.M course. ""Breaking down the applicant pool by gender, there are *17,983 male candidates, **9,269 female candidates, and notably, ***1 transgender candidate* appearing for the exam for the first time. In terms of social categories, the highest number of applications came from OC (7,849), followed by SC (6,770), BC-D (3,675), and BC-A (3,094). ""The

examinations will be conducted across *133 test centers*. Professor V. Uma confirmed that all technical, security, and logistical arrangements have been finalized at these centers to ensure a smooth and transparent examination process. ""Convener Professor Seetha Kumari advised candidates to arrive at their respective examination centers well in advance with their hall tickets and identification documents. She also indicated that the results are likely to be released by the end of June."

"Candidates are encouraged to regularly visit the official website for the latest updates. Four examination centers have been established in Tirupati: Chadalawada Ramanamma Engineering College, Annamacharya Institute of Technology and Sciences, Sri Rama Engineering College, and S.V. College of Engineering. ""Dr. N. Rajani, Public Relations Officer, was also present at the press conference.

SV University Welcomes DST Experts: A Step Towards Scientific Excellence

""May 31, Indian Chronicle Rayalaseema co-ordinator""The Department of Science and Technology (DST), Government of India, is conducting a Subject Expert Committee Meeting at Sri Venkateswara University, Tirupati, on 31st May and 1st June 2025 to evaluate IN-SPIRE Fellowship applications in Life Sciences (Bio-sciences and Biotechnology). ""A high-level team of experts, appointed by DST, is reviewing more than 300 fellowship applications as part of this prestigious national-level initiative. The team is chaired by Dr. Uma Kumar, Professor of Rheumatology, AIIMS, New Delhi. Key officials from DST, including Dr. Umesh Kumar Sharma, Scientist-F, and Dr. Phani Kumar, Scientist-E, are also attending the meeting. ""The programme was inaugurated at the Vice-Chancellor's Chamber this morning. Prof. Ch. Appa Rao, Vice-Chancellor of SV University, welcomed the delegation and highlighted the university's academic and research achievements. Prof. M. Bhupathi Naidu, Registrar, was also present to interact with the DST team and provide insights into SVU's progressive academic environment. ""Prof. S. Kishore, Department of Zoology, is serving as the Coordinator for the programme and has played a key role in orga-



nizing the meeting. ""A total of 12 subject experts are participating in the evaluation process through both physical and hybrid modes. ""This visit marks a significant collaboration between DST and SV University, reinforcing the institution's commitment to promoting scientific research and innovation.

Bhadrachalam ITDA to get Rs. 1 crore grant: ITDA PO Rahul



"Ranjith naik Bhukya ,Bhadrachalam,May 31(Indian Chronicle) :""ITDA PO Rahul said that the Ministry of Tribal Welfare (MoTA), New Delhi, has announced a grant of Rs. crore for the development of a tribal museum in the Bhadrachalam ITDA premises. On Saturday, the unit officials congratulated him for taking special care for the establishment and development of the tribal museum in his chamber. Speaking on the occasion, the PO said that the tribal museum was designed to entertain tourists and was inaugurated on the 7th of last month by the state governor Jishnu Dev Sharma and ministers Tummala Nageswara Rao. Since then, visitors and tourists have been coming in

droves to taste tribal cuisine in the tribal museum and are enjoying it very much. Recently, Ministers Ponguleti Srinivasa Reddy and Dhanasari Seethakkalu visited the museum and said that they would issue orders to establish tribal museums in all ITDAs after seeing the ancient artifacts. He said that he was invited to a conference organized by the Ministry of Tribal Welfare, New Delhi, at Taj Banjara in Hyderabad on Friday, where tribal traditions, customs, establishment and development of museums, and other matters were explained. He said that he was happy to be honored by announcing a grant of Rs. 1 crore for the development of the museum.

Asia Pacific emerges as largest market for solar photovoltaic, wind installed capacity

New Delhi: The Asia Pacific (APAC) region has emerged as the largest market for solar photovoltaic (PV) and wind installed capacity, boasting 1.18 TW and 0.67 TW in 2024, respectively, according to a new report. Solar PV systems are poised to spearhead new investments, outpacing both onshore and offshore wind sectors. In 2024, solar PV garnered \$329.1 billion in investments. In contrast, onshore wind investments stood at \$151.2 billion, while offshore wind investments reached \$69.6 billion by the end of 2024, according to GlobalData, a leading data and analytics company.

"Looking ahead, the onshore wind sector is forecasted to grow to \$186.9 billion and the offshore wind sector to \$150.4 billion by 2030. These figures correspond to a CAGR of 4 per cent for onshore wind and an impressive 14 per cent for offshore wind, signalling robust growth trajectories for these renewable energy sources," said Rehaan Shiledar, power analyst at GlobalData. Renewable resources, particularly solar photovoltaic (PV) and wind energy, are gaining a

larger share in the energy portfolio globally. Driven primarily by declining costs and strong policy support, particularly for solar PV and wind energy, the global renewable power installed capacity is estimated to surge from 3.42 TW in 2024 to 11.2 TW by 2035. Another industry report said earlier this month that India's solar PV balance of system (BoS) market is on a robust growth trajectory and is projected to grow from approximately \$3 billion in 2024 to around \$7 billion by 2029, registering a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 16 per cent. Several factors are driving this growth, including India's national target of 500 GW non-fossil fuel capacity by 2030 and the commitment to generate 50 per cent of its electricity from renewable sources, according to 1 Lattice's latest industry report. It further stated that enabling schemes like PM-KUSUM, the Grid Connected Rooftop Solar Programme, and the Delhi Solar Energy Policy are helping to democratise solar adoption across rural and urban areas, bringing new opportunities for innovation, manufacturing, and investment in the BoS space.

Strict actions will be taken against land frauds: SP Akhil Mahajan

GNS News Agency, May 31

Adilabad: Superintendent of police Akhil Mahajan is taking strict action against the land frauds who are cheating and blackmailing innocent people of district and collecting money from them. Speaking to the media Sp said that in the last one month, more than 10 cases have been registered in Adilabad district and 9 people have been sent to remand till date. He warned that strict legal action will be taken against those who are cheating innocent people, especially at the hands of some document writers. Strict action will be taken against the people as soon as complaints are received that they cannot live in the guise of cheating people for a long time. 1) On the 16th of this month, Mohammad Akram was arrested and a case was registered against Syed Shahabuddin at the 1- Town Police Station in Adilabad for illegally registering and trying to occupy the municipal land in the town.

2) On the complaint of the victim Are Sudarshan in Mahalakshmi Wada of Adilabad Two Town on the 22 of this month, three persons were Navaneeth, Gandrath Mahender and Padala Chetan Kumar.

3) Based on the loopholes in the laws in Indravelli Mandal on May 23, a genuine case was made against the non-tribals for building a house in the agency and demanding money from them. On the complaint of the victim Chempath Rao, police detained Gavande Bipin Kumar, Vipin and Mesram Anand Rao and sent to remand.

4) On May 26, a case was registered against Naitam Balu based on the complaint of victim Manikchand, who alleged that a house was being built in the agency area of Indravelli mandal, demanded Rs 5 lakh from the victim, took Rs 3 lakh, and blackmailed him without withdrawing the complaint. On May 26, a person named Konduru Gangadhar was arrested within the limits of Adilabad 1 Town Police Station for misusing his official position by allotting a plot of land allocated by the government, issuing documents for it, and getting others registered illegally.

6) The accused, Sajjarapu Lakshminarayana, was arrested on the complaint of the victim, Mallepula Chandrashekhar Goud, who sold the same plot of land to two persons by creating fake registration documents at Mavala police station on the 26th of this month.

7) Former Sarpanch of Talamadugu village Karunakar Reddy was arrested in connection with the registration of 25 acres of land on the outskirts of Kajjarla village in Adilabad Rural Mandal by creating fake dependent certificates. Under the special initiative of district SP Akhil Mahajan, the miscreants will be dealt with based on the complaints of the victims. He warned that the district police administration would take strict action against those involved in illegal registrations, double registrations, exploiting loopholes in the laws to register cases, blackmailing, misusing the laws, grabbing government land, seizing property by creating fake dependent certificates, and cheating the government machinery by creating fake documents. He stated that strict action would be taken against the violators and cases would be registered against them. People are advised to register themselves after verifying all the documents.

Summer camps attract youngsters aiming to shine in sports



Registrations soar for cricket coaching at summer camps being organised by Youth Services and Sports Department across Kothagudem

Kothagudem: Summer sports coaching camps being organised by the Youth Services and Sports Department in association with sports associations and sports enthusiasts have been attracting youngsters.

Cricket is the most favourite game among the youngsters if the number of girls and boys registered for a free coaching camp underway at Pragathi Maidan is any indication. As many as 285 girls and boys registered for the coaching being offered by Bhadrathi Kothagudem District Cricket Association (BKDCA) in association with the department. Speaking to 'Telangana Today', cricket coach Pantangi Sai Niranjana said everyday new registrations were being done for the coaching increasing the size of the camp. Training was being given in the morning and evening every day, he said. As part of this, the first batch is trained from 5.30 am to 7.30 am; second batch from 7 am to 9 am in the morning; the third batch from 5.30 pm to 7.30 pm and the fourth batch from 7 pm to 9 pm. The coaching timing is divided into slots so as to train as many students as possible, the coach said. He trains the students with the help of assistant coaches B Prasad, A. Srinivas and Narender under the supervision of District Youth and Sports Officer M Paramdhama Reddy.

All the candidates are given training on cricket drills, net practice and fielding, batting, bowling skills in the morning and evening. Practice matches are organised at the end of the week to test their talent as well as to assess their level of proficiency, Niranjana said. The students are participating enthusiastically in the camp and the encouragement of their parents is exceptional. Most of the parents accompany their kids and express happiness at the progress of their children, he noted.

An SCCL employee V Thirupathi, whose daughter Vemula Akshitha is undergoing training at the camp, said the camp was being run professionally and helped the kids a lot in picking up skills. The same is the opinion of another parent Kondur Sai whose son K Bhuvik is being trained at the camp. Similarly, SCCL organised a free summer training camp for children of Singareni employees in sports disciplines like athletics, basketball, boxing, football, volleyball, wushu/karate and others at Prakasam Stadium here. SCCL AGM (Personnel Welfare) G Rajendra Prasad said the SCCL allocates a special budget and encourages the children of the employees to undergo training in summer camps. The company gives equal priority to academics and sports for the all-round development of kids.

Pakistan spy case: NIA searches 3 locations in Kolkata, travel agency owner summoned



GNS News Agency, May 31

NIA raids Kolkata, Pakistan espionage case India, Moti Ram Jat arrest, NIA travel agency investigation, Kolkata Alipore NIA raid, Khidderpore travel agency NIA, According to sources in the NIA, there were some suspicious money transactions through the travel agency office on three occasions. In the National Investigation Agency (NIA) raids conducted across the country in connection with the arrests linked to Pakistan espionage case, searches were conducted at three locations in Kolkata on Saturday. The officials also summoned a travel agency owner to its office for questioning with regard to some dubious money transactions. According to NIA sources, in Kolkata the searches were held at shop in Alipore, a travel agency in Khidderpore and a hotel in Park Circus.

In all, raids were held at 15 locations in Delhi, Haryana, West Bengal, Uttar Pradesh, Maharashtra, Rajasthan, and Assam in connection with the arrest of CRPF Assistant Sub-Inspector (ASI) Moti Ram Jat in Delhi for allegedly leaking

classified information to Pakistani intelligence operatives in return of money. According to sources in the NIA, there were some suspicious money transactions through the travel agency office on three occasions, including one on April 3, 2024. These transactions are being investigated. Travel agency owner, Mohammed Masood Alam, has been summoned by the NIA for questioning on Monday. Alam told reporters that NIA officials searched his office regarding some money transfers. "They were asking about a specific amount, but that transaction was not found. We had done three transactions in 2024 through third-party apps like Pay Point India. We do not personally know the person who came for those transactions. We only verify Aadhaar cards and process the transactions as per our job. The account number, where the money was transferred, was provided by the customer himself," said Alam whose phone and laptop have been seized.

"As far as we know, it was said to be a Pakistan-based account. But Indian money cannot be directly sent to a Pakistan account through these platforms. This is my livelihood, and I've always done my work honestly, just like others in this business," said Alam, adding that he would co-operate with the investigation agency. "I have not done anything wrong. I only did my job, nothing else." Sources said that the activity of arrested ASI, Moti Ram Jat, who was posted in Pahalgam, was under the scanner for weeks, and was transferred to Delhi just five days before the April 22 terror attack that killed 26 civilians. Prior to Pahalgam terror attack, it was found that Haryana-based YouTuber Jyoti Malhotra who was arrested on May 16 on charges of espionage had reportedly visited Kolkata thrice. During her visits she had taken videos and pictures of important places like Sealdah railway station, Howrah Railway station, and Bali bridge.

Law student arrested from Gurgaon home by Kolkata police over social media post

GNS News Agency, May 31

Sharmistha Panoli arrest: The Kolkata police on Friday afternoon arrested a 22-year-old law student from her Gurgaon residence over an allegedly objectionable social media post. The woman, Sharmistha Panoli, is a student of Symbiosis, Pune, and has a sizeable social media following — almost 85,000 followers on X and 90,000 on Instagram. On May 14, the AIMIM's national spokesperson, Waris Pathan, had shared a video purportedly posted by her and alleged that she had insulted the Prophet and tried to spread communal disharmony. In his post, Pathan tagged the Home Minister and sought her arrest. On May 15, Patoli posted on X, "I do hereby tender my unconditional apology. Whatever was put are my personal feelings and I never intentionally wanted to hurt anybody, so if anybody is hurt, I'm sorry for the same. I expect co-operation and understanding. Henceforth, I will be cautious in my public post. Again, please accept my apologies." On Saturday, she was produced in a court in Alipore and remanded in judicial custody until 13 June. According to the FIR, police received a complaint at Garden Reach police station on May 14 from one Wajahat Khan, Chief Public Prosecutor, Alipore Police Court, Sourin Ghoshal said, "She knew about the consequences of her actions, being a law student. Several police stations have complaints against her, so we need to question her thoroughly." In a statement, the Kolkata Police said, "Certain social media narratives suggesting an unlawful arrest of a law student are factually incorrect and misleading. All legal procedures were duly adhered to. All attempts were



made to serve notice, but she was found absconding on every occasion. Consequently, a warrant of arrest was issued by the competent court, following which she was apprehended lawfully from Gurgaon. She was thereafter produced before the appropriate magistrate and granted transit remand as per due process of law. We urge all concerned to refrain from spreading unverified or speculative content and to rely on authentic sources for information." Sources said that while her family is in Gurgaon, they have property in Anandapur, Kolkata. She has been charged under sections of promoting enmity between different groups, acts intended to outrage religious feelings, insult with intent to provoke breach of peace, and statements that incite public mischief.

Arvind Kejriwal attacks BJP, Congress as Gopal Italia files nomination

GNS News Agency, May 31

Gopal Italia, the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) candidate for the Visavadar bypoll in Gujarat, filed his nomination on Saturday in the presence of the party's national convener, Arvind Kejriwal, who attacked the BJP and the Congress, calling them "badmash (rogue)" and "dhokebaaz (deceitful)" parties respectively. Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann and former Delhi Chief Minister Atishi were also present on the occasion.

The bypolls in Visavadar and Kadi Assembly constituencies of Gujarat are scheduled on June 19, and the last date for filing nomination papers is June 2. The bypoll in Visavadar constituency was necessitated as the AAP MLA from the seat, Bhupendra Bhayani, resigned and later joined the BJP. In the Assembly election before that, Congress MLA Harshad Ribadiya was elected from the seat, but he too had resigned and later joined the BJP. Addressing a public gathering before leading a roadshow in Visavadar, Kejriwal said that the people of Visavadar have not let the BJP enter the constituency for the past 18 years. "The BJP has not won in Visavadar for the past 18 years. They have a government in Gujarat, but not in Visavadar. You first voted for Congress and then voted for AAP. What did the BJP do? It attacked Visavadar and started insulting the people of Visavadar," Kejriwal said. "First, you elected Harshad Ribadiya from Congress. The BJP did badmashi and broke him (Ribadiya) and joined him in their party... Then in 2022, you elected Bhupatbhai (Bhupendra Bhayani) from AAP. The BJP broke him too. People of Visavadar, the BJP says, 'No matter whom you elect, we will break him'. So, today, I am here today to challenge the BJP. This time, we have also put our biggest hero before you. I challenge the BJP to break Gopal Italia. (If they succeed) Kejriwal will quit politics," the former Delhi chief minister said.

He then attacked the Congress too, by calling it a



"dhokebaaz" party. "The Congress too is a dhokebaaz of first grade... Congress is doing naukri (working for) of the BJP and is sitting on its lap," Kejriwal said. Kejriwal said that after the 2022 Assembly elections, five of Congress's MLAs and one AAP MLA quit their respective parties and joined the BJP. The Congress, he said, made a proposal to the AAP that in the by-elections of seats where Congress candidates had won, AAP should not field a candidate, and in the by-elections of seats where AAP candidates had won, Congress should not field a candidate. Accordingly, he said, the AAP did not field candidates in the by-elections of seats where Congress MLAs had resigned because they wanted to defeat the BJP. "Now, when a by-election on a seat won by AAP has come, Congress is going to field its candidate... It makes it clear that Congress is a dhokebaaz party. And we need to teach it a lesson too," Kejriwal said. Italia is a firebrand AAP leader in Gujarat who joined politics after quitting his government job. As per Italia's affidavit filed before the Election Commission, 21 criminal cases are pending against him in various police stations of the state. Italia has also listed total assets worth Rs 14.20 lakh in his affidavit with no liability. He is a lawyer by profession.

9th Century Jain rock-cut caves at Ananthagiri seek urgent protection, conservation

GNS News Agency, May 31 Hyderabad: A group of 15 rock-cut Jain caves belonging to the ninth century CE are craving for protection at Ananthagiri, a hill station in Vikarabad district. According to Archaeologist E Sivanagireddy, who visited the caves on Saturday, there are 15 caves that are square and rectangular on plan and vary in size between two to six meters in length and two to three metres in width and 2.5 meters in depth with openings to the east. They belong to the Jain faith and should have been excavated to facilitate the Jain ascetics to spend the rainy season, besides observing Sallekhana Vrata (fast unto death), he said. "Out of the 15 rock-cut caves, six caves are intact and the rest are damaged during the widening of the pathway leading to the origin point of the River Musi,

from where its journey starts," Sivanagireddy explained.

The rock-cut beds on the floor and niches in the walls to keep lamps and a mutilated Jain statue seated in Artha Paryankasana give enough indications about the caves Jain affiliation, he added. Sivanagireddy appealed to the authorities of the Ananta Padmanabha swamy temple and Vikarabad Municipality to remove the white wash coated on the caves walls. Pathways should be developed and signages explaining the historical and religious significance of the caves should be established, he urged, adding that Dr. Padmanabham, Chairman of the temple assured that he would extend necessary support in this regard. Heritage activists D R Syamsundar Rao, B Venkatarreddy, B Sai Kiran Reddy and Ellayya participated in the exploration.

HC strikes down Punjab formula for premature release of prisoners



GNS News Agency, May 31

The Punjab and Haryana High Court has ruled that parole must be deducted from the total sentence, including remission, and not from the actual sentence, which covers only the time spent in custody while considering eligibility for premature release of prisoners. Setting aside the Punjab government's October 2024 order denying life convict Rupinder Singh's release, the court directed a fresh assessment of his case within four weeks. Justice Harpreet Singh Brar, who delivered the ruling on May 29, also struck down the state's 2020 formula that excluded parole from the actual sentence. "The formula prescribed in meeting dated 16.07.2020 is held to be invalid, being in direct contravention of Section 3(3) of the Act of 1962... It is directed that the parole period shall only be subtracted from the total sentence and not from the actual sentence," the court said. The court found the state's formula—actual custody during undertrial plus custody post-conviction, minus the parole period—lacked legal backing and contradicted the Punjab Good Conduct of Prisoners (Temporary Release) Act, 1962. Section 3(3) of the Act states: "The period of release under this section shall not count towards the total period of the sentence of a prisoner."

Interpreting this, Justice Brar clarified, "Actual sentence must be interpreted to mean the real time spent by a prisoner behind bars. And therefore, has two parts only i.e. (i) Actual time undergone in custody as an undertrial and (ii) Actual time undergone as a convict. Thus, the quantum of actual sentence is a matter of fact, a constant number... Total sentence, for the purpose of premature release, would include the actual sentence undergone by the

MBA admissions are biased against fresh engineering graduates. But it is time for a rethink

GNS News Agency, May 31

Thousands of graduates with degrees in hand and aspirations of becoming managers graduate from India's best engineering schools each year. Interestingly, though, the majority of these talented young engineers do not immediately go to business schools. They bide their time for two — three years. Why? There is a quiet but growing agreement that freshmen without prior work experience, even those from famous institutions, don't have a good chance of getting into India's best B-schools. This goes beyond anecdotal evidence. It is supported by hard evidence. The average age and job experience of admitted students have been rising gradually across top management schools, including IIM Ahmedabad, Bangalore, ISB Hyderabad, and others. New grads are becoming the exception rather than the rule. What is causing this change, then? Furthermore, is it time for Indian business schools to reevaluate how they assess bright, young engineers right out of college? Why engineers wait

This delay is due to practical considerations. After years of technical education, many engineers only discover they want more after they start working: more creative responsibility, more exposure to clients, and more authority to make decisions. The next logical step is the MBA. However, they also understand that work experience greatly improves their application. Experienced applicants not only usually perform better in case-based assessments and interviews, they also frequently pique recruiters' interest during final placements. Candidates with some knowledge of workplace dynamics are preferred by employers, who frequently seek out applicants who can take the initiative right away.

Clarity of intent is equally vital. Young professionals who have worked in the business for two or three years are better able to identify what they want—or don't want—from their employment. Sharper essays, more cogent career goals, and an improved overall fit with MBA programs are frequently the results of that clarity. Peer learning, real-world conversations, and cooperative problem-solving are key components of top MBA programs. Regardless of academic achievement, a class made up exclusively of freshmen may lack the real-world experiences that make management theory come to life. A certain amount of maturity is also expected by recruiters post the MBA program. Freshmen may excel in positions involving a lot of data or analytics, but they might not be prepared for positions requiring client interaction, leadership, or negotiation. Thus, the premium for experience is not wholly unjustified from the institutions' own point of view. Also, a diverse learning group is important in the MBA class. Male engineers, frequently from IITs or NITs, dominated India's B-schools for many years. Many universities responded by purposefully restructuring their hiring procedures to place greater emphasis on professional diversity, gender parity, and non-engineering backgrounds.

For instance, even though their CAT score is lower than an engineer's, a graduate in commerce or a literature major may receive extra points during the shortlisting round. Some colleges assist non-engineers stand out by normalizing academic performance across disciplines. To increase gender diversity, female candidates—especially those from underrepresented fields—may be given preference. How does this thinking actually narrow down to a process? Let's take the example of IIM Ahmedabad for how this intention is translated into a robust process:

At different stages of the selection process, the 'Application Rating' (AR) score of an applicant will be used. An applicant's AR score is the sum of the rating scores based on their percentage of marks obtained in Class 10 and Class 12 (depending upon the stream, viz., 'Science', 'Commerce' and 'Arts & Humanities'), the bachelor's degree programme (depending upon the discipline), and work experience (at the time of application). The gender diversity score is zero for male candidates and 2 for all other candidates. Similarly, for computing the weightage or work experience, IIM Bengaluru has a specific process: It assigns credit for a candidate's work experience in the selection process, but the maximum cap is 36 months and anything above does not alter the weightage points given. However the quality of the work within those 36 months is assessed by the selection panel and given due weightage. The diversity imperative Today the reason why business schools prioritize diversity in admissions is fully understood by all. Diver-

prisoner and the remission earned by him." The court held that Singh's case must be considered under the 1991 premature release policy, which requires 10 years of actual imprisonment and 14 years, including remission. Citing Raj Kumar vs. State of Uttar Pradesh, 2024(9) SCC 598, the court said, "The State having formulated Rules and a Standing Policy for deciding cases of premature release, it is bound by its own formulations of law... It must strictly abide by the terms of its policies bearing in mind the fundamental principle of law that each case for premature release has to be decided on the basis of the legal position as it stands on the date of the conviction." The court also referred to Avtar Singh vs. State of Haryana, 2002 SCC (Cri.) 504, noting, "Ordinarily, the period of temporary release of a prisoner on parole needs to be counted towards the total period of detention, but this condition can be curtailed by legislative act, rules, instructions or terms of the grant of parole." As no such legal change had been made, the court said Section 3(3) remained applicable. Rupinder Singh was convicted of murder on August 11, 2014, by the Sessions Court in Hoshiarpur under Section 302 of the Indian Penal Code. His conviction was upheld by the high court on October 3, 2019, and by the Supreme Court on November 22, 2019.

Seeking premature release under the 1991 policy, Singh's case was considered by the court on January 16, 2024. The state later challenged this, and on March 24, 2025, the Supreme Court allowed it to file a review petition. The key issue was whether over three years of Singh's parole should be deducted from his actual time served or from the total sentence. The state's 2020 clarification favoured the former, delaying his eligibility. Singh's lawyers, Nandan Jindal and Tushar Sabherwal, argued that the 2020 clarification was applied retrospectively and violated constitutional rights under Articles 14, 19, and 21. They cited *Jai Kishan @ Bhola vs. State of Punjab* (2022) and *Baljeet Singh @ Rangi vs. State of Punjab* (2022). Deputy Advocate General Pardeep Bajaj, appearing for the state, relied on *Rohan Dhungat vs. State of Goa* (2023 AIR SC 265), but the court held it was not applicable due to differences in state laws. Justice Brar noted, "The objective behind the Act of 1962 is humanitarian in nature... Ensuring that the incarcerated have healthy roots in the society greatly assists in their rehabilitation and reintegration."



Admission processes in B-schools weigh against fresh engineering graduates but a rethink is needed to leverage what freshers can bring to a diverse learning group

sity helps to cultivate a richer learning environment, prepare students for the globalized business world, and fosters a more inclusive and equitable community. A diverse student body brings a wider range of perspectives, experiences, and backgrounds, enhancing critical thinking, innovation, and problem-solving skills. And in the long term, a diverse alumni network can provide students with more connections and opportunities. Alumni from different backgrounds can offer valuable mentorship, support, and access to diverse industries and markets. Aspirants to top B-schools in India need to understand these important elements that the institutions practice and prioritize. While their aspirations are personally of great importance to individuals, they must see the institution priorities and the bigger cause that the institutions work for. At the same time, although these initiatives are well-meaning and essential for comprehensive education, they also result in a higher learning curve for engineers, especially new hires. Many decide to wait, obtain work experience, then reapply with a stronger case unless they have outstanding profiles or scores. Should this, however, be the standard? Is the system unintentionally rejecting a sizable pool of bright young professionals who are more than prepared for management education in the name of diversity promotion? Many prestigious universities throughout the world provide effective early-entry MBA programs. Through initiatives such as the Harvard's 2+2 or Yale Silver Scholars, gifted undergraduates can obtain MBA admissions and postpone enrolling until they have the necessary experience.

This maintains classroom quality while providing early access to management education. Additionally, recent grads are typically more adaptable, risk-taking, and entrepreneurial. They provide their digital proficiency and new ideas. Some have previously founded businesses, run college associations, or spearheaded social impact initiatives. It could be shortsighted to overlook their potential in favor of repetitive work experience. Provide specialized tracks, career coaching, and mentoring as well as organized pathways for new hires.

Acknowledge leadership positions in college, entrepreneurial endeavours, and internships as reliable predictors of future success. Increase the number of postponed MBA programs available so that worthy seniors can earn their spots and begin working in the field a year or two later. In addition to providing opportunities for emerging talent, these models uphold the diversity and maturity that B-schools rightfully cherish. To sum up, whether new engineers are qualified for an MBA is not the question. With or without a few years of job experience, the question is whether our admissions frameworks have changed sufficiently to acknowledge the various ways quality might manifest itself. The management education system in India is at a turning point. Youth potential must not be overlooked in its quest for diversity and employability, nor should talent from the "over-represented" pool be penalized. The MBA continues to be a goal worth pursuing for many of talented young engineers. Maintaining an open and equitable road is a challenge for our institutions.

After Ziddi Girls controversy, Miranda House is coming up with a filming policy



GNS News Agency, May 31

Delhi University's Miranda House is in the final stages of adopting a formal policy to regulate filming on its campus, The Indian Express has learnt. The move comes in the aftermath of the controversy linked to Ziddi Girls, an Amazon Prime series accused of portraying a fictional college, "Matilda House", bearing an "unmistakable resemblance" to Miranda House. With the proposed regulations, DU's prestigious women's college aims to ensure that future creative projects do not distort or damage its public image, said people in the know. Directed by Miranda House alumna Shonali Bose, the series sparked protests from students and alumni who said the similarities were too stark to ignore, including the short-form reference. The college had issued a legal notice to the show's makers in February, demanding the removal of the short-form reference, "MH", and seeking a pre-release preview of the series by the administration and the students' union. A faculty-student committee then proposed a filming policy in April. "Teachers and students have come up with a policy, and the college is looking into it," Principal Bijayalaxmi Nanda told The Indian Express.

The draft, which is yet to be finalised by a committee, "reviewing the use of college space by outsiders", lays out a detailed approval process requiring filmmakers to submit a written request at least 15 days in advance. The proposal must include the script, project overview, and a clear explanation of how the college will be depicted. "The college administration will review the script and decide whether the project aligns with the values and reputation of Miranda House," the draft states. "Any content that misrepresents

the college or negatively impacts its image will not be approved." Once approved, the production team must sign a formal contract. "Filming must be done in a way that does not disturb classes, students, or faculty," reads a clause. Any damage to college property must be compensated by the production team, it said. An administrative official involved in the drafting process emphasised that commercial gain has never been the motivation behind granting access. "It is never a matter of money coming in for this college through the shooting of films and ad films. The college has always given permission only to a few very important projects, like those driven by its alumni. The effort through this policy is to make sure film shooting takes place vigilantly, under supervision, and without disturbing the academic spaces for students." Before release, the college reserves the right to view the final footage to ensure it aligns with the agreed portrayal," the guidelines note. If any changes are needed, the team will be required to make the necessary edits. "The college name and logo must not be used in credits, promotions, or any form of branding unless explicitly approved." The guidelines also focus on legal accountability. "Any violation of this policy may result in legal action or a permanent ban on future filming requests. The contract will outline legal consequences in case of policy violations," the document states. The college also insists on a complete preview of the final product: "After completion of the shoot and before launching, it should be seen by the administration." Perhaps most significantly, the policy prohibits filmmakers from deviating from the agreed script under the pretext of artistic freedom. "The overview of the script provided to the college authorities should not contrast with the actual story to be streamlined. The use of 'creative license' as an excuse for the same will not be entertained," it reads. Once adopted, the policy is expected to set a precedent for other academic institutions too. Earlier, in a statement before the release of the series, the Miranda House Students' Union said: "MHSU expresses its deep outrage and profound condemnation over the recent release of the 'Ziddi Girls' trailer on Amazon Prime. The circulating trailer contains content that raises serious objections, particularly regarding the dignity of our esteemed institution. It tarnishes, defames, and demeans the 77-year-old legacy of Miranda House, a college renowned for its commitment to women's education and emancipation."

Chief secy, team of officials in Greece for exhibition highlighting UP Defence Industrial Corridor

GNS News Agency, May 31 the Chief Secretary Singh inaugurated the Indian Pavilion at the event along with the Ambassador to Greece, Rudendra Tandon, officials said. AIMING AT attracting investment in the defence sector as part of the Uttar Pradesh Defence Industrial Corridor, Chief Secretary Manoj Kumar Singh reached Athens, Greece, on Tuesday along with a team of senior officials and defence experts to take part in an ongoing defence exhibition. The Chief Secretary Singh inaugurated the Indian Pavilion at the event along with the Ambassador to Greece, Rudendra Tandon, officials said. He and other senior officials also met some potential investors and discussed the opportunities and the incentives being provided by the state in the sector. The Uttar Pradesh Defence Industrial Corridor has set up a segment as part of the India Pavilion at the three-day exhibition, officials said. Officials said that six other officers are part of the UP delegation, including Secretary to Chief Minister Amit Kumar Singh, Additional Chief Executive Officer, Uttar Pradesh Expressways Industrial Authority, Srihari Pratap Shahi, and others.

"During the exhibition, the Chief Secretary chaired several round-table conferences with representatives from the government of Greece and the government of Armenia. Both countries have expressed keen interest in invest-



ing in India in collaboration with Indian companies, highlighting potential opportunities for partnerships and growth," said a senior officer part of the delegation. He informed that the exhibition, which will conclude on May 8, has participation from 35 countries, with several events and visits to various stalls showcasing cutting-edge defence technology. "This initiative is expected to pave the way for new investments, technological advancements and strategic partnerships in the defence sector, further solidifying Uttar Pradesh's position as a key player in India's defense industrial landscape," said an official.

Govt rolls out policy to make UP a 'global service centre'

GNS News Agency, May 31

AS PART of its efforts to attract global investment, Uttar Pradesh government has rolled out the Global Capability Centres (GCC) Policy, which was cleared by the Cabinet on Tuesday. The policy is aimed at making the state the next "global service centre" of the country and also helping UP achieve its \$1-trillion dollar economy mark, officials said. Officials said that with the incentives offered in the policy, which has been prepared after studying similar policies in other places, it is expected to attract global companies working in IT, banking, healthcare, engineering as well as next generation technologies towards UP for "large-scale investment". Elaborating further, Principal Secretary, Industrial Development, Alok Kumar, informed that the state has a large talent pool in many sectors including science, law, engineering. He said, "To get better quality work at less cost, many multinational companies are setting up their offshore development centres in Uttar Pradesh...." Kumar said software and IT companies are establishing such GCCs, which include machine learning, cloud computing, robotic process automation, AI-driven development, cyber security, engineering development etc. He said there are many elements of engineering design as well which are expensive and time-consuming but this work can be done at lesser prices and with high quality with the help of these centres in UP. "multinational companies are coming to India to outsource work in banks, financial services and insurance sector," he explained, adding that companies from the automotive sector, electronics and semiconductor manufacturing sectors have also come to the state.

Officials said that at present there are nearly 1700 GCCs in India and this number is expected to grow rapidly. "Microsoft has just laid the foundation stone of a 10,000-seater development centre in Noida. MAQ has also set up a 3,000-seater engineering development centre. We have to make arrangements to bring these centres in cities such as Varanasi, Kanpur and Prayagraj along with NCR and Noida," said Alok Kumar. Under the new policy, investors will get comprehensive assistance at every level from operations to skill development. As per the policy, under operational subsidy, 20 per cent subsidy on rent, electricity, bandwidth and data service, assistance of up to Rs 180 crore can be received. At the same time, under payroll subsidy, the benefit of reimbursement of up to Rs 1.8 lakh per annum on the salary of employees residing in UP will be available. Under fresher and intern subsidy, assistance of up to Rs 20,000 will be received on recruiting new graduates and Rs 5000 per month on internship. Special provision has been made for socially backward classes under

EPF, training and R&D grants. Apart from these incentives, exemption in land and stamp duty, subsidy on capital and interest, as well as reimbursement of SGST has also been offered under the new policy. Officials claimed that the policy would help generate high-salaried employment opportunities in the state. In another significant decision, the state Cabinet approved the transfer policy for the 2025-26 financial year. Finance Minister Suresh Khanna informed that most of the provisions of the previous policy have been retained in the new policy and that by June 2025, the officers of Group A and B who have completed three years of service in a district will be transferred to other districts and the officers and employees who have completed seven years in the division will be transferred. The transfer will be a maximum of 20 per cent of the number of officers working cadre wise in Group A and B and 10 per cent respectively in Group C. For Group B category, it will be done on the basis of a merit-based online system. In this sequence, the parents of physically challenged children and completely disabled children will be deployed at such places where there will be proper arrangement for proper care and medical care. Two major steps have been announced to tackle unplanned parking problems of both lightweight vehicles as well as heavy vehicles and at the same time create a source of income.

The Cabinet cleared a proposal for coming out with Uttar Pradesh Municipal Corporation (Construction, Maintenance and Operation of Parking Space) Rules 2025. Urban Development and Energy Minister A K Sharma informed that due to the huge increase in private vehicles in the state, pressure is increasing on the roads as well as parking spaces. He said that in such a situation, these rules would ensure implementation of uniform parking rules in the municipal corporations of Uttar Pradesh that will increase the revenue generated from parking and prevent losses. The minister informed that the use of smart technology will enable effective management of parking spaces as well. "Parking fees will become a regular source of income for municipal corporations and it will become a means of providing civic amenities and services and would also provide easy parking facilities to the general public. The Cabinet also approved the Uttar Pradesh Stage Carriage Bus Adda, Contract Carriage and All India Tourist Bus Park (Establishment and Regulation) Policy-2025. Minister Suresh Khanna said that under the policy, the invitation of applications for the establishment of bus depots, parks across the state will be under the chairmanship of the District Magistrate. Under the policy, there is a provision of at least two acres for the establishment of State Carriage Bus Adda, Contract Carriage and All India Tourist Bus Park, officials said.

What the preparedness looks like: Hotlines between civilian and defence authorities, control rooms, evacuation protocols



EMS News Agency, Nov 29

AS THE multi-agency mock drills begin across critical locations in Pune amid escalating tensions with Pakistan, Lieutenant General DB Shekatkar (ret'd), a veteran of 1965 and 1971 wars, spoke to The Indian Express about how the civil defence preparedness in the wake of possible hostile attack will look like in the coming days. "Whenever there is a possibility of a hostile attack or any calamity, it is the primary responsibility of the government to take adequate precautions to ensure safety of the citizens. Amid escalating tensions with Pakistan, if we do get caught by surprise, the entire nation has to be prepared. For this to happen, people must be prepared. It is with thought that the Union Government has asked the state governments and Union Territories to undertake civil defence drills on May 7," said General Shekatkar.

"In all likelihood, the drill will take place at night as one of the key elements is implementation of the blackout protocol, which will be at night. The sirens will be tested. There will also be drills at critical installations such as the airports, railway stations, transport hubs and power installations among other sensitive locations. The administration and

concerned government entities will also ensure full preparedness of hospitals, emergency medical response, emergency response systems such as the NDRF, through these drills," he said. Underscoring the importance of Pune city, General Shekatkar said, "People will say that these measures will be primarily for border areas. But that is not true. Even economic centres such as Mumbai and Pune also remain highly vulnerable. Pune is a major hub for information technology, manufacturing, education in addition to being a major military centre."

"On the other hand, there are sensitive power generation centres including atomic ones, dams in Maharashtra. The activation of civil defence mechanisms will include operationalising hotlines and radio contact links — including those between the civilian administrations and defence formations, state governments and the Union government. The next important thing will be setting up operational control rooms of police, airport, railways, transport services and a central control room that will oversee the total response. The next aspect is training of the civilians with a focus on youth and students. The preparedness will also include testing of sirens and blackout and emergency evacuation protocols," said the retired Lieutenant General who is a decorated veteran with an experience spanning 40 years. Gen Shekatkar further said, "For the mock drills the district administration, local military formations, NDRF, Railways, Airport Authority of India, health department, fire brigade will all come into picture. There will also be protocol in terms of cyber security. During both the 1965 and 1971 wars, these protocols and drills were implemented. This kind of mobilisation and preparedness drills are happening for the first time since 1971 war. This did not happen during the Kargil war as it was primarily limited to Kashmir." General Shekatkar is currently Chancellor of Sikkim University and has chaired a committee of experts formed by the Ministry of Defence in 2015. During the Kargil war in 1999, he held a critical command appointment on the China front in Arunachal Pradesh and also served as Deputy Director General of military operations dealing with China and East Asia.

Gujarat amends rural electric connection policy; changes will benefit families living in periphery of villages, says minister

GNS News Agency, May 31

electric connection policy Power utilities would undertake a technical survey of the lands being used for residential purposes along with primary agricultural use as well as those lands where there is no electricity connection available from agriculture feeders. The Gujarat government on Tuesday announced amendments to the rural electric connection policy to benefit families living in the periphery of villages. Apart from altering the load limit for residential connection for families living in the periphery of the villages, outside the village jurisdiction, the state government has also decided to levy fixed charges for public and commercial units in rural areas.

In a release, Gujarat Energy Minister Kanu Desai said, "As per the current policy of the Gujarat state government, residential connections in areas outside main village limits were eligible for upto 3 Kilowatts (KW) of single-phase connections from agriculture feeders. The cost for the same would be the actual cost or Rs 1 lakh, whichever is lower... Now, the families residing outside the village limits will be eligible for a 6 KW single-phase electricity connection and also pay a fixed charge based on the KW. This will benefit farmers living in homes outside the village limits... and not be levied heavy expenses." Desai said that power utilities would undertake a technical survey of the lands being used for residential purposes along with primary agricultural use as well as those lands where there is no electricity connection available from agriculture feeders. Following the survey, and based on the approval of the superintendent engi-



neer of the area, the properties will be given electricity connection from non-agricultural feeders.

The release, attributed to Desai, also stated that the state government had decided to "reduce the burden of costs" on public establishments such as shelter homes, Adarsh Residential schools as well as units of poultry farms, cattle sheds and pounds, shrimp farms, milk-chilling plants, mobile towers and mango-ripening farms. Earlier expected to pay full installation charges, these will now benefit by paying KW-based fixed charges. Grinding mills located outside village limits will also be included in the scheme. The government has also decided that the minimum number of homes required to install a Jyotigram feeder in non-tribal areas will be reduced from 15 to 10 to ensure that more clusters are connected to the feeders.

Noida police constable shot dead, another cop injured during raid in Ghaziabad to arrest wanted man



GNS News Agency, May 31

police According to the Ghaziabad police, the incident occurred at around 11 pm when a team from the station went to arrest Qadir, who is wanted under the Gangster Act and in connection with 16 cases of theft and robbery. A constable with the Noida police was allegedly shot dead while another police officer was injured during a raid late Sunday night to arrest a wanted man living in Ghaziabad's Nahal village, officers said. The deceased was identified as Saurabh Kumar, 26. He was posted at the police station in Noida's Phase 3. According to the Ghaziabad police, the incident occurred at around 11 pm when a team from the station went to arrest Qadir, who is wanted under the Gangster Act and in connection with 16 cases of theft and robbery.

"When the police went to arrest him in Nahal village, which falls under the jurisdiction of the Mussoori police station in Ghaziabad, Qadir and his associates opened fire and started pelting stones at the team," said an officer with the Noida police, adding that Qadir was taken into custody later. "Saurabh was shot in the head and was admitted to Yashoda Hospital where he was declared dead by the doctors. Another police officer was also injured and is currently under treatment," an officer said. Surendra Nath Tewari, Deputy Commissioner of Police (DCP), Ghaziabad Rural, said he received information that constable Saurabh Kumar was shot dead when the police team had gone to arrest Qadir. "We have received a complaint from the sub-inspector of Noida Phase-3 police station at the Mussoori station. We are registering an FIR and taking all necessary action," he said. Soon, Laxmi Singh, Police Commissioner, Noida, announced that she will provide an amount of Rs 1 lakh

from her salary as financial assistance to the family of the late constable, and all officers and employees posted in the Commissionerate will extend an ex gratia amount of one day's salary for the same. "Late Constable Saurabh Kumar posted at Police Station Phase-3 of Commissionerate Gautam Buddha Nagar, lost his life while performing his duty in the unfortunate incident that took place on the night of May 25. He showed indomitable courage and bravery by catching the accused and made the supreme sacrifice of his life. All the policemen of the Commissionerate are hurt by this incident and pay their tributes to him and express their condolences," read an official statement issued by the Noida police.

Farmer couple stages protest with buffaloes over power supply issue



GNS News Agency, May 31

Karimnagar: A farmer couple staged a protest against power supply disruption by staging a rasta roko along with their buffaloes on the main road in Ganneruvaram mandal headquarters on Monday. The couple, Korivi Pochaiah and Susheela, owns a few acres of land and an agricultural pump set. One month ago, the electric wire supplying power to their agricultural fields snapped due to damage to an electric pole. Though they were making rounds of the electricity department, power connection was not restored so far. Enraged over the officials' attitude, the couple staged a protest along with their buffaloes.

Gaza humanitarian group official resigns; cites lack of independence



GNS News Agency, May 31

The head of a U.S.-backed private humanitarian organization tasked with distributing aid in Gaza through an Israeli-initiated plan resigned on Sunday (May 25, 2025), saying he could not abandon principles of humanity, impartiality and independence. Jake Wood, executive director of the Gaza Humanitarian Foundation for the past two months, said he resigned because it could not adhere "to the humanitarian principles of humanity, neutrality, impartiality, and independence, which I will not abandon." Mr. Wood's statement did not provide more details and the former U.S. Marine did not immediately respond to a request for comment. In a statement, the Foundation's board said it was "disappointed" by Wood's departure, but vowed not to be deterred from efforts to reach the enclave's entire population in coming weeks. "Our trucks are loaded and ready to go," it said, adding that GHF would begin direct aid delivery in Gaza from Monday to reach more than one million Palestinians by the end of the week. "We plan to scale rapidly to serve the full population in the weeks ahead." A spokes-

person for the U.S. State Department said it remained supportive of the Gaza Humanitarian Foundation's plans to begin to deliver aid soon and underscored that U.S. President Donald Trump had said the Palestinians badly needed help. Israeli, Palestinian, U.S. and U.N. officials did not immediately respond to requests for comment.

Humanitarian assistance began trickling into Gaza in recent days after Israel relented to international pressure after having enforced a blockade since early March. A global hunger monitor has warned that starvation faces half a million people, a quarter of the population in Gaza, where Israel and Palestinian militant group Hamas have been at war since October 2023. Israel has accused Hamas of stealing aid, which the group denies, and is blocking humanitarian deliveries to Gaza until Hamas releases all remaining hostages taken in its attack on Israel. Criticism on Gaza Humanitarian FoundationThe Gaza Humanitarian Foundation, set up in February, has been highly criticized by the United Nations, whose officials have said its aid distribution plans would only foment forced relocation of Palestinians and more violence. That plan, originally set to begin by the end of May, was initiated by Israel and involves private companies, instead of the U.N. and aid groups which have handled Palestinian aid for decades, transporting aid into Gaza to a limited number of so-called secure distribution sites, which Israel said would be in Gaza's south. This month wood told Israeli authorities in a letter the foundation would not share any personally identifiable information of aid recipients. Wood also asked Israel to facilitate the flow of enough aid "using existing modalities" until the foundation's infrastructure was fully operational. He said it was essential to alleviate distress and ease pressure on distribution sites during the foundation's first days of operation.

'Headline' schemes, but Tamil Nadu's women deserve better: Edappadi Palaniswami

GNS News Agency, May 31

In Tamil Nadu, women have always led — in their homes, in our workforce, and, increasingly, in public life. Yet, despite their resilience, many continue to be underserved by systems that too often prioritise spectacle over substance. Over the past few years, a number of women-centric schemes have been launched. On paper, the announcements have captured headlines. But in homes and communities across the State, the reality has not always kept pace with the promise made. Delays, exclusions and bureaucratic roadblocks have diluted the impact of what could have been transformative interventions. Consider the much-publicised monthly income support scheme for women heads of households. Nearly 2.06 crore women applied for this. Yet, as of March 2024, only 1.06 crore applications were approved, leaving behind nearly one crore women, many of whom are from vulnerable and rural backgrounds. Their exclusion was not for lack of need, but often due to rigid documentation rules or administrative hurdles.

In districts such as Tiruvannamalai and Villupuram, women queued for hours only to be told later that they were ineligible due to discrepancies in ration cards or land records. More than 9.24 lakh women have formally appealed these rejections which is a number that speaks volumes about the frustration and unmet expectation among the public, as was reported even in this daily ('9.24 lakh women file appeals against their rejection from Kalaingar Magalir Urimai Thittam', updated October 11, 2023). Even for those applications that were approved, there were significant delays in disbursement that were reported across several regions, undermining the assurance of timely and dignified support.

Public transport initiatives, too, have sought to ease financial burdens such as the scheme of free bus travel for women. While the savings are real on paper, many commuters in tier-2 and tier-3 towns experience overcrowded services, fewer bus services, and a lack of safety provisions. The effectiveness of these efforts has been limited by the absence of women conductors, marshals, and last-mile connectivity. There is also the question of continuity versus innovation. Programmes such as the Amma Baby Care Kits — introduced to promote maternal and infant health — have continued, but largely without expansion or evolution. Similarly, subsidies and microcredit support for women-led self-help groups have seen notable budgetary reductions in recent years, shrinking the ecosystem that once enabled grass-root entrepreneurship. These issues highlight a broader concern: the gap between policy design and delivery. Launches are often celebrated, but follow-through is what truly changes lives.

In contrast, Tamil Nadu has also witnessed quieter, more enduring models of empowerment. The Cradle Baby Scheme, initiated in the early 1990s, was a deeply humane response to female infanticide. In districts such as Salem, Dharmapuri, and Madurai — once plagued by this practice — the incidence of female infanticide dropped by over 75%



between 1992 and 2011 (as in data from the Tamil Nadu Department of Social Welfare). Equally pioneering was the scheme of all-women police stations that were set up to offer safety and justice with sensitivity. By 2021, over 222 such stations were operational across the State — a testament to what institutional innovation can achieve when guided by empathy and purpose. The introduction of 50% reservation for women in local bodies was another landmark reform. Thousands of women emerged not just as voters or beneficiaries but also as panchayat presidents, councillors, and community leaders, shaping decisions, budgets, and futures. Among the welfare schemes that empowered women in a lower social strata was the revolutionary 'Thalikka Thangam' initiative which offered financial assistance and gold to women from low-income families at the time of marriage — ₹25,000 and eight grams of gold for those who had completed high school, and ₹50,000 for graduates. And the vision of the All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam extended beyond matrimony. The Amma Free Bicycle Scheme gave rural schoolgirls a path to independence, literally, helping reduce school dropout rates by enabling them safer and quicker access to education. And there were every day interventions that preserved the dignity of working women — from Amma Canteens to the supply of essential household appliances. These were not mere handouts. They were enablers of comfort and safety, and ensured independence for countless families. The truth is that Tamil Nadu's women do not need slogans. They need systems. They do not want doles. They want dignity. And they know the difference between symbolic politics and sincere governance.

Success lies in evidence on the ground. Success, after all, is not measured by how many schemes are announced but by how many lives are uplifted. Empowerment does not lie in headlines. It reveals itself in evidence of healthier babies, in safer streets, in confident women in leadership, and in girls growing up with ambition instead of fear. As Tamil Nadu looks ahead, the conversation must shift. Beyond slogans and statistics, what women seek are systems that work, services that reach, and respect that endures. They deserve nothing less. Perhaps the question is not whether welfare exists but whether it is designed to perform, or to transform.

With books for company

GNS News Agency, May 31

Back in the late 1970s, our small town was proud to have a fairly large government-run public library. Nestled in one corner of our school premises, it operated from eight in the morning until eight in the evening, with a four-hour break in between. The library was presided over by a highly respected librarian — a reserved Gandhian in his mid-fifties, always dressed in a neatly pressed white kurta and dhoti. Whenever he had free time, he would be found deeply engrossed in a book at his desk. Periodically, he would rise and patrol the aisles, as if invigilating an examination. Even the faintest whispers seemed to catch his attention, so we children were compelled to maintain absolute silence — quite an unnatural state for us. The adults, absorbed in newspapers and magazines, had little inclination for conversation, so the library was naturally quiet. We school-aged boys, often sent by our parents to the library, struggled to keep still and silent. Sometimes, we were tasked with borrowing books on our parents' behalf, armed with a small chit listing the titles to be borrowed or returned. My friends and I used to feel as though we were being punished whenever our parents insisted that we spend weekends or holidays at the library. They wanted us there for obvious reasons, but at that age, we would have much preferred the playground. Skipping the library was not an option, as we feared the librarian or his assistant would report our absence to our parents — or even to the school headmaster. At times, it seemed the librarian and his assistant took their roles a bit too seriously; even the slightest noise would earn us a stern glare. Occasionally, we forgot ourselves and spoke a little too loudly, much to their annoyance and that of the other

readers. Being young, we were easily distracted, especially when tasked with reading biographies of great men, hand-picked by the librarian.

The library itself was spacious but appeared cramped, with gunny sacks stuffed under the benches — some containing new arrivals, others books destined for disposal. The walls were adorned with portraits of freedom fighters and intellectuals, lending the place an air of sanctity. I sometimes imagined the figures in those portraits would frown upon me if I wasted time there; my innocent mind nurtured its own peculiar fears.

As I graduated from primary to high school, I began visiting the library of my own accord. By then, it had become a joyful habit, thanks to the encouragement of my parents and the librarian. My respect for the librarian and his assistant grew — not out of fear, as before, but from genuine admiration. When I discussed books with them, their passion and insights inspired me. It was there that I learned never to let go of the joy of reading. The specific books recommended by the librarian that changed my reading habits were primarily biographies of great men. These selections, though challenging at first, gradually drew me into the world of reading and helped me develop a lasting appreciation for literature. The librarian's choices exposed me to stories of resilience, leadership, and moral courage, which not only broadened my perspective but also instilled in me the discipline and curiosity essential for lifelong learning. The library and its staff played a crucial role in enriching my knowledge and shaping my character. Today, I can say with conviction that I revere a library as much as a place of worship.

Time for a new India-Africa digital compact



GNS News Agency, May 31

Africa Day (May 25) marks the founding of the Organisation of African Unity in 1963 and symbolises the continent's ongoing journey towards unity, independence, and development. To usher in a new era of growth, the African Union's Digital Transformation Strategy (2020-2030) positions digital innovation at the heart of its agenda. It recognises the need for governments to adopt digital solutions that can accelerate socio-economic progress. This evolving paradigm is also reshaping India's approach to development diplomacy in Africa. For decades, India has blended state-led financing with socially embedded solutions, ranging from capacity-building through technical training to infrastructure projects backed by concessional lines of credit. Increasingly, social enterprises delivering low-cost, high-impact innovations have also become part of New Delhi's engagement, reflecting a shift toward more inclusive and adaptable partnerships. A digital partnership India's development approach is now entering a new phase, marked by more integrated, technology-driven partnerships. This builds on early initiatives such as the Pan-African e-Network, launched in 2009, which provided tele-medicine and tele-education through satellite and fibre-optic infrastructure, implemented by TCIL on behalf of the Indian government.

Expanding on this, and building on the success of its Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI) systems, such as Aadhaar, UPI, CoWIN, and DIKSHA, India is now focusing on sharing and co-creating digital solutions to tackle fundamental governance and service delivery challenges. This shift comes at a crucial moment for Africa, where many governments are advancing national and continental digital agendas, aligned with initiatives such as the Policy and Regulatory Initiative for Digital Africa and the Smart Africa Alliance, aimed at harnessing technology for inclusive and sustainable development. The contours of a digital partnership between India and Africa are already emerging. In 2021, Togo's National Agency for Identification signed an MoU with the International Institute of Information Technology Bangalore (IIIT-B) to implement the Modular Open-Source Identification Platform as the foundation for its national digi-

Why has Tamil Nadu adopted a space sector policy? | Explained

GNS News Agency, May 31

The story so far: On April 17, the Tamil Nadu Cabinet, at a meeting chaired by Chief Minister M.K. Stalin in Chennai, approved the Space Industrial Policy, thereby following Karnataka and Gujarat in formulating a State-specific document to stimulate development and woo investments in the space sector, which encompasses satellite manufacturing, launch services, and satellite services. In 2023, the Union government came out with the Indian Space Policy 2023 to provide a framework to support the space ecosystem.

How is Tamil Nadu placed?

The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) has established an ISRO propulsion complex (IRPC) in Mahendragiri of Tirunelveli district. Apart from handling and testing earth storable propellant engines, cryogenic engines and stages for launch vehicles, the IRPC conducts research and development (R&D) and technology development programmes. ISRO is also establishing the country's second spaceport at Kulasekarapattinam in Thoothukudi. This strategic initiative aims to enhance India's space capabilities and facilitate satellite launches. The State is also home to various space startups, which are working on subdomains such as launch vehicles, reusable launch vehicles, in-space refuelling, in-space manufacturing and multi-payload data fusion from satellites, as per the Space Industrial Policy. Additionally, the National Institute of Technology (NIT), Tiruchi, hosts the southern region's Space Technology Incubation Centre (STIC), playing a pivotal role in undertaking developmental projects of the ISRO.

What triggered the policy?

The Indian National Space Promotion and Authorisation Centre (IN-SPACe), a body created by the Department of Space at the Centre for promoting, authorising and overseeing the activities of Non-Government Entities (NGEs) in the sector, had suggested to the State government to come out with a document, says a senior official. Even as the State government produced the Aerospace and Defence (A&D) Industrial Policy three years ago, it identified space as one of the priority areas. Additionally, the State has a vendor base with over 250 vendors catering to the requirements of the ISRO. The Tamil Nadu Industrial Development Corporation (TIDCO) has signed a Memorandum of

tal ID system. In 2023, Zambia signed an MoU with the Centre for Digital Public Infrastructure at IIIT-B to support the implementation and scaling up of the Smart Zambia Initiative, a national effort to advance digital transformation across government services. In 2024, the Bank of Namibia signed a pact with the National Payments Corporation of India for developing a UPI-like instant payment system. Ghana, too, is linking its payment system with India's UPI to enable faster transactions. These partnerships reflect a growing interest in India's DPI model, which offers affordability, scalability, and a public-oriented design.

However, these advances of India's digital diplomacy in Africa are not occurring in a vacuum. As research by Folashadé Soulé highlights, African governments typically choose digital partners not based on ideological alignment or geopolitical loyalty, but on the partner's capacity to meet national digital priorities. In this context, China has frequently emerged as a preferred collaborator, thanks to state-backed financial mechanisms that lower the cost of adoption, especially in infrastructure-heavy domains. But it is not alone in shaping Africa's digital future: the European Union, the U.S., and India are competing for influence. What sets India apart is not just its technology, but its framing of DPI as a digital public good, open-source, and adaptable. India's DPI model offers a public-oriented alternative to a more surveillance-driven or proprietary approach. The opportunity lies in adapting these tools to local contexts through genuine state-led collaboration, beyond technology transfer. In this context, the establishment of the first overseas campus of the Indian Institute of Technology Madras in Zanzibar represents a strategic intervention. By offering advanced academic programmes in Data Science and AI and integrating with Indian private sector partners to fund scholarships, the initiative aligns technical capacity-building with broader socio-economic goals. If scaled effectively, such models could power Africa's digital infrastructure. However, challenges persist. Africa is home to the world's largest digital divide. This exclusion is shaped by the high costs of data and devices, stark rural-urban disparities in connectivity, and a persistent gender gap in digital access and literacy. Moreover, the expansion of digital infrastructure hinges on reliable energy supply, a critical bottleneck in many African countries. Meeting the growing energy demands of digital transformation will require coordinated investments in sustainable power generation and grid expansion. Regardless, the groundwork for digital governance is advancing. About 85% of African countries now have national ID systems with digital capabilities, and over 70% collect biometric data for authentication purposes. This presents a strong foundation on which to build inclusive and interoperable public digital platforms. A new India-Africa digital compact, anchored in mutual respect, co-development, and long-term institutional partnerships, could serve as a scalable framework for advancing digital inclusion.



Understanding with IN-SPACe to enable startups and established companies to launch manufacturing related activities and services, design and R&D, strategic electronics manufacturing and space-grade components.

What does Policy want to achieve?

Aimed at attracting ₹10,000 crore investments in the next five years, the document, according to the government, may pave the way for the generation of direct and indirect employment for nearly 10,000 persons in the given period.

The Policy has been prepared, keeping in mind the need for leveraging the State's strengths in electronics, precision manufacturing and related sectors, and integrating space technologies into Tamil Nadu's governance to improve citizens' quality of life. Space technologies have immense applications in departments such as disaster management, fisheries, agriculture, transport, revenue, health, and municipal administration. The State government would provide a payroll subsidy for companies that are involved in R&D or that would establish global capability centres in the space sector. The government will also notify select regions as Space Bays for offering structured packages of incentives to firms that plan to do investments below ₹300 crore. Additionally, space industrial park developers will be eligible for an industrial housing incentive of 10% on the cost of developing residential facilities within the industrial park over 10 years, subject to a ceiling of ₹10 crore. Those undertaking green and sustainable initiatives will be eligible for a 25% subsidy on the cost of capital for such initiatives, subject to a ceiling of 5 crore.

EAM Jaishankar speaks to Canadian counterpart Anita Anand, discusses India-Canada ties

New Delhi: External Affairs Minister (EAM) S. Jaishankar spoke with his Canadian counterpart Anita Anand through a telephonic conversation for the first time and discussed strengthening the relationship between the two countries. Anand made the announcement on Sunday on her social media account on X, thanking EAM Jaishankar for the "productive discussion" on Indo-Canadian ties.

"Thank you Minister @DrSJaishankar for the productive discussion today on strengthening Canada-India ties, deepening our economic cooperation, and advancing shared priorities. I look forward to continuing our work together," she wrote on X. Soon after, EAM Jaishankar confirmed the conversation with Anand on Sunday on his official X account, saying he discussed prospects of the relations between the two countries. "Appreciate the telecon with FM @AnitaAnandMP of Canada. Discussed the prospects of India-Canada ties. Wished her a very successful tenure," he wrote on X. Canada's new Prime Minister Mark Carney is pushing for deepening economic cooperation with India. Canada will be hosting the G7 Summit from June 15 to 17. Indian-Canadian lawmaker Anita Anand, 58, was appointed as Canada's Minister of Foreign Affairs earlier this month in a Cabinet reshuffle announced by Prime Minister Mark Carney almost two weeks after his Liberal Party won the parliamentary elections.

On May 14, EAM Jaishankar congratulated Anand on her appointment as Canada's Minister of Foreign Affairs. Anand was the Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry before the Canada elections and in the past has served in several roles, including Defence Minister. She replaced Melanie Joly, who is now the Minister of Industry. Prime Minister Narendra Modi had congratulated Carney on being elected as the Canadian Prime Minister after his predecessor Justin Trudeau stepped down from the role. In his message, PM Modi had stressed strong people-to-people ties between the two countries while saying he was looking forward to "unlocking greater opportunities". With Carney, it looks like India wants to turn a new leaf in bilateral ties that had nosedived under Trudeau amid unsubstantiated allegations against New Delhi related to the killing of pro-Khalistan terrorist Hardeep Singh Nijjar in June 2023. Even during his campaign, the Canadian Prime Minister said rebuilding ties with India was a priority for his government, describing it as an "incredibly important relationship". He had said Canadians have deep personal, economic and strategic ties with India. Relations between India and Canada took a big hit in 2023 after Trudeau publicly accused India of being involved in the killing of Nijjar on Canadian soil, allegations that India described as "absurd" and "politically motivated".

Death toll in Israeli strikes on Gaza reaches to 52: Medics



GNS News Agency, May 31

Israel renewed its offensive in March after ending a ceasefire with Hamas. It has vowed to seize control of Gaza and keep fighting until Hamas is destroyed or disarmed, and until it returns the remaining 58 hostagesDeir al-Balah: Israeli strikes killed at least 52 people in the Gaza Strip on Monday, including 36 in a school-turned-shelter that was struck as people slept, igniting their belongings, according to local health officials. The military said it targeted militants operating from the school.

Israel renewed its offensive in March after ending a ceasefire with Hamas. It has vowed to seize control of Gaza and keep fighting until Hamas is destroyed or disarmed, and until it returns the remaining 58 hostages, a third of them believed to be alive, from the October 7, 2023, attack that ignited the war.Israel began allowing a trickle of humanitarian aid into Gaza last week after blocking all food, medicine, fuel or other goods from entering for 2 1/2 months. Aid groups have warned of famine and say the aid that has come in is nowhere near enough to meeting mounting needs.

A new aid system supported by Israel and the United States but rejected by UN agencies and aid groups is expected to begin operations as soon as Monday, despite the resignation of the American leading the effort, who said it would not be able to operate independently.Israel says it plans to seize full control of Gaza and facilitate what it describes as the voluntary migration of its over two million population, a plan rejected by Palestinians and much of the international community. Israel's military campaign has destroyed vast areas of Gaza and internally displaced some 90 per cent of its population. Many have fled multiple times.Rescuers recover charred remainsThe strike on the school in the Daraj neighbourhood of Gaza City also wounded dozens of people, said Fahmy Awad, head of the ministry's emergency service. He said a father and his five

children were among the dead. The Shifa and al-Ahli hospitals in Gaza City confirmed the overall toll.Awad said the school was hit three times while people slept, setting their belongings ablaze. Footage circulating online showed rescuers struggling to extinguish fires and recovering charred remains.

The military said it targeted a militant command and control centre inside the school that Hamas and Islamic Jihad used to gather intelligence for attacks. Israel blames civilian deaths on Hamas because it operates in residential areas.A separate strike on a home in Jabalya in northern Gaza killed 16 members of the same family, including five women and two children, according to Shifa Hospital, which received the bodies. Palestinian militants meanwhile fired three projectiles from Gaza, two of which fell short within the territory and a third that was intercepted, according to the Israeli military.Israel plans to roll out a new aid distribution system run by a group known as the Gaza Humanitarian Foundation, made up of former humanitarian, government and military officials, that would set up distribution points guarded by private security firms. Israel accuses Hamas of siphoning off assistance, without providing evidence.The foundation said in a statement that it would begin delivering aid Monday and would reach a million Palestinians — around half of Gaza's population — by the end of the week.UN agencies and major aid groups have refused to cooperate with the planned US-backed system, saying it would force even more displacement, fail to meet local needs and violate humanitarian principles that prohibit a warring party from controlling humanitarian assistance. They also say there is no evidence of systematic diversion of aid by militants.

Jake Wood, the American heading the foundation, unexpectedly resigned Sunday, saying it had become clear that the foundation would not be allowed to operate independently. It's not clear who is funding the group.Hamas-led militants killed some 1,200 people, mostly civilians, and abducted 251 people in the 2023 attack. More than half the hostages have been returned in ceasefire agreements or other deals, eight have been rescued, and Israeli forces have recovered the remains of dozens more.The offensive has destroyed vast areas of Gaza, rendering entire neighbourhoods uninhabitable. Hundreds of thousands of people have been forced to shelter in schools and squalid tent camps for well over a year.Israel's retaliatory offensive has killed around 54,000 Palestinians, according to the Gaza Health Ministry. It says more than half the dead are women and children but does not distinguish between civilians and combatants in its count.

Putin 'has gone absolutely CRAZY! ', says Trump

GNS News Agency, May 31

Washington: President Donald Trump made it clear he is losing patience with Vladimir Putin, levelling some of his sharpest criticism at the Russian leader as Moscow pounded Kyiv and other Ukrainian cities with drones and missiles for a third straight night."I've always had a very good relationship with Vladimir Putin of Russia, but something has happened to him. He has gone absolutely CRAZY!" Trump wrote in a social media post on Sunday night.

Trump said Putin is "needlessly killing a lot of people," pointing out that "missiles and drones are being shot into Cities in Ukraine, for no reason whatsoever." The attack was the largest aerial assault since Russia's full-scale invasion of the country in February 2022, according to Ukrainian officials. At least 12 people were killed and dozens injured.The US president warned that if Putin wants to conquer all of Ukraine, it will "lead to the downfall of Russia!" But Trump expressed frustration with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy as well, saying that he is "doing his Country no favours by talking the way he does." "Everything out of his mouth causes problems, I don't like it, and it better stop," Trump wrote on social media.

The president has increasingly voiced irritation at Putin and the inability to resolve the now three-year-old war, which Trump promised he would promptly end as he campaigned to return to the White House. He had long boasted of his friendly relationship with Putin and repeatedly stressed that Russia is more willing than Ukraine to reach a peace deal.But last month, Trump urged Putin to "STOP!" assaulting Ukraine after Russia launched another deadly barrage of attacks on Kyiv, and he has repeatedly expressed his



frustration that the war in Ukraine is continuing."I'm not happy with what Putin's doing. He's killing a lot of people. And I don't know what the hell happened to Putin," Trump told reporters earlier Sunday as he departed northern New Jersey, where he spent most of the weekend. "I've known him a long time, always gotten along with him, but he's sending rockets into cities and killing people and I don't like it at all."A peace agreement between Russia and Ukraine remains elusive. Trump and Putin spoke on the phone this past week, and Trump announced after the call that Russia and Ukraine will "immediately" begin ceasefire talks. That conversation occurred after Russian and Ukrainian officials met in Turkey for the first face-to-face talks since 2022. But on Thursday, the Kremlin said no direct talks were scheduled.The European Union has slapped new sanctions on Russia this month in response to Putin's refusal to agree to a ceasefire. But while Trump has threatened to step up sanctions and tariffs on Russia, he hasn't acted so far.

Avoid costly mistakes in retirement plans

Retirement planning is a crucial aspect of personal finance. Rising life expectancy, growing prevalence of nuclear families and lack of social security for the elderly have further increased its importance. Here are some suggestions to avoid common retirement planning errors.Underestimating needsMany investors wrongly assume a steep reduction in living expenses post retirement. While some expenses like commuting may reduce, rising chances of catching diseases, risks of injuries and other age-related health risks are likely to lead to a steady increase in healthcare expenses.Another critical factor is longevity risk — the possibility of outliving your corpus. As medical advancements are likely to raise life expectancy, one should factor in a life expectancy of, at least 80 years while calculating retirement corpus.

People also tend to ignore impact of inflation on post-retirement costs. This can leave one with inadequate retirement corpus. For example, assuming average inflation of 6%, a 35-year-old spending ₹50,000 per month will need ₹2.15 lakh a month at age of 60 for the same lifestyle.One can use online retirement calculators to calculate the monthly contributions for creating the corpus. Prefer calculators that consider key factors like current monthly expenses and expected inflation rates, among other things.Not starting early

The most effective way to create a sufficient corpus without straining one's finances is to start early.For example, assuming a 12% annualised return, a 30-year-old investing ₹10,000 a month in equity mutual funds (MFs) via SIPs would have a post-retirement corpus of ₹3.5 crore in the next 30 years. Whereas a 45-year-old would require a monthly SIP investment of about ₹70,000 in equity funds for building same corpus in 15 years at the same rate of return.Avoiding equitiesVolatility leads many investors to avoid equity exposure in retirement corpus. However, equity as an asset class usually outperforms inflation rate and fixed-income instruments by a wide margin in the long term.



This makes equities the most suitable asset class for achieving long-term financial goals like creating retirement corpus.Avoid shifting entire retirement corpus to fixed deposits or other fixed-income instruments upon retirement. The long-term growth potential of equities can help reduce longevity risk to post-retirement corpus and thereby raise chances of retirement corpus outlasting lifespan. As individuals approach retirement, they should calculate sum needed to cover essential living expenses and financial goals due in the next seven years. Allocate that portion of post-retirement corpus to fixed income instruments like bank fixed deposits (with payout option) or short-term debt funds (with SWP activated) to generate regular income. The balance should be invested in equity MFs for wealth creation.Not reviewing portfolioPast performance of MFs does not guarantee future performance. Always review portfolio once every financial quarter. Compare MF scheme returns with benchmark indices and peer funds. Exit schemes that consistently underperform benchmarks indices and peer funds for over four consecutive quarters.Employer health insurance

Employer's group health insurance cease to cover staff and families after retirement. Relying on retirement corpus for the expenses can quickly deplete the corpus.

How will land ports closure impact the region? | Explained



GNS News Agency, May 31

The story so far: On May 17, the Directorate General of Foreign Trade shut down all land ports with Bangladesh for export of apparel (readymade garments) from Bangladesh. The order also shut down the northeastern land ports with Bangladesh to restrict the export of specific items from Bangladesh. The move is being interpreted as a fall-out of the downturn in relations between New Delhi and Dhaka. The two sides are yet to develop a fully functional relationship after the fall of the Hasina government last August.

What is the May order?

Stopping import of readymade garments from Bangladesh through all land ports, the order said, "Import from Bangladesh shall not be allowed from any land port; however, it is allowed through Nhava Sheva and Kolkata seaports." That apart, the order also banned export of fruit, fruit flavoured drinks, processed food items (baked goods, snacks, chips and confectionery), cotton and cotton yarn waste, plastic and PVC finished goods except pigments, dyes, plasticisers, and granules, and wooden furniture from Bangladesh through land ports of Assam, Meghalaya, Mizoram and Tripura. The same goods were also banned from entering India through the land customs stations of Changrabandha and Fulbari. The order has clarified that import of fish, LPG, edible oil and crushed stone from Bangladesh will remain unaffected.

What led India to issue this order?

India said the order was aimed at ensuring reciprocity in trade with Bangladesh. On April 13, Bangladesh's National Board of Revenue imposed a ban on the import of cotton yarn from India through land ports. That apart, Bangladesh also stopped export of Indian rice through the Hilli land port in West Bengal. Indian officials further said that Bangladesh had been carrying out aggressive checks of Indian trucks over the past several months. All these factors were taken into account in stopping the entry of readymade garments through Indian land ports. In all, there are 24 operational land ports between India and Bangladesh, and several other crossings are being developed.

How is India justifying the decision?

The order came into immediate effect on May 17, officials said. However, the order and the list of items on it are expected to be reviewed from time to time. The sea ports too are not expected to remain open for all items from Bangladesh as there will be mandatory checks and reviews of all items from Bangladesh exported through Indian sea

Where does the RBI's surplus come from? | Explained

The story so far: Putting an end to much speculation, the Reserve Bank of India's Central Board on Friday (May 23, 2025) announced that it had decided to transfer ₹2.69 lakh crore to the Central government as a surplus for the year 2024-25. This is a record high transfer, 27% higher than the ₹2.11 lakh crore transferred the previous year, which itself was a record at the time.

What had the government budgeted for?

This ₹2.69 lakh crore is also higher than what the government itself budgeted — ₹2.56 lakh crore — as dividend or surplus from the RBI, and the public sector banks and insurance companies. With the RBI's share itself exceeding this amount, this means the government's total collections from this category is likely to be far in excess of what it budgeted.However, things have not always been so easy for the government when it comes to the RBI's surplus. There have been strong arguments on both sides in the past on what should be done with the surplus the RBI earns, including some reportedly caustic remarks by Prime Minister Narendra Modi himself.

Where does the RBI get its surplus?

Before getting into the past controversy, it's important to first understand how the RBI earns money, and also why what it transfers to the government isn't called a 'dividend'. The RBI is not a company in the traditional sense with shareholders, and so it cannot issue dividends.But it is a 'full-service' central bank, meaning that not only does it target inflation, issue currency, and regulate the banking sector, it is also the last resort lender to the government of India and the various State governments. The RBI can earn significant profits from some of these functions. For example, the process of issuing currency allows for the RBI to earn something called seigniorage. Seigniorage is basically the difference between the face value of a currency and the cost it took to produce that currency. When the RBI issues currency, say, a ₹500 note, the commercial banks have to 'buy' these notes from the central bank at the full face value (in this case, ₹500) even though it might have cost a fraction of that to actually produce that note.

This counts towards the RBI's revenue. Then, the central bank also lends money to the Central government, State governments, and commercial banks with interest. This interest, too, adds to the RBI's revenue. Third, the RBI makes investments in other countries' bonds as well, not only earning interest on these, but also potentially benefiting from currency exchange rate fluctuations.According to the Reserve Bank of India Act, 1934, after the RBI has made provisions for bad and doubtful debt and has met all its expenses, including any provisions it needs to make towards buffer funds, "the balance of the profits shall be paid to the Central Government". The debate, thus, is on the size of the buffer the RBI should maintain.

What kind of buffer levels does the RBI maintain?

The main buffer fund the RBI maintains is called the Contingent Risk Buffer (CRB), which is basically a safety net in the event of a financial stability crisis.In 2018, a committee was set up under the chairmanship of former RBI governor Bimal Jalan to determine the RBI's Economic Capital Framework (ECF), including how big the CRB should be. At the time, the committee recommended that the CRB should be in the range of 5.5-6.5% of the RBI's

ports. The Indian side further claimed that Bangladesh has been cherry-picking issues and that several comments by top leaders indicated that they were treating the northeast as a "captive market" for Bangladesh's products, while Indian goods are not being given transit. Citing Prime Minister Modi's speech on the northeast, Indian officials said the northeast is integral to the BIMSTEC (Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation). The "equal market space now available in the resource-rich northeast is expected to give a fillip to manufacturing and entrepreneurship in the region under the Atmanirbhar Bharat schemes and policies," they said.

How has Bangladesh responded?

Bangladesh has not issued any official response so far though off the record Bangladeshi officials have expressed disappointment over the way this step was initiated by the Indian side. They said Bangladesh was not intimidated about Indian plans and that they got to know of the decision through media reports which caught traders and transporters unawares.To India's accusation of Bangladesh unilaterally stopping India's cotton yarn and rice exports, Bangladesh officials said that these moves were enforced to control corruption on their side. Commerce Adviser S.K. Bashir Uddin of the interim government of Bangladesh has said a preliminary review is on about the impact that the Indian order will have on the economic prospects of Bangladesh. He said that in terms of furniture and agro products, the impact on Bangladesh will not be widespread, but the impact on readymade garments is likely to be significant.

Will India's order affect Bangladesh's trade with Nepal and Bhutan?

India claims that the order will not affect Bangladesh's trade with Nepal and Bhutan. However, it is understood that overland trade blockade will naturally impact flow of orders from Bangladesh to Nepal because of frequent disruption. The order has also created a ripple effect making investment planners careful before venturing into Bangladesh.

Is the decision to shut land ports part of a larger issue between India and Bangladesh?

Indian officials say the order is a "message to Bangladesh" in response to remarks regarding India's northeast made by interim government chief Mohammed Yunus in China during the March 26-29 visit, which were unacceptable. In a meeting with Chinese business houses, Prof. Yunus had described the northeast as a "landlocked" region that is suffering from developmental bottlenecks, urging China to access the region through Bangladesh. He had pitched Bangladesh as the "guardian of the ocean" suggesting that Bangladesh's coastline is available to China to develop industrial and commercial links with India's northeast. Indian officials have said that the closure of land ports (Integrated Check Posts and Land Customs Stations) is also a message to the interim government of Bangladesh which has warned towards Pakistan, accused of exporting cross-border terrorism to J&K. Indian officials said the order to restrict readymade garments was taken as it will affect nearly \$700 million worth of textile exports from Bangladesh to India. Though it is a small part of the total \$50 billion worth of exports from Bangladesh, it is expected to send a message to the global community about Bangladesh's moves.



balance sheet. This was adopted by the RBI in 2019.The Jalan committee also recommended that the ECF be reviewed every five years, which is what the RBI's central board just completed doing. The central board decided that the CRB range would be widened to 4.5-7.5% from 2024-25 onwards.During 2018-19 to 2021-22, the RBI kept the CRB at 5.5% of its balance sheet, due to the COVID-19 pandemic and its impact on the economy. This was then hiked to 6% in 2022-23 and 6.5% (the maximum limit at the time) in 2023-24. For 2024-25, the RBI board has decided to keep the CRB at the new highest limit of 7.5% of the central bank's balance sheet.The profits of the central bank have been such that — despite this higher provisioning — it could still manage to transfer a record ₹2.69 lakh crore to the Central government.

Have these transfers happened in the past without controversy?

In short, no. While the surplus transfers haven't been the sole reason for acrimony between the RBI and the Ministry of Finance, it has certainly played a significant part.Take, for example, the statement by then RBI Deputy Governor Viral Acharya in 2018 in which he lamented that the RBI was "neither an independent nor an autonomous institution" and that governments that do not respect the central bank's independence will "come to rue the day they undermined an important regulatory institution".It was never officially clarified what this was about, but reporters covering the beat at the time knew a large part was about the government demanding large transfers of surpluses, and the RBI resisting.Then, there's the explosive passage in former Finance Secretary Subhash Chandra Garg's book We Also Make Policy, in which he recounts that — during a meeting with then RBI governor Urjit Patel in September 2018 — PM Modi told Mr. Patel that he was like a "snake who sits over a hoard of money".Both Mr. Acharya and Mr. Patel resigned soon after their disagreements with the government. The matter subsequently died down, especially once the Jalan committee formula was adopted.

Are such large transfers the new normal?

The higher transfer this year was on account of higher foreign exchange sales by the RBI, higher earnings on its foreign exchange assets and from its liquidity management tools.As Madan Sabnavis, chief economist at the Bank of Baroda, noted, the RBI's foreign exchange sales — a significant driver of profits — may not be at the same level next year.However, on the other hand, the RBI has also now provided itself a wider band for the CRB. So, if next year it decides to keep it at the lower end of 4.5%, then it could have a larger amount left over to send to the government.

Navigating floods in Bengaluru: A natural way forward



The first FIR, stemming from Mr. Jathedi's complaint, invokes Section 152, which penalises acts "endangering sovereignty, unity and integrity of India". This provision closely mirrors the language of the colonial-era sedition law under the now-repealed Indian Penal Code—an offence the Supreme Court placed in abeyance in 2022, citing its incompatibility with the "current social milieu" and its susceptibility to misuse against dissidents. Additional charges in the same FIR include Section 196(1)(b), which penalises acts that disturb communal harmony and public tranquillity; Section 197(1)(c), which targets "imputations [and] assertions prejudicial to national integration"; and Section 299, which criminalises "deliberate and malicious acts intended to outrage religious feelings." The second FIR, filed on Ms. Bhatia's complaint, invokes two further offences: Section 79, penalising "acts, words or gestures intended to insult the modesty of a woman" and Section 353, which pertains to "statements conducing to public mischief". Of these, Section 152 alone prescribes a prison term of up to seven years, while the others are punishable with imprisonment of up to three years. Senior advocate Kapil Sibal, appearing for Mr. Mahmudabad, contended that his client harboured no criminal intent and that his statements were an expression of patriotism. However, Justice Kant observed that, *prima facie*, certain words used by the professor appeared to carry

The benefits of this approach go beyond reducing flood risk. Nature-based solutions can support biodiversity, enhance groundwater recharge, mitigate urban heat, and create opportunities for local employment and community stewardship. These co-benefits align closely with Sustainable Development Goal 11, which promotes inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable cities. However, despite their potential, such interventions often remain limited in scale. Key barriers include the absence of standardised design frameworks, limited documentation of long-term impacts, and a disconnect between pilot initiatives and citywide planning or investment decisions. Addressing these gaps requires a structured and evidence-based implementation strategy. Rigorous pilot studies, coupled with monitoring and evaluation, can generate the performance data needed to inform design standards and build confidence among stakeholders. Integrating these findings into municipal planning frameworks that are supported by cross-departmental coordination and targeted funding will be critical for moving beyond demonstration projects toward systemic change. Ultimately, the aim is to transition from an old model that seeks to quickly dispose of rainwater to one that values its retention and reuse. This shift will help the city manage stormwater more sustainably, while also contributing to water security and climate resilience. The knowledge and tools already exist. The next step is to apply them through a deliberate and collaborative process that brings together science, policy, and practice. With careful planning and commitment Bengaluru city can lead by example in demonstrating how cities can adapt to their changing water realities. Rather than merely coping with the impacts of heavy rainfall, the city has the opportunity to reimagine its relationship with water by transforming a challenge into a platform for innovation, equity, and long-term sustainability.

"dual meaning" and questioned his motives, asking during the proceedings why he was seeking "cheap popularity" at a time of national crisis. While acknowledging the professor's right to free expression, the judges stressed that this freedom must not be exercised in a manner that causes "hurt" to others. Accordingly, the court directed him to join the investigation and extend full cooperation. It instructed Additional Solicitor-General S.V. Raju, appearing for the State of Haryana, to ensure that no further FIRs are registered in relation to the two contentious posts. The Director General of Police, Haryana, was also ordered to constitute a three-person SIT comprising senior IPS officers from outside both Haryana and Delhi to examine and interpret the true meaning of the posts. The interim relief of bail was made conditional on Mr. Mahmudabad surrendering his passport and refraining from commenting on or writing about the two posts under investigation, as well as from expressing any opinion on the Pahalgam terror attack or Operation Sindoor. 'Unpatriotic' speech protected The Constitution permits restrictions on speech only on eight narrowly defined grounds under Article 19(2), which includes incitement to an offence and disruption of public order. The Supreme Court has consistently held that the state cannot impose restrictions beyond these constitutionally prescribed limitations. In 2015, in the case of Shreya Singhal v. Union of India, the court struck down Section 66A of the Information Technology Act, 2000, holding that vague grounds such as "annoyance," "insult," or "hated" cannot justify the criminalisation of speech. It affirmed that speech which "offends, shocks, or disturbs" remains protected under Article 19(1)(a), and any restriction must satisfy the test of reasonableness under Article 19(2). More recently, in Kaushal Kishore v. State of Uttar Pradesh (2023), a Constitution Bench reiterated that the grounds enumerated in Article 19(2) are exhaustive. No additional restrictions—however well-intentioned—can be read into the constitutional framework. The judges underscored that "no one can either be taxed or penalised for holding an opinion which is not in conformity with the constitutional values". "I do not believe there is anything inherently objectionable in either of Mr. Mahmudabad's posts," Justice Gautam Patel, former judge of the Bombay High Court, told The Hindu. "Nothing in them appears to violate the parameters set forth in Article 19(2). Even if the posts are complex or open to varied interpretations, constitutional ethos demands that the reading favouring the right to free speech must prevail." He further observed that while the state must be afforded an opportunity to present any incriminating material, an alleged deficiency of "patriotism" cannot serve as a legitimate basis to criminalise speech. Inconsistent precedents As recently as March, the Supreme Court laid down clear standards for the registration of FIRs under Sections 196, 197(1), and 299 of the BNS, while hearing a petition filed by Congress MP Imran Pratapgarhi, who had been booked for a social media post quoting one of his poems. A Bench comprising Justices Abhay S. Oka and Ujjal Bhuyan underscored that, in such cases, the impact of the spoken or written words must be assessed from the perspective of "reasonable, strong-minded, firm and courageous individuals,"

The maths of how India's coastline lengthened without gaining new land

The more recent updated measurement — performed by the National Hydrographic Office (NHO) and the Survey of India — used electronic navigation charts at a much finer scale of 1:250,000. Preparing these charts requires the use of technologies like geographic information systems, satellite altimetry, LIDAR-GPS, and drone-based imaging.

Bashar al-Assad is gone, what's happening in Syria now?



above all, fraternity. No wonder the government and its institutions often found ways of using the Constitution as an instrument of repressive control rather than reasoned regulation. If today the government is undermining the Constitution, it is due to the deep-rooted rejection of the idea of limited government. The last 75 years stand testimony to our penchant for sacrificing constitutional morality at the altar of the wisdom of rulers. This line of attack often invokes national interest, collective good, welfare, etc. to underplay the importance of constitutional morality. Against this backdrop, the third attack has often been through attempts to amend, change, reform, review — and now, Indianise the Constitution. In his speech in Parliament, the PM spoke of controversial amendments. If he meant the Emergency-era amendments, then most changes have been wisely undone subsequently. If the PM had the amendments from the late Sixties in mind — the 24th and 25th amendments for instance — then those have been corrected by the 1973 Kesavananda Bharati ruling. But as is customary these days, no analysis is complete without blaming Jawaharlal Nehru. PM's attack too implied the mistake Nehru made in the matter of the First Amendment. While it is a political tragedy that a PM presiding over the most vicious application of existing laws targeting dissent should remind us of this, let us face Nehru's mistake. Nehru's mistake was that he was a child of the democratic movement which believed in the capacity of the power-holders to be constrained — it trusted their discretion and ability for self-regulation. Therefore, he sought to empower the state with a belief that democratic politicians will not trespass and also that institutional mechanisms will function against misuse. Both were misplaced. What needs to be learned from this mistake? One lesson could be the need to evolve political consensus on adequate protection for citizens from the state and ensure that unseemly effects of the First Amendment are undone. Since both the BJP and the Congress stand by the Constitution, that should not be difficult. Pending this, all parties can pledge that they will not harass dissenters, arrest citizens at the drop of a hat, oppose bail except when evidence or witnesses are likely to be tampered with, or unleash government agencies against opponents. Moreover, self-doubt rather than self-assurance should mark law-making and its implementation when there is a clash between state power and citizen rights. Most readAs for the government, lofty praise for the Constitution sits ill with a Chief Minister coming out in support of a judge who openly defied the Constitution. The criticism about amendments could not have come at a more inopportune moment when the government is set to fundamentally rewrite parts of the Constitution in its ambition to streamline the electoral cycle.

real-time, high-resolution images directly to physicians. Unlike traditional endoscopy, PillBot offers a non-invasive, sedation-free alternative that enhances both patient comfort and diagnostic accuracy. Dr. D Nageshwar Reddy, Chairman of AIG Hospitals, said "This cutting-edge technology represents a monumental leap forward in the field of gastroenterology. PillBot combines precision with patient convenience, offering a glimpse into the future of diagnostic care". The top gastroenterologist in the country said that PillBot's ability to provide high-resolution insights without the need for invasive procedures marks a pivotal moment in patient care. "By integrating robotics and AI, we are paving the way for more efficient, accurate, and patient-friendly diagnostic solutions that can potentially redefine GI care in India by not only saving lives but also making diagnosis cost-effective." The doctors at AIG Hospitals have also made it clear that at present, the PillBot technology is still undergoing clinical trials and has not yet received FDA approval and its use in India is currently restricted to research purposes.

Greenko, Adani, JSW to build bulk of India’s 51 GW pumped storage pipeline



Three players—Greenko, Adani Green, and JSW Energy—are set to develop nearly two-thirds of India’s planned 51 gigawatt (GW) pumped storage hydropower capacity by 2032, according to new data from the Central Electricity Authority (CEA). Of the total capacity expected to come online, over half—57 per cent—will be located in Andhra Pradesh and Maharashtra. Together with battery energy storage systems (BESS), pumped storage is set to play a key role in balancing India’s power grid amid increasing integration of variable renewable capacities like solar and wind. Pumped storage projects typically use two reservoirs at different elevations. During periods of low demand, solar power is used to pump water from the lower to the upper reservoir. This water is released back down to generate electricity during periods of high demand in non-solar hours.

At present, India has less than 5 GW of installed pumped storage capacity, and plans to increase it over ten-fold by 2032. The CEA expects 39 projects to get commissioned by then, totalling 51.24 GW. Around 10 GW is currently under construction, including 3 GW slated for commissioning in the current financial year. These projects were either self-identified by private developers, awarded through competitive bidding, or allotted to public sector enterprises. Of the total pipeline, Hyderabad-based Greenko Group is set to develop 13.2 GW (25 per cent), Adani Green

11.4 GW (22 per cent), and JSW Energy 7.7 GW (15 per cent), according to data with the CEA. The above companies did not respond to requests for comment. Greenko, which currently has a small portfolio of run-of-river hydro-electric projects, will commission its first 1,680 MW pumped storage project in Pinnapuram, Andhra Pradesh in September this year.

In an earnings call on April 29, Adani Green executives said the company is “all set for gigawatt capacities” in pumped storage. Stressing on the economic case for storage projects, Raj Kumar Jain, head of business development, said, “The IRRs (internal rate of return) are better than what you get in a normal plain vanilla solar or wind project by close to couple of percentage points.” In an earlier call, executives said pumped storage is the “next frontier for a higher return portfolio”. Adani Green’s first 500 megawatt (MW) project, located near the Chitravathi dam in Andhra Pradesh, is expected to be commissioned in 2027. In addition to Greenko’s maiden project, two other pumped storage projects are scheduled for commissioning this year—THDC India’s 1,000 MW project in Tehri, Uttarakhand, in October; and TANGEDCO’s 375 MW project in Kundah, Tamil Nadu, by December. Pumped storage projects typically have longer gestation periods—around five years—due to the need for environmental clearances and more complex civil works. However, unlike BESS, pumped storage remains the dominant form of energy storage globally, accounting for over 90 per cent of installed capacity. While BESS offers faster and more flexible deployment, it faces supply-side risks, with much of the global battery manufacturing concentrated in China. Recognising the trade-offs and the need for energy storage at large, Indian policymakers are pursuing a balanced strategy that supports both technologies. India has pumped storage potential of 176 GW, with around 40 per cent—70 GW—in Maharashtra and Andhra Pradesh alone. By 2032, 16 GW will be developed in Andhra Pradesh and 13 GW in Maharashtra.

‘Market is growing... we need to raise surveillance and enforcement actions,’ says Sebi chairman Tuhin Kanta Pandey

As markets have remained choppy amid US President Donald Trump’s tariff war and geopolitical concerns including an armed conflict between India and Pakistan, the new chairman of the Securities and Exchange Board of India Tuhin Kanta Pandey said that faith and conviction in the Indian markets is fairly strong from the domestic retail, mutual fund as well as the institutional levels. “On April 2, when the US announced reciprocal trade tariffs, we were the least affected and we were the fastest to recover,” he said in an interview with

The first issue is that we have demonstrated a lot of resilience in the Indian markets. This is a time when there has been a change... the new administration and then April (US) tariff orders. So, practically, from March 1 onwards, there has been a lot of activity and volatility, in terms of policy. I think the markets have held up fairly well in India. The way Indian markets handled April 2 when it (US reciprocal tariffs) was announced, we were the least affected and we were the fastest to recover. The market is now fairly counterbalanced by FPIs (foreign portfolio investors) and domestic institutional investors (DIIs). From the domestic retail, mutual fund as well as the institutional levels, I think faith and conviction in the Indian markets is fairly strong.

Indian markets, I would say, have been very resilient in these (uncertain times). Resilience also means that even that day (when armed conflict broke between India and Pakistan) when we were expecting turmoil, there were no extraordinary margin calls. There was, of course, a decline in the market, but then it recovered. While we were keeping it (markets) under watch, there were no extraordinary movements, the settlements were smooth, people could come in and exit with no difficulty, and there was no panic. This is a sign of the maturity of Indian markets. In my opinion, ease of entry and ease of exit are two sides of the same coin. If you have an ease of exit, it also ensures ease of re-entry. Secondly, regarding the buffers — if large calls are taken, then do you have (enough) buffers in place? In terms of margin money, we ensure that nobody is playing with client funds. That is a very big security if you are investing as your funds are secure. We also do not allow anybody to play with client securities. This gives retail investors a confidence that their securities and money are safe with them.

There was an issue of conflict of interest within Sebi in the recent past. When you announced some measures, you also mentioned that you will make this conflict of interest public. How far has it progressed? I had promised that we will set up a committee and a (high-level) committee has been constituted. They are already working quite hard and they have meetings and they are taking inputs. So in the next three months they will have the report.

Do you think Sebi’s image took a dent, which led you to form this committee and that too for the board members?

I thought that narrative is there, so we have to address it. My issue was that let us address the narrative head-on. If you have a problem, in the sense that there are some questions, then we need to answer, but more in a system way. It cannot be sporadic. So, when I came here, we said we need to address (conflict of interest). I found that actually the issue required addressing, because there was also a lot of need and confusion here. In terms of conflict of interest, whenever you see the 2008 document that we had for the chairman and the board, and then there are employee regulations. I found there were virtually no public disclosures. So, some public disclosure may be there, may be of assets, may be of property, at least that’s the minimal expectation. They were also not there. The conflict of interest in SEBI’s case is much wider. It’s a very difficult concept... virtually the listed companies are everywhere. If Sebi officers are working, then where should they recuse and where should they not recuse? If you say that my cousin’s son and others are working or employed somewhere, I will not write orders. Is it okay? So you have to be really defining and clearly saying where the recusal will come, how the recusal will be recorded, and how the recusal will be maintained. Therefore, what we suggested is (to) let an independent committee, with eminent, well-meaning people and lots of experience from different sides, have a look at it and suggest a framework. This framework then will come to the board and our board will take a view, and we will implement that framework. It will help... not only Sebi, but will also really put to rest this narrative that — we have something to hide. What we have to hide, we should hide in a manner, which is actually sort of mandated — means while you are investigating, you have to be hiding and you have to reveal only when your investigation is complete. But in terms of conflicts also, what is to be reported, what is not to

be reported, to whom (it is) to be reported, how (it) is to be reported — this framework needs clarity. Otherwise, there will be confusion.

Which areas in the market require regulatory changes?

This has to be worked out with industry and concerned participants. So, different departments in Sebi are engaged with different interlocutors. Normally, they have committees, associations of different kinds, and also investor associations. There could be a difference between the large and small brokers also. They are taking up larger consultations. Wherever these points will be identified, they will work out on the time frame in which they can be handled, in terms of simplification. It is time to take a relook. Some of the regulations have already been changed and modified, but many of them have not been. It is an active process which is going on.

There have been concerns raised on market manipulation, especially in the small-cap segment. What is Sebi doing to address it?

The market is growing and it has grown quite a lot. We need to accordingly increase our surveillance and enforcement actions. These have been strengthened a lot. If you see the capacity which we had five or 10 years back, it has now increased considerably, both in terms of tools and manpower. The workforce that we are hiring is young and quite technologically savvy. If you really look at some of the Sebi’s orders, you will find that a great deal of investigative work has gone into it, because we have to eventually prove to the court that we have caught it and this is the manipulation that is there. I would say that enforcement, surveillance and analysis will become our focus areas. When you do a wider analysis, you will find the kind of people who are doing it (manipulations). Something can come as complaint-based and something can emanate from alerts. If we are trying to do things analytically, we can get a lot of alerts, and from those alerts we can do further analysis, which means that we do not have to wait for any complaint. We can ourselves look into what is happening, like if there is any ‘pump and dump’ case going on. I think we need to keep on developing a risk-based system.

Sebi is now re-examining F&O norms. Which are the areas that need review?

We are watchful of the data. This (F&O segment) is one area which we have now taken up as an activity. We will be constantly watching and analysing the data in terms of what is happening in the market. In the weekly options on the expiry day, there was a kind of extreme activity happening — just before the expiry or on the expiry day. It was almost akin to some kind of betting. Certain sanitisation measures such as terms of size of the contract, margins, and even restricting the number of expiry days in a week, were taken. These were part of the consultation papers and we have received a lot of comments. We have had discussion on this and we will take new measures based on the inputs.

When will the T+0 settlement (trades are settled on the same day) cycle be fully implemented?

People are asking how we have managed T+1 (settlement cycle). We did it first and the US followed. Many countries do not have T+1 cycle.

The T+0 was not intended to be mandatory. Technology has been tested in some respects, but in order to take it further, we must also ensure that the largest number of participants must be comfortable and you have to ensure that everyone comes in. FPIs have to come in, and they should be comfortable too. There are time zone issues, and there is also an issue of moving the money at the right time. If you want everything on the same day, then the level of preparation for every participant has to be of that order where everyone is comfortable. For us to move from T+2 to T+1, it has taken almost a year in bits and pieces. So, we are giving it a little pause, at this moment, on proceeding from T+1 to T+0. Let us stabilise T+1. If (T+0) is not mandatory and very few people are using it.

Are you using artificial intelligence (AI) to upgrade your system?

Yes, we do. AI is both a strength for us as well as a threat to our system. We have to see how AI will also make our markets vulnerable. AI also gives us a tremendous amount of facility and we are using it. We are able to process IPO documents much faster because AI is being used. Even IOSCO (the International Organization of Securities Commissions) has taken note of this issue — it is a worldwide problem.

A medical oxygen access gap SE Asia must bridge



Oxygen is a life-saving essential medicine with no substitute. Because of the complexity of the industrial production process, there are many challenges in access to medical oxygen such as availability, quality, affordability, management, supply, human resources capacity and safety. Some five billion people around the world lack access to safe, quality, and affordable medical oxygen.

The Lancet Global Health Commission on medical oxygen security highlights a stark reality — that South Asia and East Asia and the Pacific have the highest unfulfilled demand for medical oxygen (the oxygen service coverage gap in these two regions is 78% and 74% respectively), and there is a clear and urgent need for action to rectify this. The COVID-19 pandemic exposed vulnerabilities in oxygen infrastructure, particularly in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs). While that crisis did trigger emergency interventions to alleviate the situation, long-term progress has been slow. A World Health Organization (WHO) report (2022), “Promising practices and lessons learnt in the South-East Asia Region in accessing medical oxygen during the COVID-19 pandemic”, points out that sustained investments and policy commitments are required to ensure that oxygen is available where it is needed most. WHO’s Access to Medical Oxygen Resolution and The Lancet Global Health Commission on Medical Oxygen Security provide a road map for scaling up solutions, but its implementation requires urgent action. Governments, global health agencies, industry and civil society must come together to close the oxygen gap. This is an opportunity to create lasting and equitable access to a life-saving medical intervention.

Challenges hindering oxygen access Several systemic barriers hinder the availability of medical oxygen, preventing its integration into health-care systems. The first is the shortage of equipment — only 54% of hospitals in LMICs have pulse oximeters and 58% have access to medical oxygen. Consequently, this gap in basic monitoring and supply infrastructure leads to delayed diagnoses, inadequate treatment and preventable fatalities, a deficiency that intensifies dramatically during severe respiratory outbreaks, let alone pandemics. Without the necessary diagnostic tools, health-care providers struggle to detect and manage oxygen deficiencies effectively.

However, the issue extends beyond equipment availability. The financial burden associated with increasing oxygen access remains a major obstacle. Bridging the global oxygen gap requires \$6.8 billion, with South Asia alone needing \$2.6 billion. The reality is that many LMICs face competing health-care priorities, making it difficult to allocate substantial funding toward oxygen infrastructure. Therefore, efforts to improve oxygen access risk being short-lived without sustainable financing mechanisms. Compounding the challenge is the acute shortage of trained biomedical engineers and technicians. Even when oxygen plants and concentrators are available, a lack of skilled professionals to install, maintain and repair them can lead to frequent breakdowns. These deficiencies exacerbate disparities in access, especially in rural and underserved communities, where alternative solutions are often unavailable.

There needs to be a long-term and multi-pronged approach that integrates innovation, investment and policy action. Transparency, data-driven decision-making, and a strong policy framework will be crucial. The WHO Access to Medical Oxygen Scorecard is a key tool in tracking progress and ensuring accountability, playing a pivotal role in monitoring progress on the WHO Oxygen Resolution.

Politics of the palm: A protest wrapped in a festival in Tamil Nadu

Tamil Nadu’s tryst with toddy, a byproduct of the State’s official tree, the palmyra, has been steeped in complexity since the implementation of the Prohibition Act in 1937. For years now, toddy tappers have petitioned the government to legalise toddy, categorising it as a health drink. The government has steadily rejected the demand, continuing to criminalise the tapping of this product, all while several regimes have toyed with its legalisation.

What might seem like a moot point to the rest of the State has had a direct impact on the lives of those who scale the rough trunk of a tree that thrives in barren landscapes. Think of a palm tree climber. A visual of a tired man with ropes around his hips and legs sweating profusely whilst a blazing sun shines, somehow emerges. A festival in Villupuram’s Narasinganur titled Pana Kanavu Vizha [The Palmyra Dream Festival] village wished to change this narrative of a tired toddy tapper. On May 24, when an oppressive humidity took over the village and not a single blade of grass moved due to the stillness, around 2,000 people from different parts of the world, danced, performed martial arts, scaled the palm, drank padaneer and toddy, and chose to picnic, all whilst celebrating the palm. Although it seemed like a gala on the outside with fire dances and ice candy, the event concealed within its folds, a vociferous protest. Associations protecting the rights of toddy tappers from across the State, were present, providing monetary aid to the cause.

D. Pandian, at the forefront of the Tamil Nadu Palm Tree Climbers Protection Association, is the convener of the Pana Kanavu Vizha. The Tamil Nadu Prohibition Act, 1937, outlines the penalties that come with the extraction of toddy. It is a bailable offence, he says. For years now, the criticism that the government has raised against toddy tapping and its sale, especially since its classification as an alcoholic drink category after brief stints of government-run toddy shops in the 1970s and 1980s, is the adulteration. Pandian says that those brewing spurious liquor and adulteration deserve punishment. However, toddy tapping is an entirely different business.

An article in The Hindu from September 30, 1970, shows that the demand has existed for years. “A deputa-tion of the Tamil Nadu Kal Venduvore Kazhagam, led by Dr. M. A. Karim, met the Chief Minister, Mr. M. Karunanidhi, on Tuesday and presented a memorandum pleading for exemption of toddy from the Prohibition Act,” the article says. “They tell us that they do not know how to regulate or do quality checks of our products. We tell them to come

The resolution calls for reporting ‘on progress in the implementation of this resolution to the Health Assembly in 2026, 2028 and 2030’. National governments should develop medical oxygen scale-up plans with support from WHO, to strengthen oxygen ecosystems, allocate resources effectively, and address infrastructure gaps. Tailoring these strategies to health-care needs can create sustainable, resilient oxygen delivery models. In South-East Asia, WHO has facilitated intra-regional cooperation between countries to build capacity. In partnership with Nepal’s National Health Training Center, WHO facilitated training for biomedical engineers and technicians, leading to the installation of state-of-the-art PSA oxygen plants in Bhutan. The training will ensure sustainable operations and maintenance, and this model of cross-border collaboration can be replicated across LMICs.

Infrastructure is insufficient Ensuring a stable oxygen supply requires strong partnerships between governments, the private sector and international organisations. WHO emphasises local manufacturing to reduce import dependence, cut costs, and improve accessibility. Decentralised production can address supply imbalances and enhance last-mile delivery.

Innovations such as portable oxygen concentrators, solar-powered generators, booster pumps and community-based hubs can bridge accessibility gaps, especially in remote areas. Integrating these solutions into health-care plans can ensure that life-saving oxygen reaches every patient. Power disruptions hinder oxygen production in South-East Asia, as in many LMICs. In these low-resource settings, solar-powered oxygen systems are a cost-effective and low-maintenance innovation that ensures uninterrupted supply, lower costs and reduced grid dependence. Ethiopia and Nigeria have successfully implemented solar-powered oxygen delivery systems in remote health-care facilities, improving access and saving lives. The South-East Asia region should promote and invest in the solarisation of oxygen plants to ensure a stable supply amid energy insecurity and health crises. Strengthening oxygen ecosystems

Bridging the oxygen gap requires a unified, multi-stakeholder approach. Governments should lead the way by integrating oxygen access into universal health coverage and emergency preparedness plans. A clear regulatory framework should be established to ensure the quality and the safety of medical oxygen, along with standardised protocols for storage, transportation and distribution. These measures will be needed for sustaining long-term availability of quality medical oxygen. The private sector must also invest in local production and supply chain optimisation. Industry players have a crucial role in developing cost-effective, scalable solutions that cater to the specific needs of LMICs. Further, global health agencies must ensure that oxygen access remains a funding priority, facilitating financial support for infrastructure development, equipment procurement and workforce training.

Academia and research institutions can contribute by focusing on low-cost, innovative oxygen solutions tailored for LMICs. Prioritising affordability, efficiency and adaptability will be key. Using digital technologies for real-time monitoring, predictive demand analytics and supply chain management can further enhance the efficiency of oxygen delivery systems. The oxygen crisis is a solvable problem that demands coordinated action, sustainable financing, and strong political will. Our success in installing PSA oxygen plants in countries demonstrates that strategic investments, cross-border collaboration, and workforce training can yield long-term solutions. To maximise COVID-era investments in PSA oxygen plants, countries must ensure operational readiness. Ideally, donors who have already shown support for these initiatives during the pandemic should continue to support ongoing efforts. Surplus capacity should be distributed to peripheral facilities using booster pumps. WHO stands ready to provide technical support. As The Lancet Global Health Commission on medical oxygen security reminds us, access to medical oxygen is not just a health issue but also a matter of equity and human rights. Oxygen should never be a privilege but rather a fundamental right for all. Instead of crisis-driven approaches, sustainable investments in oxygen infrastructure can — and must — be made, ensuring that no one is left behind in their moment of need.



with their equipment. We do not want to follow a model like that of Kerala’s where toddy shops are run by the government. We do not want toddy shops at all. Those who grow and tap palm though, should be allowed to tap it and sell it to those who seek it,” he says.

Toddy is usually tapped between December and May but peak season tends to be during summer months. Each tree produces between two and five litres of toddy and each litre is sold for ₹100 in a hush-hush way. Padaneer, another liquid byproduct of the tree, is priced at ₹120 because the tree requires a coating of alkaline before tapping. “It is also far more effort to tap for padaneer,” says T. Vinayagam, district head of the association’s Tiruvannamalai division. Until recently, the practice of paying off the police to tap toddy in a clandestine manner existed across the State. “But why should we be criminalised for climbing a tree? Do you know the number of times the police have come and pulled our fathers and grandfathers off the trunk of the tree? It was horrific to watch.

That’s why there are so few tree climbers today,” says V. Ranjini, the head of the women’s wing of the Tiruvannamalai district’s association. Ranjini adds that the children as young as three, are given toddy as it is said to have several health benefits. An article from The Hindu dating back to July 2, 1931, by Colonel J N Chopra, from the School of Tropical Medicine, Calcutta, speaks of the vitamins benefits available in a toddy drink. Harris Karishma, who scales the palm treat with grace swears by the healing powers of toddy which she claims cleared her skin condition. It is a video of her inviting people to this festival that went viral on social media. “Today, even climbing a tree is political but it is in my blood. That is not going to change,” she says.

‘As a batting unit, collectively, we couldn’t do well’: KKR captain Ajinkya Rahane



GNS News Agency, May 31

Kolkata Knight Riders captain Ajinkya Rahane said that underwhelming batting efforts throughout the season cost KKR their title. However, he also said that the pressure of expectations on the batters might also have played a factor in them not performing well.

“It’s just that for us as a team, three-four guys were out of form. Where we faltered was at the batting end. As a batting unit, collectively, we couldn’t do well. Unfortunately, two-three players were going through that phase for us. And that was the reason we couldn’t do well...But again, they

are pretty much experienced enough to handle this situation. I’m sure they will come back stronger next year...Rinku (Singh), Raman (Ramandeep Singh), all the players, they will learn from the mistakes and come back stronger,” Rahane said after the match against Sunrisers Hyderabad on Sunday.

“When you have a couple of good seasons, as an individual, you put a lot of expectation on yourself. You put pressure on yourself. And I feel that was the case for most of the batters, to prove, you know, that how good I am. And it is completely natural. I’m sure our players, will learn from the mistakes. It’s a lot to learn from this season, as a team. Not for any particular individual, but for everyone. So many learnings from this season,” he added.

Kolkata ended their season on a low note when they were thrashed by SRH by a massive 110 runs which resulted in them finishing 8th in the table. SRH had posted a 278/3, the third highest IPL total in history, thanks to the third fastest century by Heinrich Klaasen. Chasing, KKR were all out for 168 runs.All their top batters who had clicked last season like Venkatesh Iyer (average 20.28), Andre Russell (18.55), Rinku Singh (29.42) and Ramandeep Singh (9.40) had a tournament to forget while auction buy Quinton de Kock couldn’t plug in the gap left by Phil Salt.

After winning Round 1 at French Open, American star Tommy Paul recalls how he realised his Ford truck was repossessed for missing payment

GNS News Agency, May 31

American Tommy Paul won his first round match at French Open. But it was some intense emotional drama back home in Florida that brought him a lot of joy.Seeded 12th at Roland Garros, Tommy’s truck was repossessed by authorities in Florida after he accidentally missed three payments. On a day that he battled rain and sunshine alternating at Court Simonne-Mathieu to beat Elmer Moller of Denmark 6-7 (5), 6-2, 6-3, 6-1, there was more than a set deficit he came back from.

ESPN reported that the 2023 Australian Open semifinalist’s truck was taken over while he played the semi-finals at the Italian Open earlier this month. Typically for an American, the shenanigans resulted from changing banks and forgetting to properly adjust the automatic payments for his Ford F-150.“I missed I think it was like three payments,” Tommy was quoted as saying by ESPN. “They came and took it. I didn’t know it happened like that. I didn’t know how quick they would come and grab it — like in the middle of the night. Now I’m watching all these repo shows, where they come in and swoop trucks at 1 in the morning. It’s definitely a funny experience. To be in Europe while it happened is even crazier. But we did get it back,” he said.Tommy was asked by his trainer — who was back in Florida — to check his security camera footage, for routine



delivery packages and inform him if they needed to be picked.“There were no packages — and no truck!” he told the press in high pitched American tone of flabbergast on Sunday. The New Jersey born then went through his whole video footage. “I’m like, ‘What the hell is going on? There’s a tow truck coming and taking my car!’ I thought it was stolen at first,” he was quoted by ESPN and Associated Press.

Turning it into a reel he took to social media and posted the black-and-white footage of his property being towed away from his driveway. It was slow mo truck tow to the soundtrack of Celine Dion’s “My Heart Will Go On.”

Kevin de Bruyne – the uncelebrated Messi of the under-appreciated golden era of Manchester City



GNS News Agency, May 31

Five minutes remained on the clock when the fourth official raised the digital substitution board. It flashed No 17. A wave of applause erupted in Craven Cottage, the home ground of Fulham, as Kevin de Bruyne, his crown of golden hair flapping in the West London breeze, glided onto the pitch. For the one last time in the sky blue shirt of Manchester City.By then, there was no task left for him to perform on the day. Manchester City had extracted a 2-0 lead and secured a spot in next season’s Champions League. There was no rolling the clock, a farewell trick or a tribute. Perhaps, it was the finest tribute his colleagues could offer him. To simply enjoy the last five minutes of his glorious career, soak in the light of his deeds. There was nearly a throw-back moment when he almost slid a pass from the instep of his right boot and found Phil Foden but for a defender’s flailing leg. De Bruyne smiled wryly. It was not quite his evening. But there were hundreds of others, afternoons, evenings and nights, he could call his own.The history of Manchester City’s greatest era is the biography of two great men. Pep Guardiola and de Bruyne. The creator and the conduit. The soul and the heart. When de Bruyne hit the high notes, he was a rhapsody, strumming the perfect beat with his feet. He was no routine passer who performed to practised tunes. But mastered the toughest metre in football orchestra—to see the pass that no one sees. He, like the great pass-metronome Xavi, could also see the pass no one else imagined, or after its execution, no one else believed. The responses of crestfallen defenders were not marvelling at a piece of unstoppable genius, but a sense of shock as to how the space existed, sort of a phantom space. It was right there, right here, yet no one saw. Often, the pass was a gentle roll along the ground, the ball not bending and bursting but whistling through a straight line, through a cavalcade of frozen impulses. The work of a genius operating on the outer reaches of imagination, intelligence and a perception of space and time. He could conjure the magical too, the curlers and benders that wickedly hooped around the corners, the supersonic thunderbolts from the distance, the pace not diluting the precision. He created, scored, disrupted and defended, making him one of the most difficult players to classify in the conventional sense. He was a midfielder. Or was he? He was a right-sided forward, but was he? Was he an 8 or 10? He wore No 17, a figure that breaks conventional number-role correlation.Manchester City’s Kevin De Bruyne waves to supporters after his final home game. (AP Photo/Dave Thompson) Manchester City’s Kevin De Bruyne waves to supporters after his final home game. (AP Photo/Dave Thompson)

attacker or at the centre as a more conventional playmaking 10. Guardiola primarily utilised him as one of twin free No 8s, with the equally intelligent David Silva. The pair was play-making, but in a deeper role, just in front of the defensive midfielder in a high line.The Spaniard’s departure repurposed him into something of an extinct inside right, a realm from where he pulled the strings of the most dominant side in England in the last decade. It was his most fruitful period as both creator and goalscorer, and the golden period of Guardiola, winning four league titles on the spin, realising the European dream and achieving the treble. And de Bruyne was the golden boy.His shapeshifting expertise complicated the lives of defenders and markers because it was hard to define exactly where he was playing, which meant it was not clear whose job it was to neuter him. To borrow from cricket lexicon, he operated in the corridor of uncertainty, in half spaces.As Guardiola calibrated and recalibrated his systems and structures, so did de Bruyne, blending seamlessly into positional swaps. The manager would employ him as False 9, wide man, deep man. He excelled in every role. “I have always changed positions and I don’t expect any different. It’s all the same to me. It’s all about the way you interpret it,” he once said.

Perhaps, this is how great footballers perceive the game, without the shackles of roles and spaces, regimented structures and refined systems. Football as an instinct. Two-footedness, a rare band in itself, helped. So exemplary that he once racked a hat-trick with his weaker foot, the left leg, against Wolverhampton Wolves in 2022. It helped even more that his brains processed the patterns on the field faster than those around him—the path of the ball, the weight on it, the curl and drop. He could combine sophistry with power and pace too.KdB’s moment of farewell was graceful too, leaving the stage before he became a burden to the club. KdB’s moment of farewell was graceful too, leaving the stage before he became a burden to the club. (AP)In his valediction at Etihad, Guardiola hailed him as the second best passer he has managed, after Lionel Messi. There was no sense of immediacy in him placing him above Xavi and Andres Iniesta. But because he was, at his peak, more influential than the Spanish pair. The stats capture the glory of his passing efficiency— 171, in 421 games. He was a sniper-eyed goal-scorer too—netting 108 goals in all competitions. In the Premier League, only Ryan Giggs has assisted more often, and in the last decade no player in Europe’s top five leagues has assisted more goals than him.In full bloom, de Bruyne, was a treat for his colleagues. Erling Haaland, whose droughts coincided with De Bruyne’s time on the injury table, would say: “I’m not even looking at him because I know where the pass will come.”Yet, he wore his fame lightly, without ego or tantrums, his words as precise as passes (often soft-spoken he once tore into his underperforming Genk teammates: I’m ashamed of them. I suggest that those who don’t have a desire to play just leave.” his demeanour as elegant as his far-post crosses. When he needed a pay-raise, he didn’t resort to the usual shenanigans of sparking a transfer rumour, but went straight to the CEO with a dossier of his achievements and politely demanded a revised package.His moment of farewell was graceful too, leaving the stage before he became a burden to the club. As Guardiola’s Barcelona would always be identified with Messi, his City would be connected with de Bruyne, the golden man with the golden hair. And leaves as the best in the sky blues of Manchester City and one of the finest that has graced the Premier League stage. One that saw the space no one

Why Nadal climbed to highest point at Roland Garros on crutches in 2004, how he pronounces Barcelona & other French Open memories



GNS News Agency, May 31

His career flew and took off at Roland Garros like no other place, but returning to the red clay, Rafael Nadal said though it was true he was a “very good tennis player”, but for other things in life, he was rooted and much loved as “just another human person”.In a sit-down interview with The official French Open website, rolandgarros.com, Nadal spoke of his memorable moments at the Arena that has become synonymous with the athlete.

He recalled his debut, his favourite year beating Federer and the final goodbye beating Sasha Zverev in 2024 even as his greatest peers Messrs Federer, Djokovic and Murray, assembled at the 2025 start of French Open to a Beatles worthy applause.Ironically, his most remembered years, the “emotional ones” were when he suffered the most, the foot hurt like crazy, but he fought to win his 14 titles.Recalling his first year, Nadal said he had hit the highest perch of the Roland Garros Philippe-Chatrier centre court in 2004 while on crutches and decided he could return to win. He never stopped winning for the next 18 years.“First time I visit Roland Garros was 2004. I was in crutches. It was a strange feeling because I was supposed to be playing already that year,” he told rolandgarros.com. “But I had a tough time, my first foot injury. I remember arriving in Roland Garros, that place I used to watch on TV all my life. Even on my crutches, I remember going at the highest part of the stadium. And saying, ‘Hopefully next year, I will be here to do good things.’”Soon enough he returned in 2005, and it was in his baggy white pirates and green sleeveless tee that he won his first title.

“2005 was special. It was my first title at Roland Garros and first Grand Slam title. At the same time, things went very quick because I had started the year being around something like 50 in the world and few months later I arrived at Roland Garros with the feeling that I was maybe not the favourite, but one of the favourites because I started winning a lot of matches and I had a great clay court season at Monte Carlo, Barcelona and Rome. So I arrived in Paris with that confidence. But when I saw the draw I thought, “Wow this is tough.” But then things went well and I was able to win my first title which was unforgettable for me,” he said. The rolandgarros.com video interview has the most charming enunciation of Barcelona (pr: Baarkhelona) as he went down memory lane.Nadal thrice beat Federer initially in French finals – 2006, 2007, 2008. Nadal chose his most emotional of the three.“For me the most important title against Federer was 2006 because I came back from a very difficult injury on my foot. I didn’t know if I would be able to play at that level that I later played at in my career. So 2006 was most emotional,” he said, the year he donned his Blue-black tee.2008 was arguably his most fluent march to the titles, but the comfortable saunter means it wasn’t particularly emotional, Nadal told rolandgarros.com.“People also talk a lot about 2008 performance. And maybe it’s true that it was the year I played better. Or I was at a different level than the rest of the players. But the truth is if I remember that year when I played so well, but for me it was not that emotional because the results had been more or less com-

‘I saw him play on a seaming pitch and he didn’t do well’: Ex-TN coach says Sai Sudharsan’s technique not equipped for England Tests

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In his last outing for the side, Sai Sudharsan cracked his maiden First-Class century in English conditions while batting at No. 6. (Surrey Cricket)In his last outing for the side, Sai Sudharsan cracked his maiden First-Class century in English conditions while batting at No. 6. Tamil Nadu’s rising star Sai Sudharsan made the cut for India’s 18-member Test squad on Saturday, with his maiden call-up into the red-ball side coming ahead of a daunting five-match tour to England.

The left-hander’s batting technique has received several plaudits in the IPL 2025 season, where he has seemingly raised the bar in his white-ball repertoire. However, Sudharsan’s existing batting techniques would not be enough to withstand the challenges of the Dukes ball in England, feels former Tamil Nadu coach Sulakshan Kulkarni.Kulkarni, who worked with Sudharsan during the 2023-24 season when he was in charge of the TN team, picked up on his underwhelming First-Class record and said the youngster needs to reinforce his technique to counter the moving ball.“His domestic record is not great. When I was the coach, I saw him play on a seaming track in at least two matches. And he didn’t play well there. His technique against the moving ball needs to improve,” Kulkarni was quoted as saying by Times of India.

The former Mumbai captain who has had minor county stints in the past said that Sudharsan will have to curb the range of his strokes to succeed against the English attack.“He has a tendency of playing away from the body

fortable. So from internal side, I remember all the years when things had been much more difficult,” he said.

The 2017 LA Decima (The Tenth) had been unforgettable. “I came back in 2017 and the year started well. I arrived at the tournament with the confidence that I am playing well. I felt I was a big candidate to go through and win. And that’s what happened. In the end I played a very solid tournament. I didn’t know if I lost a set in that whole tournament but I played well. I arrived at last match of the tournament with the right energy and confidence. For me to win the No 10 had been amazing . What Roland Garros did for me at that trophy ceremony with the crowd with my name and No 10. It was one of the most special moments of my life,” he said.He also was grateful to French Open for recognising his bond with Uncle Toni and getting him to present the trophy to Nadal. “Toni was most important person in my life. And to have him give me that trophy was super special and unforgettable. Back then he already said it was his last year being my coach and that made the moment more emotional. I can’t thank French Open enough for letting me live that moment with my uncle on court,” he said. A big flag in red & green was flying in the stands that day with Bravo Rafa written.

Nadal’s last title at the French came in 2022 and he was literally in tears in the hotel room at 5 am with unbearable pain. “2022 had been a very rough year. My body was starting to give me clear signal that things were not working in a proper way. But I was playing well. That year I won in Australia. I don’t know how honestly because that was probably the most unexpected title in my career. But then I was playing really well. Winning in Apacupo, playing final in Indian Wells. But at Indian Wells I had a stress fracture of my rib,” he recalled.Then he started to have problems with his foot. “I played in Rome but I was simply on one leg and was very worried if I would be able to compete in Roland Garros. So we decided to put some injections of anaesthesia on the foot to try to sleep the foot,” he told Rolandgarros.com.It was his 300th Grand Slam match and he wrapped up a win in 3, 1, 4 against Corentin Moutet to reach the third round. “I finished the match with Moutet. But immediately after the match I remember going back to the hotel and I was not able to put my foot on the floor. So I was crying at 5 in the morning on the bed thinking my career was over. But then in morning I was talking to my doctor and we found a way to sleep the nerve and because of that we were able to go the whole way to the final,” he recalled.As the years rolled on, he knew tge inevitable. “I wanted to give myself a chance to play my last tournament in 2024. But ofcourse there was a large percentage (improbable). But that day against Sasha (Zverev) was unforgettable because I had my chances, I enjoyed the game but it will always be impossible to describe the feelings. And the crowd was huge. The support I received. ...butbi had that feeling since long time ago so it didn’t surprise me because everything I played at Roland Garros the support of people was highest possible,” he said adding, “At the end of my career, I said it at the beginning but I want to say it again. I feel the love of the people was the most important thing for me in the place I love the most.”Defining his legacy hevtold rolandgarros.com that it was about determination, passion and love. “But also hard work and about having as much success as possible but with positive values. I consider myself a normal guy, that’s it. If that is being humble that’s okay. I am from a small village of Majorca. I am a familiar guy that grew up around positive examples in terms of hard work, showing me how things need to be done. I was lucky to have good people, going family next to me so it was positive education,” he said.His endless charm meant his mic drop was actually a mic neatly placed in its slot with a hoot of a line. “In the end I’m only a very good tennis player, that’s it... that’s true,” he accepted. “That’s a thing. For the rest of things in life, I’m just another human person.”



while the secret of success in England is to play late and play the ball right under your nose. He has to curb some of his strokes and should play straight and close to the body. He has to work to get the technique right before the tour,” Kulkarni added.Sudharsan has previously featured in two County stints with Surrey in 2023 and 2024, averaging 35. In his last outing for the side, Sudharsan cracked his maiden First-Class century in English conditions while batting at No. 6. Overall, the 23-year-old averages 39.93 for 1957 runs in 29 FC outings since his debut in 2022.

Leading the batting charts in the IPL, Sudharsan has racked up 679 runs in 14 innings for the Titans. Post the IPL Playoffs, Sudharsan and skipper Gill are slated to participate in a match for India A against the England Lions starting June 6 before the Tests begin two weeks later.

We made lot of errors as a bowling unit: Rahane

HYDERABAD: Kolkata Knight Riders Captain Ajinkya Rahane said that while the Sunrisers Hyderabad batted well, his team made errors.“They capitalised on the loose balls and hit the good balls as well. Their intent was great. (Taking pace off) We discussed it, going wide too, but if the bowler doesn’t execute it well, batters like Klaasen capitalise,” Rahane said in the post-match briefing after his team lost to SRH on Sunday night.“Through the season, we had our moments. Two or three close games which we didn’t play well. We gave our best, in a format like this you have to be switched on always,” the India star said.“If we’d taken those moments, we’d have been one or two. No regrets, all gave

their best. We’ll come back strong next year,” Rahane said. “We made a few errors while bowling”: KKR skipper Rahane reflects on their defeat against SRH“ We were short on our execution part, but also made a lot of errors throughout the innings as a bowling unit. Throughout the season, we had our moments, we had our chances, two to three close games, which we thought we didn’t play well as a team,” Rahane said.“Apart from that, we tried our best, we gave our best. A format like this, you have to be switched on everytime. This format is really tough and this IPL is really tough,” he said.“But, no regrets, lots to learn from this season. We will come back stronger next year,” Rahane said

Paresh Rawal opens up on Akshay Kumar's lawsuit for exiting Hera Pheri 3: 'My lawyer has sent an appropriate response, all issues will be laid to rest'

Actor Paresh Rawal has finally opened up on his longtime co-star Akshay Kumar initiating legal proceedings over his sudden exit from their film Hera Pheri 3, the third installment of the franchise which kickstarted with the cult comedy Hera Pheri in 2000. Kumar also serves as a producer on Hera Pheri 3.

"My lawyer, Ameet Naik, has sent an appropriate response regarding my rightful termination and exit. Once they read my response all issues will be laid to rest," Rawal tweeted on Sunday morning. Ameet Naik is best known for representing Amitabh Bachchan and Anil Kapoor in landmark cases. My lawyer, Ameet Naik, has sent an appropriate response regarding my rightful termination and exit. Once they read my response all issues will be laid to rest. On Friday, Akshay Kumar's lawyer opened up on initiating legal proceedings against Paresh Rawal. "I think there will be severe legal consequences. It's of course hurt the franchise. We have written to him letting him know that there are a lot of legal consequences involved. There have been expenses incurred towards the cast, towards the crew, towards leading senior actors, logistics equipment, and shooting of the trailer," Pooja Tidke, Joint Managing Partner of Parinam Law Associates, told PTI. Tidke said Rawal had clearly indicated his involvement in the project through a social media post in January. "Thereafter, there were contracts entered into for the shooting of the trailer. In fact, there was some portion of about three-and-a-half minutes of the film itself that had been shot. Suddenly, a few days ago, we received a notice from Paresh ji saying that he is no longer associated with the film and doesn't want to be associated with the film. So, it's taken everybody by shock and surprise, of course," she said. Reneging from a contract has "severe consequences" for the film, she added.



"There's reputational damage involved for the actors that are committed to the film, the franchise as a whole, and of course, there's a great deal of disappointment among the audience. So we're optimistic that things work out, but as of now we're facing legal issues," Tidke said. She said they have given the actor seven days to respond. "There's been a substantial amount of money already invested in the film. Shooting had begun. Of course, everyone's synchronised schedules are now disrupted. Professionally, it's affected everyone," she added. However, the details of Rawal's legal response are yet to be ascertained. Paresh Rawal portrayed Baburao Ganpatrao Apte in the first two installments of Hera Pheri, which released in 2000 and 2006, respectively. The first film was directed by Priyadarshan, who is also attached to the third installment. The second part was helmed by Neeraj Vora, who also wrote the first two parts. He died in 2017.

Raveena Tandon helps daughter Rasha Thadani get her first tattoo: 'Make the Trishul bolder'



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Actor Raveena Tandon's daughter, Rasha Thadani, made her Bollywood debut this year with the film Azaad. Recently, the "Uyi Amma" girl got her first tattoo—with her mom by her side for the special moment. The star kid got a butterfly tattoo with a Trishul at its center, inked on the back of her neck. A clip shared online shows the mother-daughter duo at the tattoo studio as Rasha gets inked. In the video, Rasha Thadani shared that she was inspired by her mother, who has multiple tattoos. "Yeah, definitely my mother's comfort with getting tattoos has inspired me," Rasha said in the clip, adding, "But I've always wanted one." She was also seen reacting to her tattoo after the session. The clip was shared a couple of days ago with the caption "When talent runs in the family— @rashathadani 's first ink at our studio, following in mom @officialraveenatandon 's footsteps (and

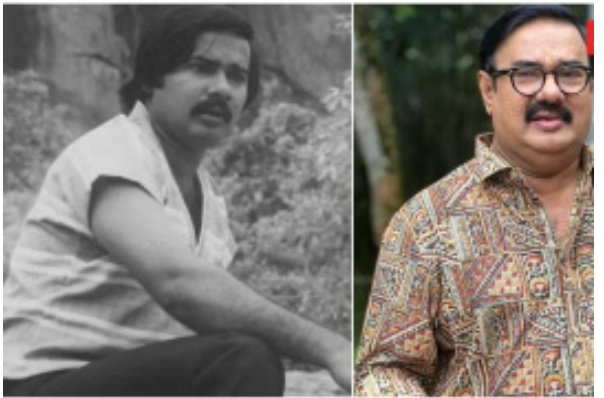
tattoos!)." In the video, Sanjay Dutt is seen exiting a Mumbai restaurant amid heavy rain. Outside the restaurant, the actor shares a light-hearted moment with the paparazzi, casually telling them, "Jaa na re. Ghar jao. Baarish ho rahi hai (Go home, it's raining)." A photographer responded, saying they were waiting for a "naiya ladki." Curious, Sanjay Dutt asked, "Kaun?" When the paparazzo replied, "Rasha," the actor, still puzzled, asked again, "Kaun?" Another photographer then clarified, "Raveena Tandon ki beti (Raveena Tandon's daughter)." Sanjay Dutt and Raveena Tandon have shared screen space in several films, including Jeena Marna Tere Sang (1992), Zamane Se Kya Darna (1994), Aatish (1994), Vijeta (1996), and more recently, KGF: Chapter 2. The duo will reunite in the upcoming film Welcome to the Jungle, which also features Akshay Kumar, Riteish Deshmukh, Paresh Rawal, and Jacqueline Fernandez, among others.

Maniyanpilla Raju recalls witnessing a director assaulting his 'prominent actress' wife: 'As I was about to leave, he heard the sound of the door and turned around...'

Despite knowing Maniyanpilla Raju had witnessed the assault, the filmmaker spoke to him casually after that, as if nothing unusual had happened. Maniyanpilla Raju also recalled being screamed at by renowned filmmaker AB Raj when he went to meet him for the first time.

In a shocking revelation, actor-producer Maniyanpilla Raju recently claimed to have once witnessed a prominent filmmaker physically assaulting his wife at their residence. Raju mentioned that the incident occurred when he had visited their home to request a role in an upcoming film. He added that, despite knowing Raju had witnessed the assault, the filmmaker spoke to him casually, as if nothing unusual had happened. "I won't name the director. He had married a prominent Malayalam actress. I had gone to their house looking for a role in his new film. I walked up to the second floor and rang the bell. No one responded, so I gently pushed the door open. That's when I saw the director assaulting the woman. As I was about to leave, he heard the sound of the door and turned around," Raju recalled during a chat with Rekha Menon. When the director asked the reason for his visit, Raju replied that he had come seeking an acting opportunity in his new film. "He casually said that the work on that project was already over," he added.

During the chat, Maniyanpilla Raju also recalled being screamed at by renowned filmmaker AB Raj when he went to meet him for the first time. "I had a letter of recommendation from my teacher with me. When I reached AB Raj Sir's house, a girl in a petticoat called me inside. I walked into the hall, and she pointed towards a curtain. When I moved the curtain and said, 'Sir,' he asked, 'Who is this?' I told him I had come to act. He retorted, 'Get out. Did you come here to get into the bedroom?' I explained that his daughter had



called me in, and he snapped, 'Do you obey whatever young girls say?!' Then his son-in-law saw me and asked why I looked disturbed. I explained the situation and admitted I may have been wrong to enter. He took the letter inside." However, Raj's behaviour towards him changed immediately after learning the content of the letter since it was penned by Raju's teacher, ASA Sami, whom Raj considered a "guru". "I scolded you only because you came inside the house uninvited," he told the actor. The relationship between them that commenced that day landed Raju a role in the filmmaker's Seemantha Puthran, featuring Prem Nazir and Jayabharathi in the lead roles. He also shared that the little girl in a petticoat who led him into Raj's bedroom was none other than his daughter, Saranya (Saranya Ponvannan), who grew up to become a National Award-winning actor.

Raveena Tandon confronts Farah Khan for talking about her fight with Karisma Kapoor, denies involvement: 'It was classroom politics'

In her latest vlog, Farah Khan visited Raveena Tandon's farmhouse along with her cook, Dilip. During an interaction between the two, Raveena confronted Farah for talking about her infamous fight with Karisma Kapoor. Raveena and Karisma reportedly had a spat during the shooting of the 1994 films Andaz Apna Apna and Aatish.

Raveena questioned Farah and said, "You went everywhere and said that fights were happening on set. When did we fight?" Farah maintained her stance and responded that it was "true." When Raveena asked about her own involvement in the fight, Farah clarified that the actor "didn't do anything" to anyone. Raveena further added, "What did I do? I was sitting with dancers who were my friends and they were sharing non-veg jokes." Farah quickly changed the subject and said, "Now everyone's kids are going in the same school and we keep meeting on annual days." Raveena agreed, saying, "We were also kids at that time. We were 20-21 years old. It was classroom politics and we had to face that."

They then talked about the current generation of actors and whether they have conflicts among themselves. Farah refused the notion and said, "These days they are all sterile." Raveena disagreed, saying, "No, these things still happen, not that frequently, but they do happen." She also pointed out that like today's actors are constantly surrounded by paparazzi and need to maintain a good public image, actors from the previous generation also faced intense media scrutiny that often led to sensational headlines. She also noted that since actors back then didn't have so-



cial media, they lacked the platform to share their side of the story directly with fans, a benefit that today's actors have. Earlier, during her appearance on Koffee with Karan in 2007, Farah had addressed the fight between Karisma and Raveena and said, "I was once doing a song with Karisma Kapoor and Raveena Tandon, long ago, in a film called Aatish. They were both having some kind of teenage spat. They were hitting each other with their wigs."

She continued, "They were wearing these wigs with plaits and beads in them. One was hitting, the other was stamping her foot with her heel. It was quite childish. I am sure they will laugh about it now." In a 2012 interview, Raveena had shared that things between her and Karisma eventually normalised, especially since their daughters — Rasha Thadani and Samaira Kapoor — attended the same school. "Since our girls go to the same school, we end up bumping into each other and have bonded well. It's easier to hang out and discuss our kids," she had said.

Vivek Dahiya opens up about getting addicted to alcohol: 'Every night I used to sit with a glass... it became a lifestyle'

Vivek Dahiya and Divyanka Tripathi are not just renowned television actors but also one of the small screen industry's most beloved power couples. Although they weren't paired together in it, the title of their first collaboration, Yeh Hai Mohabbatein (This Is Love), could not have been more fitting for the journey their lives would take together.

Despite being married for nearly a decade now, the couple continues to be surrounded by persistent rumours and speculation about their relationship. Like many celebrity couples, Vivek and Divyanka have also often found themselves at the centre of baseless separation and divorce rumours. Now, the Qayamat Ki Raat actor has stepped forward addressing such speculations, stating that, over the years, he has learned to handle such matters with maturity. "Now I am more prepared as I have seen and lived this phase, where I have learnt so much. And I also understand that, being a public figure, you are subjected to certain perspectives and judgments. Whether you like it or not, it's a part and parcel of being in the industry. I deal with it sensibly now," he shared during a chat with Bollywood Bubble.

Nonetheless, considering the couple has faced negativity from certain corners of social media ever since making their relationship official in early 2016, Vivek admitted that dealing with it wasn't easy at first. "It was a hard time for us. It's very easy to judge, and it's part of our innate nature. Whenever we look at someone who is an outsider... There was a world that existed here and then there was a new element who came about... I felt like all eyes were on me," he shared. "When the two of us were together and we announced it, there were judgments and some of them reached us, and some we didn't know. There were instant judgments, but it also solidifies you when. That happens;



they come together. And that's what happened in the initial phase, and we proved that they were wrong." Vivek also spoke about how he started drinking during COVID. "Every night I used to sit with a glass and watch content, I would not do anything stupid, it became a lifestyle," added Vivek. "Slowly, frustration started crawling in and then I started witnessing a pattern and realised this is not something I would like to continue doing. Lockdown will eventually get over and I don't want to find myself to be an alcoholic by the end of it all. When things suddenly become normal and everyone is excited to be going back to work, here I'm stuck with a belly, no hair, dark circles. That's when I decided this needs to go," said Vivek. While Vivek Dahiya was last seen as a contestant in Jhalak Dikhla Jaa Season 11, Divyanka Tripathi's most recent appearance was in the streaming series The Magic Of Shiri, wherein she starred alongside Jaaved Jaferi. The couple tied the knot in a traditional wedding ceremony in July 2016.

Paresh Rawal's lawyer accuses Akshay Kumar of not delivering Hera Pheri 3 screenplay, says his exit due to 'overall disorganisation'

Paresh Rawal's exit from Hera Pheri 3 has led to a legal tussle between him and his co-star Akshay Kumar, who is also serving as the producer of the film. After Akshay Kumar's legal team accused Paresh Rawal of unprofessional conduct for quitting the film midway, the Oye Lucky Oye actor has responded to the same and accused Akshay and his team of failing to deliver the film's screenplay or a draft of their long-form agreement to him.

According to a report in Times Now, Paresh's legal representatives have clarified that Paresh Rawal had valid and legitimate concerns over the film's level of preparedness. They spoke about responding to Akshay's legal team and said, "We have replied to the notice, and Paresh Rawal's termination is on strong legal footing. They did not deliver the story, screenplay or a draft of a long-form agreement, which was fundamental to the engagement of our client." The report stated that Paresh signed the term sheet in good faith in March, without a legal review, due to his long-standing association with Akshay. He did so after Akshay promised to send him the long-form agreement later. In April, Paresh shot the promo clip for the film but raised concerns about the urgency despite the absence of a final script or production schedule. Eventually, due to the lack of a concrete agreement and overall disorganisation, he decided to exit the film. "He has sent legal notices to Akshay Kumar, Priyadarshan, Suniel Shetty, and Paresh Rawal. The legal notice issued asked all of them not to do any promos, endorsements, or any activities related to the Hera Pheri franchise. It also stated that if they go ahead and proceed with it, it will be considered a willful breach. The notice also stated that the IP of all the characters, including Babu Bhaiya are with Nadiadwala," the source said. Akshay-Paresh's legal war After Paresh exited Hera Pheri 3, Akshay reportedly sued Paresh Rawal, seeking Rs 25 crore in damages and threatening civil and criminal action. Akshay's company claimed that they paid Rs 11 lakh to Paresh Rawal as a partial payment for the film. They also claimed that the actor had shot a promo clip, along with other videos, for the film. Akshay's lawyer Pooja Tidke, Joint Managing Partner of Parinam Law Associates, told PTI, "There were contracts entered into for the



shooting of the trailer. In fact, there was some portion of about three-and-a-half minutes of the film itself that had been shot. Suddenly, a few days ago, we received a notice from Paresh ji saying that he is no longer associated with the film and doesn't want to be associated with the film. So, it's taken everybody by shock and surprise, of course." After Akshay sent the legal notice, Paresh Rawal's legal team declared that the actor had paid back the amount of Rs 11 lakh along with 15 percent interest to Akshay's production company. Paresh wrote on X, "My lawyer, Ameet Naik, has sent an appropriate response regarding my rightful termination and exit. Once they read my response all issues will be laid to rest." According to a report in Bollywood Hungama, Paresh's total fees for the project were finalised at Rs 15 crore, and he was supposed to receive Rs 14.89 crore a month after the film's release. And since the film's release was expected to take place in 2026 or 2027, Paresh's payment would have been stalled for two years—something the actor reportedly didn't find acceptable.