

## Senior journalist Kommineni Srinivasa Rao arrested in Hyd

Hyderabad: Senior journalist Kommineni Srinivasa Rao was arrested by a team from the Andhra Pradesh Police at his residence in Hyderabad on Monday for allegedly making derogatory remarks against women from the Amaravati region during a recent television debate.A police team in plainclothes arrived at his residence in Journalists' Colony in the early hours and informed him of the arrest. At the time, Rao questioned the officials, demanding a valid reason or evidence, and alleged that it was a foisted case by the government.

## Amit Shah on Modi's leadership: 11 years of Modi govt 'golden period' of resolve, dedication towards public service

GNS News Agency, June 9

Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Monday (June 9, 2025) said the 11 years of Modi government was a "golden period" of resolve, endeavour and dedication towards public service.In Narendra Modi's third term as Prime Minister, Mr. Shah said this new India is rapidly progressing towards development and self-reliance with the power of reform, perform and transform.He said this journey of making India "number 1" in every field by bringing positive changes in the lives of the countrymen will continue.The historic 11 years of the Modi Government have been a golden period of resolve, endeavour and dedication towards public service," he wrote on 'X' in Hindi and called it 11 years of "seva" (service).

The Home Minister said the country has seen a new era of economic revival, social justice, cultural pride and national security."The Modi government has proved that when the leadership is clear, the resolve is firm and the intention is of public service, then new records of service, security and good governance are created," he said.Mr. Shah said when PM Modi took over the reins of the country in 2014, there was policy paralysis in the country.He said there were no policies, no leadership and scams were at their peak in the government the economy was in shambles and the governance system was directionless.The Home Minister said during the "11 years of seva", the speed and

## Chhattisgath Additional SP killed, other cops injured in Sukma IED blast

GNS News Agency, June 9

An additional superintendent rank police officer was killed while several other personnel and officers also sustained injuries when an improvised explosive device (IED) planted by Maoists went off in Sukma district of Chhattisgarh on Monday (June 9, 2025), said Deputy Chief Minister Vijay Sharma. Mr. Sharma confirmed that ASP Akash Rao Giripunje was killed and expressed grief over his death. Earlier the police had said that Giripunje was critically injured in the blast. "Akash Rao Giripunje, Additional Superintendent of Police (ASP)—Konta Division, District Sukma, has sustained serious injuries in a pressure IED blast near Dondra on Konta-Errabora road.

Additional SP Akash was on foot patrol duty in the area to prevent any kind of Naxalite incident in view of the call for Bharat Bandh on June 10 by the CPI (Maoist)," a police officer had said earlier..The officer added that other officers and jawans had also been injured in this pressure IED blast but did not specify their exact number. He further said that

## Can ECI announce date by which electoral-roll data of Haryana, Maharashtra will be handed over: Rahul Gandhi



GNS News Agency, June 9

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Monday (June 9, 2025) lauded the Election Commission's (EC) reported decision to share the electoral-roll data for Haryana and Maharashtra as "a good first step" and urged the poll body to announce the exact date by which the data will be handed over in a digital, machine-readable format.The Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha shared the screenshot of a media report that claimed that the EC has cleared the way

## Supreme Court stays Madras HC order halting toll collection on Madurai-Tuticorin highway

GNS News Agency, June 9

New Delhi: The Supreme Court, in an interim order passed on Monday, stayed the operation of a Madras High Court decision, which had restrained the National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) from collecting toll on the Madurai-Tuticorin national highway.A bench of Justices Prashant Kumar Mishra and Manmohan agreed to examine the special leave petition (SLP) filed by the NHAI and issued notice to V. Balakrishnan, a retired Tamil Nadu Generation and Distribution Corporation assistant executive engineer from Tuticorin district, on whose plea the Madras HC passed the impugned order on June 3.The stay order was opposed by senior advocate P Wilson, who termed toll collection "day-light robbery" since the Madurai-Tuticorin highway remained in an unsatisfactory condition.The apex court told the respondents to complete pleadings, saying that it would ex-



scale of the country's development have been changed by 'Minimum Government, Maximum Governance'. "PM Shri @narendramodi ji brought farmers, women, backwards, Dalits and marginalised to the centre of governance and created a work culture of Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas, Sabka Vishwas and Sabka Prayas instead of appeasement," he said.Mr. Shah said the 11 years of the Modi government have also proved to be a milestone in the direction of national security."Naxalism is on its last legs, peace has been established in Jammu-Kashmir and the Northeast, India now responds to terrorist attacks by entering the homes of terrorists. This shows the changing picture of India under the Modi government," he said.



the other officers were out of danger. "All the injured are being treated at Konta Hospital. Among the injured, the condition of Additional SP Akash Rao is said to be very serious and critical. The other injured are currently out of danger. Efforts are underway to transfer Additional SP Akash Rao to a higher medical centre for better treatment," the officer said.

for sharing the electoral-roll data for Haryana and Maharashtra from 2009 to 2024, following an assurance it gave to the Delhi High Court earlier in the year.In a post on X, Mr. Gandhi said. "Good first step taken by EC to hand over voter rolls." "Can the EC please announce the exact date by which this data will be handed over in a digital, machine-readable format?" the former Congress chief asked.

After Mr. Gandhi sought the EC's response on his article alleging rigging in last year's Maharashtra Assembly election, sources in the poll authority said on Sunday (June 8, 2025) that the constitutional body would respond only if the Leader of Opposition writes to it directly.They also pointed out that as part of its outreach, the EC had invited all six national parties for separate interactions. While the other five met the EC brass, Congress cancelled the May 15 meeting.Mr. Gandhi hit back at the EC on Saturday after sources in the poll panel rejected his allegation of rigging in the Maharashtra election, saying evasion would not protect its credibility but telling the truth would.In an article published in a newspaper, Mr. Gandhi had alleged "match-fixing" in the Maharashtra polls and claimed that it would next happen in the Bihar election and "anywhere the BJP is losing".

amine the matter in detail at a later stage.In its order, the Madras HC said that the collection of toll fees on the Madurai-Tuticorin national highway was "impermissible" and the road users are entitled to a "good condition" highway, and then alone they are liable to pay toll fees as prescribed by the NHAI.It ordered the NHAI authorities not to collect toll fees from the road users, who are travelling from Madurai to Tuticorin or from Tuticorin to Madurai, till such time, the road is relaid or maintained as per the standards prescribed under the National Highways Authority of India

Act, 1988.However, the bench of Justices S.M.Subramaniam and A.D.Maria Clete clarified that after the highway road is maintained in a good condition as per the standards prescribed under the law, the NHAI would be at liberty to collect toll fees from the road users.

## Sangareddy district receives much-needed rain, reviving farmers' hopes

Sangareddy: Several parts of Sangareddy district received moderate to heavy rainfall on Monday, bringing much-needed relief to farmers who had sown various crops early.The district had witnessed good rainfall during the latter half of May, prompting many farmers to sow cotton, maize, soya, and other crops early.However, a nearly 10-day dry spell left them anxious, as partial or no sprouting was observed across the region due to a lack of moisture. Monday's rain revived their hopes and brought smiles to their faces.Meanwhile, farmers who had delayed sowing were seen preparing to begin operations following the fresh showers. In Narayankhed town, which recorded heavy rainfall, some low-lying areas were flooded.

## His sacrifice always inspires countrymen: PM Modi on Birsa Munda's death anniversary

GNS News Agency, June 9

New Delhi: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday paid tributes to legendary tribal leader and freedom fighter Bhagwan Birsa Munda on his 125th death anniversary, also known as 'Balidan Diwas', calling his life a symbol of courage, sacrifice, and commitment to tribal welfare and national pride.Taking to X, the Prime Minister wrote: "Respectful tribute to the great hero of the freedom struggle Bhagwan Birsa Munda ji on his Balidan Diwas. He dedicated his life to the welfare of the tribal brothers and sisters and to protecting their rights. His sacrifice and dedication will always inspire the countrymen."

Birsa Munda, born on November 15, 1875, in Ulihatu village -- now in Jharkhand -- emerged as a formidable force against British colonial rule in the late 19th century.Despite having limited formal education, he united Adivasi communities against exploitation by British officials, landlords, and missionaries and led a socio-religious movement to assert tribal identity and rights.Known as 'Dharti Aaba' or the 'Father of the Earth' by tribal communities, Birsa Munda laid down his life for the cause of Indigenous empowerment and resistance to colonial oppression.He died at the young age of 25 in British custody but left behind a legacy of resistance that continues to inspire tribal and non-tribal Indians alike.On November 15, 2024, PM Modi had launched the



150th birth anniversary year of Birsa Munda on Janjatiya Gaurav Diwas, visiting Jamui in Bihar where he also unveiled development projects worth over Rs 6,640 crore.During the event, he released a commemorative coin and postage stamp in honour of the iconic tribal leader.Speaking then, PM Modi underlined the importance of honouring Birsa Munda's contributions, which had been "ignored for decades after Independence", and said the celebrations were a sincere attempt to bring long-overdue recognition to tribal history and heroism.The Modi government had declared November 15 as Janjatiya Gaurav Diwas to honour tribal freedom fighters and their contributions to the country's independence and identity.

## 11 years of PM Modi: Good governance of PM Modi will be written in golden letters, says J.P. Nadda

GNS News Agency, June 9

The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) national president and Union Health Minister J.P. Nadda on Monday (June 9, 2025) said that the work done under Prime Minister Narendra Modi in his 11 years in office would be written out in "golden letters".The National Democratic Alliance (NDA) government, currently at the helm, would not only complete its ongoing term fully but would also be voted back in 2029, Mr. Nadda said.The Minister was addressing a press conference at the BJP's national headquarters in New Delhi, on Mr. Modi completing 11 years at the helm. The Modi government marks its first anniversary in the third term on Monday (June 9, 2025). Mr. Modi took oath for a third term as Prime Minister on June 9, 2024."Prime Minister Modi has changed the country's political culture and started politics of performance and good governance by providing a responsible and accountable government, while the Congress-led UPA (United Progressive Alliance) regime was marked by corruption, scams, and 'appeasement politics'," Mr. Nadda said.



He listed out bold decisions by the Modi government, including the abrogation of Article 370 of the Constitution, which accorded special status to Jammu and Kashmir; the passage of the Triple Talaq Act; the Women's Reservation Act, 2023 which makes provisions for reservation for women in the Lok Sabha and the State Assemblies; and the Waqf Act."Before 2014, the previous government was full of corruption and there was a sense of negativity that prevailed across the country...But after 2014, under the leadership of Prime Minister Modi, that sentiment changed. Now people proudly say, 'Modi hai to mumkin hai (all is possible with Modi)'," Mr. Nadda said.

"People's participation has significantly increased under the Modi government because of the strong trust in leadership. If I talk about demonetisation, I remember how other political parties were instigating the public to take advantage. You may have forgotten, but I do not forget. But the common man of India stood in front of the bank for hours and supported the demonetisation decision of the Modi government. When there is trust in the leadership, the public

supports it," Mr. Nadda said.He said that under Mr. Modi's leadership, key policies, including the National Education Policy and National Health Policy, were implemented smoothly with wide support, and campaigns, including the Swachh Bharat Mission, became major public movements."This is the same country where, in the past, even Education Ministers struggled to hold press conferences together. But today, we collectively agreed on the National Education Policy, a result of one of the widest and most inclusive consultation processes in our history. Thanks to a holistic approach, we introduced a new National Health Policy smoothly, without confusion or chaos. Initiatives like Swachh Bharat have become among the most successful mass movements," Mr. Nadda said.Responding to queries on what his response would be to the remarks by the Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha, Rahul Gandhi on the electoral integrity of the results of the Maharashtra Assembly election, Mr. Nadda accused Mr. Gandhi of playing the role of an "irresponsible" Opposition leader by asking baseless questions."May God bless him with good sense," Mr. Nadda said, when asked to specify what he meant.To a question on the Opposition doubting the BJP-led government's stability after the party lost majority on its own in the 2024 Lok Sabha election, Mr. Nadda quipped that the Modi government would not only complete its term in this tenure, but also in the next.

## Crime Branch arrested because CM ordered, says lawyer of RCB's marketing head to HC



GNS News Agency, June 9

The CCB sleuths arrested Nikhil Sosale, the marketing and revenue head of RCB, because Chief Minister Siddaramaiah ordered the arrest, submitted his lawyer to the Karnataka High Court on Monday The court was hearing a petition filed by Sosale challenging his arrest on June 6.Sosale was arrested at Bengaluru Airport, as he was heading to Dubai, on an FIR filed in the aftermath of the stampede incident near M Chinnaswamy Stadium, which claimed 11 lives.Sosale's lawyer had also argued that he was not arrested by either Ashok Nagar police (where Sosale stays) or Cubbon Park police (under whose jurisdiction the stadium falls) but by the Central Crime Branch of Bengaluru."It was not part of the

investigation, just because the CM said CCB arrested him, though they are not investigating the case," he contended.When the petition came up for hearing on June 6 afternoon session, Justice S R Krishna Kumar, who heard the petition, had declined an interim relief from arrest and had adjourned the case to June 9.

## Telangana Gaddar Film Awards to Be Held Grandly at Hitex on June 14

The Telangana government, under the leadership of Chief Minister Revanth Reddy, is set to revive the tradition of honoring cinematic excellence with the Telangana Gaddar Film Awards. The much-anticipated awards ceremony will be held on June 14 at the Hitex Exhibition Center in Hyderabad.The event marks a significant moment for the Telugu film industry, as it celebrates the best of cinema released in 2024, along with notable contributions from actors, technicians, and filmmakers. In a special gesture, the awards will also recognize exceptional films that received censor certification between June 2014 and December 31, 2024, acknowledging a full decade of creativity and storytelling.



# Indian Chronicle

English Daily

## The Ethics of Virtual Influencers

In an era where authenticity is currency, it's ironic that some of the internet's most influential personalities aren't even real. Virtual influencers, computer-generated personas operated by teams of designers, marketers, and AI engineers, have begun to dominate digital platforms once ruled by human content creators. They collaborate with brands, appear in fashion campaigns, promote social causes, and amass millions of followers. But as their presence grows, so too does an urgent ethical debate: What does it mean when influence is no longer rooted in lived experience, but in carefully simulated narratives? The phenomenon of virtual influencers isn't new, but its current sophistication and scale are unprecedented. Lil Miquela, arguably the poster child of this movement, emerged on Instagram in 2016, posed as a 19-year-old Brazilian-American robot model, and has since partnered with major brands like Prada, Samsung and Calvin Klein. Her carefully curated persona of activist, fashion icon, and artist presents a veneer of relatability and edge. And it works. She's not just accepted, she's adored. But that adoration raises troubling questions. Who is accountable when a virtual influencer peddles unrealistic beauty standards, misrepresents a marginalised identity, or expresses political views? Behind these digital avatars are corporate teams, overwhelmingly homogeneous and profit-driven, pulling the strings. When a virtual persona speaks about racism, sexuality, or mental health, as many now do, it isn't an expression, it's a strategy. And while some argue that any message supporting positive social values should be welcomed, even if manufactured, one must pause to consider what's lost in the translation of lived experience into a marketable aesthetic. Audiences must know who is behind the avatar, what they stand to gain, and what boundaries exist between fiction and influence.

## A Grand Homecoming: 1975 Intermediate Batch Alumni Reunion Set for June 15 at Siva Kiran Garden.

“PS Ashokan” Indian Chronicle “Manthani, June 9” “In a nostalgic and heartfelt initiative, the distinguished alumni of the 1973–75 Intermediate batch have orchestrated an elaborate reunion to rekindle old memories and celebrate lifelong friendships. This much-anticipated event is scheduled to take place on the 15th of June at the serene and picturesque Siva Kiran Garden in Manthani.” “Addressing a press meet at the Manthani Division Media Press Club on Monday, the organizing committee announced that formal invitations have been extended to fellow batchmates. However, they emphasized that even those who may not have re-



ceived a formal invitation are warmly encouraged to connect telephonically and attend the event with equal enthusiasm.” “The organizers earnestly appealed to all former students to participate in the reunion along with their families—spouses and children alike—to elevate the occasion into a joyous celebration of unity, nostalgia, and shared legacy. They underscored that the essence and success of this heartwarming event depend on wholehearted participation from every alumnus.” “Among the key dignitaries involved in the planning and promotion of the event were Kondela Maruthi, founder of Manthani Vidyarthi Yuvatha, retired educators Chandupatla Sudhakar Reddy and Srinivas, and noted industrialist Komuravelli Vijay Kumar. Their presence and support lend a dignified charm to the upcoming celebration.” “This memorable gathering promises to be a remarkable tribute to enduring bonds and cherished memories that have stood the test of time.

## District SP Rohit Raj congratulates CI Sivaprasad for receiving the Police Medal for Gallantry Award.”



“Bhukya Ranjith Naik, Bhadradi Kothagudem, June 9 (Indian Chronicle): Kothagudem Three Town Inspector Sivaprasad, who received the Police Medal for Gallantry Award from Telangana Chief Minister Revanth Reddy as part of the Telangana formation celebrations held at the Hyderabad Parade Grounds on June 2nd, was specially congratulated by District SP Rohit Raj in his office on Monday.

Inspector Sivaprasad received this award for his effective performance of duties in Maoist-affected areas. The SP said on this occasion that officers and staff who work with discipline and commitment in the police department will always receive special recognition and respect. Kothagudem DSP Rahman participated in the program.

## KP's 21st Century IAS Academy Honors 2024 UPSC Achievers



Hyderabad: The 21st Century IAS Academy celebrated the outstanding achievements of the 2024 UPSC rankers during a grand felicitation event held on June 8 at Sundarayya Vignana Kendram in Baglingampally. This prestigious ceremony brought together dignitaries, students, and their families, highlighting the academy's unwavering commitment to nurturing future leaders through exceptional education and rigorous training programs. Founded in 2003 by P. Krishna Pradeep, the 21st Century IAS Academy began with just two students in Ashok Nagar and has since become a beacon of excellence in preparing aspirants for competitive exams such as Civil Services, Group 1, and 2. Over the course of 21 years, the academy has successfully guided more than 2000 students toward securing coveted positions in IAS, IPS, IRS, as well as other government roles. The academy has earned national recognition and has significantly contributed to civil service education across the two Telugu states.

As part of the "One Nation One Curriculum" initiative,

the academy has established several residential institutions in Shamshabad, providing comprehensive training to over 500 intermediate and degree students. Additionally, KP's 21st Century IAS Academy is dedicated to its social responsibility, conducting free awareness classes on competitive exams in 100 government degree colleges. A noteworthy endeavor includes the adoption of Adilabad, one of Telangana's most backward districts, where, in partnership with district collector Shri Rajarshi Shah, free training is offered to tribal and indigenous students preparing for competitive examinations.

Looking toward the future, P. Krishna Pradeep is ambitious in his goal to select 100 candidates for Civil Services from the two Telugu states by the 21st Century Rajatotsav year (2028). Comprehensive plans are currently being developed to achieve this target, reinforcing the academy's mission to cultivate aspiring civil servants who will lead with integrity and competence. The felicitation program featured a heartfelt welcome address by P. Krishna Pradeep, who expressed his admiration for the dedication and perseverance exhibited by the rankers. "Today, we celebrate not just the achievements of these remarkable individuals but the ideals they represent. Their success is a testament to hard work, resilience, and the spirit of service," he stated, emphasizing the importance of dedication in public service. The honorees included Pulkrit Bansal (AIR 155), Hemanth Sankar (AIR 223), Shailendra Choudhary (AIR 362), Ashish Kumar (AIR 489), Nikhil (AIR 555), Sashin (AIR 688), Mukhekar Dayaneshwar (AIR 707), Srishti Gupta (AIR 728), Aishwarya Surya (AIR 843), Vaibhav Raj Singh (AIR 883), Gourav Sabharwal (AIR 914), Gargi Londhe (AIR 939), and C. Sravana Sowmya (AIR 951).

## India Charts a Future-Ready Path in Geosciences



Hyderabad, 9 June 2025: Union Minister for Coal and Mines, Shri G. Kishan Reddy, today inaugurated the "Next-Gen Geophysics 2025: Unlocking Earth's Hidden Treasures" conference at the Geological Survey of India Training Institute (GSITI), Bandlaguda-Nagole, Hyderabad. The event was also graced by Shri Eatala Rajender, Hon'ble Member of Parliament, Malkajgiri. Addressing the gathering, Shri Kishan Reddy emphasized that India is entering a new era where science, sustainability, and technology will play a pivotal role in mineral exploration. He highlighted the vital role of geophysics in achieving the goals of Viksit Bharat by providing innovative tools to address challenges such as climate change, urbanization, and disaster risk mitigation.

The Minister lauded the Geological Survey of India (GSI) for organizing this timely conference as it celebrates 175 years of dedicated service. He described this milestone as a testament to India's long-standing commitment to the scientific exploration of natural resources. Shri Kishan Reddy highlighted significant advancements including the establishment of the National Landslide Forecasting Centre and a recent Memorandum of Understanding with Italy aimed at enhancing disaster preparedness. He called for the expansion of monitoring networks and the adoption of cutting-edge forecasting technologies. Further, the Minister drew attention to India's growing presence in global education and research, noting a 318% increase in Indian institutions featured in the QS World University Rankings 2025. He also mentioned the doubling of IIT seats and the creation of the Anusandhan National Research Foundation (ANRF) as examples of the government's commitment to scientific excellence.

Shri Kishan Reddy urged geoscientists to embrace emerging technologies such as Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Quantum Computing for enhanced exploration, including



predicting hidden mineral resources and interpreting seismic data with greater precision. He highlighted flagship initiatives like the ₹10,300 crore India AI Mission and the ₹6,000 crore National Quantum Mission as catalysts for innovation.

Emphasizing the strategic importance of critical minerals, the union minister stated that India's future economic strength depends on reducing import dependence for key minerals like lithium and cobalt through AI-powered, clean, and efficient exploration methods. He underscored the need for innovation alongside collaboration and sustainability, advocating for stronger partnerships between government, academia, and industry. The Mineral Exploration Hackathon was cited as a successful model of such co-creation. He also stressed the importance of responsible mining practices that benefit local communities and protect the environment.

Addressing the audience, Shri Eatala Rajender, Hon'ble Member of Parliament, stated that "Geoscience is entering a transformative era—where traditional methods converge with AI-powered predictive models, quantum sensing, and cutting-edge technologies to revolutionize resource exploration and contribute to building a future-ready, Viksit Bharat." "He emphasized the crucial role of geoscientific research in addressing challenges related to mineral security, environmental resilience, and natural disaster preparedness. Shri Rajendar commended GSI's adoption of Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning in geohazard assessments and mineral investigations and expressed confidence in India's ability to become a global leader in data-driven exploration and sustainable resource management. Earlier in the day, Shri Kishan Reddy, along with Shri Eatala Rajender, inaugurated two newly inducted Hydrostatic Drill Rigs at the Geological Survey of India (GSI), marking a significant milestone in India's geoscientific capabilities. He also inaugurated the Next-Gen Geophysics Expo Pavilion, showcasing advanced geophysical tools and AI-enabled exploration models. The pavilion features live demonstrations of frontier technologies supporting India's vision for sustainable development of critical mineral resources. The two-day conference has brought together eminent geoscientists, researchers, and industry leaders from India and countries including Australia, Canada, Russia, the USA, Poland, Malaysia, and Singapore. The agenda focuses on advanced geophysical technologies, AI/ML-integrated exploration models, high-resolution subsurface imaging, and data-driven mineral targeting. The event was attended by Dr. S. Ravi, Deputy Director General and Head, Mission-V (Training and Capacity Building), GSITI; Shri Asit Saha, Director General, GSI; Shri S.D. Pathbaje, Additional Director General, GSI (Southern Region); senior officials, international delegates, and leading geoscientific experts.

## Provide irrigation through the Sitarama Project: Lakkineni Surender Rao.

Bhukya Ranjith Naik, Bhadradi Kothagudem, June 9 (Indian Chronicle): BRS state leader Lakkineni Surender Rao said that the government should help by redesigning the Sitarama Project and irrigating crop-lands through it. On Monday, under the leadership of Tekulapalli Mandal BRS President Bommarla Varaprasad, BRS Mandal leaders organized a dharna in front of the Tahsildar's office and handed over a petition to MRO Veerabhadram. Later, Lakkineni Surender Rao said that the Sitarama Project should be rede-



signed for fallow lands and steps should be taken to provide irrigation water to every acre; otherwise, they will organize large-scale protests

and dharna programs. Banoth Kishan Naik, Pul Singh Naik, Bhukyaraja Chimala

Satyanarayana, Muchha Jayaraju, Lakpathi Raju, and others participated in this program.

## The Fourth Utkarsha Samaroh Held Grandly“



“June 8 Indian Chronicle Rayalaseema coordinator” “The Fourth Utkarsha Samaroh (Excellence Ceremony) of the renowned Central Sanskrit Universities of India was held at the holy place of Nashik in Maharashtra. The event was graced by distinguished guests: Prof. GSR Krishnamurthy, Vice-Chancellor of National Sanskrit University, Tirupati; Prof. Murali Manohar Pathak, Vice-Chancellor of Shri Lal Bahadur Shastri Sanskrit University; and Prof. Srinivasa Varkhedi, Vice-Chancellor of the organizing Central Sanskrit University, who collectively made the program a grand success.” “Eminent Sanskrit scholars from across the country participated in this event, engaging in extensive discussions on how to impart Indian culture and knowledge to the modern generation. They deliberated on utilizing modern technology to disseminate this wisdom to contemporary society.” “Speaking on this occasion, Prof. GSR Krishnamurthy, Vice-Chancellor of National Sanskrit University, Tirupati, emphasized that the three universities are collaboratively formulating various plans to elevate Sanskrit to greater heights for future generations. He stated that their goal for the coming decade is to widely deliver the profound knowledge embedded in Sanskrit to students using modern technology.

## Kannala Village School Sets a Benchmark with Consecutive 100% Pass Rates: A Beacon of Rural Educational Brilliance.



“PS Ashokan” Indian Chronicle “Manthani, June 9” “In a shining example of collective commitment to education, Kannala village held an inspiring Gram Sabha under the aegis of the Prof. Jayashankar Badi Bata initiative. The event brought together villagers, school staff, parents, and students to reaffirm their dedication to nurturing academic excellence at the grassroots level.” “Addressing the assembly, Headmaster Hariprasad announced with pride that the government school has consistently achieved a perfect 100% pass rate for the second consecutive year. He lauded the students for their commendable performance and high scores, attributing the success to dedicated teaching, parental support, and the students' unwavering effort.” “He passionately appealed to all village residents to enroll their children—right from Class 1 through Class 10—in the local government schools, emphasizing the importance of accessible, high-quality education within the community.” “A heartwarming highlight of the program was the felicitation of Charan Teja's mother, whose son secured first rank in the recent Class 10 board examinations. She was honored with a traditional shawl in recognition of her family's support and her son's academic brilliance.

The family extended heartfelt gratitude to the teachers for their relentless guidance and encouragement.” “Adding to the school's accolades, Headmaster Hariprasad proudly shared that the institution was recently conferred with a District-Level Certificate of Appreciation in recognition of its exemplary academic record.

## Fire breaks out at Telangana diagnostic centre in Medak hospital

GNS News Agency, June 9

Medak: A fire broke out at the Telangana Diagnostic Centre located on the premises of the government hospital in Medak on Monday, damaging several computers and furniture.

Hospital staff alerted the fire department, and personnel arrived promptly with a fire tender to contain the blaze. Their swift action prevented the flames from spreading to other parts of the facility.

Hospital Superintendent Dr Sunitha said that no machinery or diagnostic equipment was damaged in the incident. She assured that diagnostic services would resume without delay.

The hospital management is currently assessing the extent of the loss caused by the fire.



# Ovation with Purpose: BJP Cadre Honors PM Modi for Unprecedented Welfare Initiatives Amid Global Uncertainty“



“PS Ashokan“Indian Chronicle“Manthani, June 9““In a spirited display of admiration and gratitude, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) activists of Manthani town congregated at Ambedkar Chowrasta to perform a ceremonial milk abhishekam to the portrait of Hon’ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, acknowledging his visionary leadership and historic welfare initiatives.““Speaking on the occasion, BJP Manthani Town President Mr. Sabbani Santosh extolled the Prime Minister’s unparalleled commitment to the welfare of the nation. He remarked that no leader in Indian history has delivered such profound relief to the populace as Shri Modi, who ensured the simultaneous distribution of three months’ ration rice to every eligible citizen—an act that stands as a milestone in India’s governance.““Mr. Santosh further emphasized that this extraordinary measure was not merely a relief initiative, but a strategic foresight anticipating immi-

nent crises. He lauded the government’s efforts to shield the nation from the possible onslaught of a COVID-19 resurgence, monsoon-induced floods, and escalating global tensions, by guaranteeing robust food and health security for every Indian.““He highlighted flagship programs like Ayushman Bharat, which fortify the public healthcare system, and commended the advanced ration disbursement as a life-saving precaution in turbulent times.““

The event witnessed the enthusiastic participation of District Council Member Mr. Bogaju Srinivas, Senior BJP Leader Mr. Boyina Narayana, and prominent BJP karyakartas including Samala Ashok, Dasari Shrvan, Sriramoju Lakshman, and Parvati Vishnu. Ration beneficiaries such as Sayamma, Parvatamma, and Gundeti Lakshmaiah also expressed their heartfelt gratitude, marking the program as both symbolic and socially significant.

# Government Must Own Up to Medigadda Tragedy: Former MLA Putta Madhukar Demands Accountability



“PS Ashokan“Indian CHRONICLE“Manthani,june 9““Former Manthani MLA and BRS constituency in-charge Putta Madhukar has demanded that the government take full responsibility for the tragic incident at the Medigadda Barrage. On Sunday, he visited the grieving families of the youth who drowned near the barrage at the Mahadevpur Government Hospital and offered his condolences.““Speaking on the occasion, he alleged that the Congress government had deliberately sidelined the globally acclaimed Medigadda project, and despite know-

ing the increased risk of water flow, failed to implement even basic safety precautions. He blamed the government’s negligence for the unfortunate deaths of six innocent youths and called for immediate accountability.““Putta Madhukar urged the state government to promptly provide an ex gratia of ₹10 lakh to each of the bereaved families and extend full support. He further cautioned that tourist activity at the Medigadda project is likely to rise, and stressed the need for the government to establish robust safety measures to prevent such tragedies in the future.

# Empathy in Action: Sridhar Babu Facilitates ₹75,000 Medical Aid to Dubbapalli Beneficiary.



““PS Ashokan“Indian Chronicle“Manthani,june 9““In a commendable act of compassion, Hon’ble Minister for IT, Industries, and Legislative Affairs, Sri Duddilla Sridhar Babu sanctioned a Letter of Credit (LOC) worth ₹75,000 under the Chief Minister’s Relief Fund (CMRF) to support the medical treatment of Smt. Nadipelli Vimala Devi, a resident of Dubbapalli village, Manthani Mandal, Manthani Constituency.““Smt. Vimala Devi, who is undergoing treatment at NIMS Hospital, Hyderabad, for serious health issues, had appealed for financial assistance. Upon learning of her condition, Minister Sridhar Babu responded swiftly and ensured the sanction of ₹75,000 towards her medical expenses.““

The LOC was formally handed over by the Minister’s hospital liaison team at the MLA Camp Office in Hyderabad, enabling timely access to necessary treatment.““Grateful for the timely support, the family members of Smt. Vimala

Devi extended their sincere thanks to Minister Sridhar Babu for standing by them during a difficult time.““Duddilla’s Helping Hand – A Friend to the Needy”

# Bengaluru techie stabs married lover 17 times in hotel, arrested after confession

GNS News Agency, June 9  
Bengaluru: A married woman in Bengaluru was tragically murdered by her lover, a software professional, who stabbed her 17 times. The police have arrested the man.

The incident happened recently in a hotel room in Poomaprajna Layout. The victim, 36-year-old Harini, was having an affair with the accused, Yashas. They first met at a fair, exchanged numbers, started chatting, and their relationship became physical.

However, Harini’s husband grew suspicious. He took away her phone and stopped her from leaving their home. After several months, Harini managed to get out and contacted Yashas again. Police say Yashas had become very upset during their separation and decided to kill her.On June 6th, the pair met and went to a hotel. After being intimate, Yashas repeatedly stabbed Harini with a knife and then fled. Harini died from her injuries.

The Subramanyapura police investigated and arrested Yashas. He confessed to killing Harini because he felt she was avoiding him.

# Release of Books Authored by University Faculty at the Utkarsha Festival

““June 9 Indian Chronicle Rayalaseema co-ordinator““During this Utkarsha Festival at Nashik the book Vedic Mathematics, authored by Prof. V. Ramesh Babu, Head of the Department of Mathematics and Public Relations Officer of the university, was officially released.““Similarly, the book Sri Chaitanya Philosophy was unveiled by the distinguished guests who attended the event at Gurudakshina Hall Nashik. The guests remarked that these books contain important topics that will be beneficial to future generations.



# Distribution of assistive devices to the disabled.“



““Bhukya Ranjith Naik, Bhadradi Kothagudem, June 9 (Indian Chronicle):The Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, Government of India, and Alimco, with the courtesy of the Social Welfare Shivar, organized a program to distribute assistive devices to the disabled at Telangana



School, Old Kothagudem. The program was presided over by District Welfare Officer Swarnalatha Leinana. The Chief Guest, Additional Collector Venugopal, inaugurated the program with a jyothi and said that the disabled should excel in all fields where they do work with their intelligence and ability, that these assistive devices are very useful as part of their daily routine, and that the welfare schemes provided by the government should be provided to the eligible ones. Last October, a selection camp for assistive devices for the disabled was organized at Gundala, Bhadrachalam, Aswaraopet, and IDOC Palvancha places in the district. 1057 assistive devices (worth Rs. 1.11 crore) were distributed to 440 selected disabled people. The beneficiaries were provided with battery tricycles, wheelchairs, tricycles, hearing aids, CP chairs, and walking sticks. The chief guests of this program were ZP CEO B. Naga Lakshmi, DMHO Bhaskar Nayak, CDPO Padma Shri, IED Sriram, TVPS President Satish, DCPO Hari Kumari, Sakhi Admin Subha Sri, Hub Coordinator Rupa, Child Line Coordinator Sandeep, ICDS Supervisors, office staff Varaprasad, Naresh, and Praveen, Anganwadi teachers, and others.

# Tribals should apply to ITDA only for livelihood through self-employment: ITDA Project Officer B. Rahul

““Bhukya Ranjith Naik, Bhadradi Kothagudem, June 9 (Indian Chronicle): Tribals should apply only to increase their livelihood through self-employment in the Tribal Darbar; applications will not be accepted for government jobs, and applicants should submit Xerox copies of their complete data with the application, said ITDA Project Officer B. Rahul.In the Tribal Darbar held at the ITDA conference hall on Monday, in the presence of unit officers, he received applications from tribals from various remote tribal villages, resolved those within his jurisdiction immediately, and sent the rest to the concerned officers, and directed them to take special care so that every eligible tribal gets the welfare schemes introduced by the government. He said that most of the applications were for land issues, change of names in land titles, personal issues, tricycle loans, provision of electricity to land titles, drilling of boreholes through the Indira Giri Jal Vikasam scheme, provision of personal loans to enhance livelihood, provision of seats in Gurukuls up to intermediate and fifth class, establishment of new sand and fishery societies, and other financial benefits, treatment of chronic diseases, and kirana shops and ANM posts.

He said that the applications submitted by the tribals in the Tribal Darbar are being registered in a special register online, and steps are being taken to provide welfare



schemes introduced by the government to every eligible tribal in phases.In this program, Assistant Project Officer General David Raj, DD Tribal Welfare Officer Manemma, SDC Ravindranath, EE Tribal Welfare Harish, SO Bhaskaran, AO Sunnam Rambabu, APO Power Venu, DTRO FR Lakshminarayana, FDC Uday Kumar, PVTG Officer Manidhar, Manager Adinarayana, ICDS Supervisor Rajeshwari, and other departmental staff members Bhargavi, Joga Rao, Chalapathi, Varalakshmi, and others participated.

# Identity cards should be distributed to BLOs: State Chief Electoral Officer C. Sudarshan Reddy“



““Bhukya Ranjith Naik, Bhadradi Kothagudem, June 9 (Indian Chronicle):State Chief Electoral Officer C. Sudarshan Reddy suggested that identity cards should be distributed to Booth Level Officers (BLOs) and this process should be completed by the 25th of this month. On Monday, he held a review with collectors and additional collectors through video conference. Speaking on the occasion, the CEO said that new polling stations have been set up where there are more than 1200 voters. Earlier, if there were up to 1500 voters, one polling station was set up, and now steps have been taken to ensure that one polling station is available for voters below 1200. To this extent, he suggested that the list of proposals with newly identified polling stations should be sent to the collectors by the 20th of this month. Similarly, new Booth Level Officers should be appointed wherever necessary, and they should be local em-

ployees of the Central and State Governments, and if they are not available, Anganwadi workers have been appointed. The CEO suggested that an action plan be prepared for the SSR-2026 process and that the details be submitted to him from the 15th of this month. The video conference was conducted by Additional Collector D. Venugopal, Special Deputy Collector Kasaiah, Election Superintendent Ranga Prasad, and Collectorate Election Department staff member Naveen.

# TGSRTC likely to hike bus pass fares by up to 20 percent from June 9

GNS News Agency, June 9Hyderabad: The Telangana State Road Transport Corporation (TGSRTC) is likely to increase the bus pass fare of all the categories by nearly 20 per cent.The increase in the fare is applicable to the ordinary and student bus passes as well.According to the reports, while the ordinary bus pass fare is likely to be increased from Rs 1,150 to Rs 1,400, Metro Express pass is to be increased from Rs 1,300 to Rs 1,600 and Metro Deluxe bus pass to be increased from Rs 1,450 to Rs 1,800.



# Congress announces roadmap for creating organisational cadre in Haryana



GNS News Agency, June 9

The Haryana Congress Monday announced a roadmap of creating new organisational cadre across the state. It has been over a decade that the state unit of the party has had any organisational cadre at the ground level.The Congress announced that Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha, Rahul Gandhi, is also likely to visit Haryana “soon”.In a press briefing held here Monday, party affairs in-charge BK Hariprasad and PCC president Udai Bhan announced the list of 69 HPCC’s observers and eight additional observers who will be working towards the creation of an organisational cadre in the state.

The 69 observers, including 16 former MLAs and a former MP, have been allocated specific districts. The prominent among these include Jitender Bhardwaj, Suresh Gupta and Ramkishan Gurjar (working presidents, HPCC), Divyanshu Buddhiraja, former MLAs including Rao Dan Singh, Balbir Balmiki, Ramniwas Ghorela, Amit Sihag, Subhash Gangoli, Mewa Singh, Rakesh Kamboj, Sant Kumar, Anand Singh Dangl, Neeraj Sharma, Jagdish Yadav, Pradeep Chaudhary, Shamsher Singh Gogi and Attar Singh Saini; and Kailasho Saini, the former Congress MP.“Observers appointed by the AICC will visit each and every district of Haryana and collect feedback on creation of organisational cadre,” Hariprasad said, adding that “The party has completed all the formalities pertaining to organisational cadre’s creation in Gujarat and very soon the name of state chief of Congress party in Gujarat shall

# Why PAU is reassessing PR-126 variety nine years after introduction: ‘timing holds the key’

GNS News Agency, June 9

Punjab Agricultural University (PAU) recently released a survey report on different sowing timings for the PR-126 rice variety from June to August to inform farmers how these varying sowing periods affect the yield, moisture level and the milling out-turn ratio (OTR) of this variety.After “conducting all required tests and trials”, PAU introduced this variety in Punjab in 2016.Considered one of the PAU’s best paddy varieties so far in terms of short duration, good yield, resistance to pests and consistently desirable OTR, among other qualities, a large area under rice cultivation in the state is producing this variety. However, ahead of the paddy transplanting season in Punjab in June, PAU undertook a fresh survey on the performance of this variety — why?That too, after nine years, given a large area in Punjab, is already producing PR-126 variety.

Why PR-126 matters?

Paddy is an extremely water-intensive crop, and despite a severe groundwater crisis in Punjab, the area under paddy cultivation has been increasing every passing year.Last year, the state recorded the highest 32.44 lakh hectares under paddy cultivation, producing different varieties, ranging from short to medium to long-duration types. In such a scenario, shifting to shorter-duration paddy varieties is one of the best options to conserve water. That’s how the PR-126 variety comes in.After its introduction in 2016, this variety quickly gained popularity among farmers due to its shorter growth period, high yield (over 30 quintals per acre), minimal pesticide requirements and excellent OTR.Key findings from the survey reveal that PR-126 performs best when transplanted between June 25 and July 15, using 25–30-day-old seedlings, as very early and very late transplantation led to yield reduction. Key findings from the survey reveal that PR-126 performs best when transplanted between June 25 and July 15, using 25–30-day-old seedlings, as very early and very late transplantation led to yield reduction.PR-126 matures in just 93 days after a 25 to 30 days of transplantation, using less water, producing less straw (making residue management easier), and providing a longer gap between rice harvesting and wheat sowing.This is also resistant to major pests and diseases, reducing the input cost significantly.In 2023, PR-126 was cultivated over approximately 8.59 lakh hectares, almost 33 per cent of the total area under non-Basmati paddy cultivation in Punjab. This increased to 43 per cent this year.Additionally, PAU sold around 7,500 quintals of PR-126 seeds this year, in addition to seeds saved by farmers and produced by several paddy seed breeders in the state.

Why did PAU conduct a survey despite its popularity?

Last year, rice millers raised a large hue and cry about the procurement of PR-126 and several high-yield (up to 36 to 38 quintals per acre) hybrid paddy varieties by the government.They refused to store it in their mills, claiming the OTR of this variety did not meet the specifications of the Food Corporation of India (FCI) set at a minimum of 67 per cent, and alower OTR means they will have to pay from their pockets to the FCI.Procurement is carried out by the government or private agencies based on FCI’s

# ‘False accusations can cause damage to reputation’: Delhi AAP MLA Anil Jha acquitted of charges under SC/ST Act

GNS News Agency, June 9

A Delhi court on Saturday acquitted Aam Aadmi Party’s (AAP) Kirari MLA Anil Jha in a case where he was charged under the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act (SC/ST Act).Complainant, Sanjay Kumar, a BJP member, had alleged that on February 28, 2016, during an annual function at Awadh Public School in the capital, Jha, along with other accused people, had hurled casteist slurs directed towards him. He had also alleged that Jha had manhandled him.Special Judge Jitendra Singh of Rouse Avenue Court, in his order dated May 31, said that the complainant has attempted to attribute a criminal colour to what was, “in essence, a verbal altercation” between him and the accused due to their respective political affiliations and activities.“It is not unusual in such circumstances for the incident to be exaggerated, with the apparent intention of falsely implicating the accused in a more serious offence, thereby attempting to invoke stringent provisions such as the SC/ST Act,” Judge Singh

be announced”.Talking of Haryana, Hariprasad added, “Anybody who had worked for the party for over five years can apply for district president’s post. AICC and HPCC observers will speak to all potential candidates. They can also collect application forms from the party’s state headquarters office in Chandigarh. The party will also focus on those candidates who will emerge unanimous choice in any district. If there are more than one candidate for the post of district president, then the top 3-4 candidates will be shortlisted and one of them will eventually be declared the district president. The party will also invite district presidents to Central Election Committee’s meetings after which the ticket-distribution for the next polls will take place. Within the next one month, each district of Haryana will get it’s president from the Congress. Once all the district presidents have been declared, the next step will be selecting the state PCC chief and other office bearers of the HPCC”.Replying to Congress’s inability to declare the CLP leader since October 2024, Hariprasad said,

“A committee was constituted for finalising the CLP leader who would also be the Leader of Opposition in the Haryana Vidhan Sabha.

The committee had submitted it’s report to the party high command. The final decision shall be announced, soon. As far as the new observers announced today are concerned, the party will not tolerate any kind of indiscipline.”On the occasion, the party also released a list of “senior leaders of HPCC” that included Udai Bhan (president, HPCC) on top followed by Bhupinder Singh Hooda (former CM, former PCC president, and former CLP leader), Birender Singh, Dharampal Singh Malik, Bablir Pal Shah, Phool Chand Mullana (all former HPCC presidents), Kumari Selja (AICC general secretary and former HPCC president), Randeep Singh Surjewala (AICC general secretary), Deepender Singh Hooda (MP and CWC member), former CLP leaders Mahendra Pratap Singh and Ajay Singh Yadav; AICC secretaries Chetan Chauhan, Chiranjeev Rao, Pradeep Narwal and Vineet Punia besides Retired Colonel Rohit Chaudhary (AICC’s ex servicemen department) and Sunil Panwar (AICC’s Rajiv Gandhi Panchayati Raj Sangathan).



specifications.The major parameters for purchase at the Minimum Support Price (MSP) include — grain moisture content not exceeding 17 per cent, and mixture of lower-class grains not more than 6 per cent, damaged, discoloured, sprouted, or weevilled grains should not be above 5 per cent and immature, shrunken or shrivelled grains should not more than 3 per cent.PAU strongly argued that it releases any new variety after rigorous testing for three years on all possible parameters, including yield, OTR, and pest resistance.However, millers remained adamant and refused to store PR-126 and several other hybrid paddy varieties, citing low OTR.Later, the government intervened and millers stored it.Thus, PAU initiated this survey to dispel this notion and demonstrate the variety’s relevance and profitability for farmers and the environment.

What’s this survey about?

Recently, issues related to inconsistent yields, high grain moisture, and milling quality surfaced, especially when PR-126 is transplanted too early or too late, or when aged seedlings are used.According to the survey, out of the 43% area covered by PR-126 during Kharif 2024, a sizeable portion was transplanted very late (from the second fortnight of July to August 10).This area was typically transplanted after summer maize—a practice PAU does not advocate.The very late transplanting resulted in issues with yield, grain moisture content, and milling quality.Key findings from the survey reveal that PR-126 performs best when transplanted between June 25 and July 15, using 25–30-day-old seedlings, as very early and very late transplantation led to yield reduction.As a result, PAU is advising farmers to transplant PR-126 between late June and mid-July, use 25–30-day-old seedlings, avoid very late transplanting (after July 15), and ensure proper drying and handling for better grain quality to maximise productivity.Like PR-126, the notified hybrid paddy varieties — also cultivated in Punjab for several years — have been blamed for low OTR last year only.Experts from the seed industry suggest that harvest moisture content, rather than the seed variety, may be a key factor affecting milling outcomes.“Optimal milling requires grain to be harvested with 22-23 per cent moisture, dried to 16-17 per cent for procurement, and milled at 13-14 per cent,” they explain.Delayed procurement, often due to bad weather conditions from late sowing and logistical bottlenecks, can lead to excessive field drying, causing grain breakage and lowering OTR regardless of the variety.

said.“The IO (Investigating Officer) is expected to keep in mind that false accusations have far-reaching consequences, as they may result in the prosecution and conviction of innocent persons. The falsely accused person may suffer considerable societal stigma, damage to reputation and psychological harm, even when a determination ultimately occurs that the accuser accidentally or deliberately made a false accusation,” said the judge.He also stated that the Investigating Officer failed to produce a copy of CD containing the video clip of the alleged incident despite multiple opportunities. “...the most clinching evidence at the hand of the investigating agency was the video clip of the alleged incident...The CD containing the video clip was filed along with the charge sheet. However, the said CD could not be played in the Court... This Court never had the opportunity to go through the video clip,” Judge Singh noted.To prove its case, the prosecution, which was represented in the court by Additional Public Prosecutor Manish Rawat, had primarily examined three witnesses.

# ‘Main naukri mein hoon’: IRS officer initially denies, then agrees to Rs 45 lakh bribe



GNS News Agency, June 9

A transcript of the recorded conversation between accused IRS officer Amit Kumar Singhal and complainant Sanam Kapoor reveals that when the complainant sought help from Singhal in the income tax notice matter by promising to pay Rs 45 lakh ‘bribe’, the accused initially showed some resistance by saying that he is in a job (“main hai na nokri mein hu”), but later relented.The transcript of the conversation between complainant Sanam Kapoor, co-accused Harsh Kotak and accused IRS officer Amit Kumar Singhal has been attached by the CBI in the FIR copy.

The conversation was recorded in a voice recorder’s memory card, which was taken by the complainant, on being told by CBI officials, to the residence of an advocate in Chandigarh, where co-accused Harsh Kotak was sitting.

# In one of the biggest gold heists in the country, gold worth Rs 52 crore stolen from bank in Karnataka’s Vijayapura

GNS News Agency, June 9

On Monday, Laxman Nimbargi, Superintendent of Police, Vijayapura, said it is suspected that the gold ornaments were stolen between 6 pm on May 23 and 11.30 am on May 25.On Monday, Laxman Nimbargi, Superintendent of Police, Vijayapura, said it is suspected that the gold ornaments were stolen between 6 pm on May 23 and 11.30 am on May 25. In one of the major gold heists reported in the country, thieves in Karnataka fled with gold worth Rs 52 crore from a branch of Canara Bank in Karnataka’s Vijayapura district over a weekend last month.

Though the theft took place in the Managuli branch of Canara Bank in Vijayapura on May 23, the crime was discovered on May 26 when the staff came back to work. The police are yet to make any arrests in the case.While the thieves decamped with 51 kilogram of gold ornaments, the police have yet to find out about the mode of transport of the loot.On Monday, Laxman Nimbargi, Superintendent of Police, Vijayapura, said it is suspected that the gold ornaments were stolen between 6 pm on May 23 and 11.30 am on May 25. “We have formed eight teams to nab the accused. It is suspected that 6 to 8 people were involved in the theft,” he added.A police officer said it was a pre-planned theft, and the thieves waited for a long weekend, the second Saturday and Sunday, to commit the crime. The officer said the thief used a fake key to enter the bank, and switched off the alarm. They also switched off the CCTV cameras, and took away the Network Video Recorder (NVR). They

The conversation between Harsh Kotak and Sanam Kapoor was recorded over a discussion on Rs 45 lakh bribe. Also, Harsh Kotak let the complainant talk to Amit Kumar Singhal from his mobile phone on speaker. During the conversation, the bribe of Rs 45 lakh came up and the complainant requested Singhal to sort out the matter of income tax notice.As per the transcript of the conversation, initially, Singhal is heard denying the bribe demand, attempting to maintain a façade of integrity. However, as the conversation progresses, he appears to soften his stance and ultimately ‘agrees’ to the bribe proposal.The CBI had laid a trap and caught Singhal, Additional Director General at the Directorate of Taxpayer Services, New Delhi, and his associate Kotak while they were allegedly demanding the bribe. They had reportedly been harassing Kapoor, the owner of La Pino’s Pizza, by sending him repeated income tax notices and then demanding Rs 45 lakh to have them withdrawn. Kapoor alerted the CBI, leading to a trap and arrest of the accused.As per CBI’s remand paper submitted at Chandigarh Court on Sunday, “...role of accused Amit Kumar Singhal, is complicit as during the conversations held with complainant over telephone at the time of verification on May 30, 2025 and trap proceedings on May 31, 2025, the accused Amit kumar Singhal acknowledged the demand of bribe amount of Rs 45 lakh raised by him in exchange for extending favourable treatment from the Revenue/Income Tax Department and subsequently accepted bribe amount of Rs 25 Lakhs from complainant through co- accused Harsh Kotak”.



only opened the bank lockers, and fled with the gold.

The Vijayapura police said that after the theft, the accused kept a black colour doll, making it look like they had performed some ritual at the crime scene.This is not the first time that a bank has been the target of a heist in Karnataka.On October 28 last year, a gang stole gold ornaments worth Rs 13 crore from a branch of the State Bank of India (SBI) in the Nyamathi town in Davanagere district, 325 km away from Bengaluru. The Davanagere police later arrested six people involved in the crime.On January 17 this year, a gang robbed gold worth Rs 12 crore at the Vyavasaya Seva Sahakari Sangha Bank at Kotekar in Mangaluru. The police arrested six people in connection with the heist.

# Dhami’s meeting with Dhumma fails to yield a breakthrough

GNS News Agency, June 9

Harnam Singh Dhumma, SAD, Operation Blue Star, SGPC, Chandigarh Damdami Taksal head Harnam Singh Dhumma, refuses Akal Takht acting Jathedar Giani Kuldeep Singh Gargarj from delivering message on the 40th anniversary of Operation Blue Star. A day after the Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD) accused Damdami Taksal head Harnam Singh Dhumma of “acting under the influence of government agencies”, Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee (SGPC) president Harjinder Singh Dhami on Monday met Dhumma in a bid to ease tensions.

Dhumma drew SAD flak after he declared that Akal Takht acting Jathedar Giani Kuldeep Singh Gargarj would “not be allowed to deliver any message” to the Sikh community on the 40th anniversary of Operation Blue Star on June 6.“Gargarj is not recognised as a Panth-approved Jathedar and has already been declared ‘tankhaiya’ (under religious penalty) by the Panj Pyare by the Takht Patna Sahib,” Dhumma had said.Questioning Dhumma’s motives, SAD leader Parambans Singh Romana said, “Is this being done at someone’s behest? On one hand, we had a Taksal head who sacrificed his life for the dignity of the Akal Takht, while on the other, we have one acting as an agent trying to derail events meant to pay tributes to martyrs.”Dhami’s meeting with Dhumma failed to yield a breakthrough as the



latter remained adamant on his position and warned of “serious consequences” if his concerns were not addressed.Speaking after the meeting, Dhumma said, “We support peace during the June 6 events, but someone who lacks legitimacy cannot be allowed to issue messages on behalf of the Takht. If such actions continue, tensions will escalate. The SGPC has assured us that they will seek a resolution.”Romana had also said, “Every year, the Sikh community organises programmes to pay homage to the martyrs. Sadly, Harnam Singh Dhumma is trying to sabotage these commemorations.”

# Delhi Police gets digital boost: New system to track stock in real time

GNS News Agency, June 9

The Delhi Police has established a Central Inventory Management System (CIMS), the first of its kind within the force, enabling real-time tracking and management of every item in stock.With help from the Bhaskaracharya Institute for Space Applications and Geoinformatics (BISAG), the force has developed the application. The Delhi Police’s Provisioning and Logistics (P&L) Unit will have command of the operation, while district and unit heads can update and manage the stock.Confirming the development, Deputy Commissioner of Police (P&L) Vinit Kumar said BISAG has been working with the Delhi Police for the past year, and the application has been developed for use across six different modules within the force.These modules cover Motor Transport, Fuel Stock, Arms and Ammunition, Office Supplies, Communication Equipment, and Hiring.

The P&L unit is responsible for managing the stock of all Delhi Police resources and their allocation to districts and other units, the officer said. “Maintaining a record of any item from the stock is a herculean task in a force of over 90,000 personnel. We have tried to make the system easier and more handy for us and our unit heads,” Kumar further said.“Under the supervision of Special Commissioner of Police (P&L) Garima Bhatnagar, three of the six modules have already been launched under CIMS for testing,” he said, adding, “The login credentials for the application will be shared with unit heads so they can submit requests before the stock is depleted.”Motor and Transport: Under

this, unit heads can access detailed information about newly acquired vehicles in the force. Officers can retrieve all sorts of data — from the date of a vehicle’s induction to its retirement. It also includes the number of times it has been serviced and its performance reports. Additionally, unit heads can receive notifications when a vehicle reaches the end of its service life.Petroleum, Oils, and Lubricants: The Delhi Police operates 11 petrol pumps for its vehicles. All these petrol pumps will be integrated with the CIMS system. Staff deployed at these pumps will be required to update the application each time a vehicle’s tank is filled or fuel is issued to any vehicle. This will enable senior officers to monitor fuel availability at each pump in real time.Arms and Ammunition: This module is dedicated to managing the stock of arms and ammunition. The Delhi Police currently relies on SLRs, INSAS rifles, and AK-47s for long-range engagement, and 9-mm Glock pistols and revolvers for short-range operations.The authority to distribute arms and ammunition rests with the unit heads, subject to approval by officers of Joint Commissioner rank. In emergencies such as riots or hostile incidents, if a district or unit requires additional weapons and another district has surplus stock, this can be immediately checked through the system and shared accordingly.Central Supply Agency: From stationery items to office furniture, unit heads are required to update the application as soon as new stock is purchased. In addition to making purchases independently, they can also submit requests to the Central Command System.



# Maharashtra Chief Minister objects to increasing Almatti dam height; Karnataka to take up the issue with Prime Minister



GNS News Agency, June 9

Expressing concern over Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis objecting to increasing the height of the Almatti dam [Lal Bahadur Shastri dam], Deputy Chief Minister D.K. Shivakumar on Monday appealed to Union Ministers and MPs from Karnataka to safeguard the State's interests. He also announced that he and Chief Minister Siddaramaiah would meet Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the Union Jal Shakti Minister in this regard. "As per the Krishna Water Dispute Tribunal's order, Karnataka can increase the height of the Almatti dam to 524 metres. Maharashtra, which did not object when the order was pronounced, has suddenly written a letter to our Chief Minister now objecting to it. I appeal to all Union Ministers and MPs

from Karnataka to protect the State's interest in this regard," Mr. Shivakumar told a press conference.

"Mr. Fadnavis wrote to Mr. Siddaramaiah on May 9 raising objection to increasing the height of the dam. Expressing concern that Sangli and Kolhapur districts in Maharashtra would face flooding if the height was raised, Mr. Fadnavis has asked for re-evaluating the plan to raise the height. This letter has come as a shock to us. Maharashtra had never raised objection to this project till now. Maharashtra had even submitted an affidavit to the tribunal seeking increase in the Almatti dam height. But it is opposing it all of a sudden," said Mr. Shivakumar, who also holds the Water Resources Department. "This project is our right accorded by the Krishna tribunal. Our Chief Minister will reply to the letter by his Maharashtra counterpart," he said, and sought to draw the attention of BJP leader from Karnataka V. Somanna, who is the Union Minister of State for Jal Shakti and Railways. "The Almatti project is needed for the State. We don't want any friction with our neighbouring State. The delay in implementation of the project has resulted in cost escalation. We would need ?1 lakh crore for land acquisition for this project," he said. He pointed out that Karnataka had been waiting for the gazette notification regarding increasing the Almatti dam height since 2013. "How long should we wait? We will share the letter from Maharashtra Chief Minister and our reply to it with all our MPs," he said.

## Homes bulldozed at Delhi's Bhoomiheen Camp — minutes before HC heard petitions to stay demolition

GNS News Agency, June 9

Minutes before pleas to stay the demolition at Bhoomiheen Camp, in Southeast Delhi's Govindpuri, were heard by a vacation bench in the High Court on Monday, civic authorities had already started razing hutments. The two petitioners in the case lost their homes. When the petition was taken up, Justices Tushar Rao Gedela and Harish Vaidyanathan Shankar refused to halt the Delhi Development Authority's (DDA) action while issuing notices to the authorities.

The two-judge bench's refusal on Monday came days after the HC dismissed a clutch of petitions by slum dwellers against the impending eviction and demolition. Justice Dharmesh Sharma, on May 26 and May 30, had rejected the pleas. The nearly three-decades-old slum cluster was home to migrants from UP, Bihar and West Bengal, among others, the single-judge bench was told during the hearings. The inhabitants included women who worked as domestic help, labourers in factories and local shops, and others who had meagre sources of income. The petitioners had moved the court first in 2023, claiming that the DDA, in "an arbitrary and illegal manner, proposed to demolish their jhuggi-hopdis". The proposal, they contended, was contrary to the Delhi Slum & JJ Rehabilitation and Relocation Policy, 2015. It was contended that the surveys for their rehabilitation were conducted contrary to the policy, "by an obscure, outsourced agency appointed by DDA". It was also pointed out that due processes were not followed. Justice Sharma, in the May 26 ruling against 44 dwellers who moved court, and the verdict for which was reserved last year on December 6, 2024, held that the DDA has "substantially adhered to all prescribed procedures in surveying the JJ clusters in question". Refusing to set aside the survey, Justice Sharma



emphasised that the petitioners have "no vested right" to rehabilitation and that the earlier court-ordered interim stay on demolition "has not only hindered the timely execution of the rehabilitation project but also resulted in a significant escalation of public expenditure."

The court also recorded that as per the DDA, "over Rs 835.88 crore has been expended in the process of in-situ rehabilitation of JJ dwellers of Bhoomiheen Camp," adding that "it cannot be overlooked that the rehabilitation process is time-sensitive, and any further extension of timelines would result in additional expenditure of valuable public funds and delay the rehabilitation of other clusters and JJ dwellers." Appeals by two petitioners from the earlier round of litigation — Manjoor Ali and Kashmir Lal — challenging Justice Sharma's order of May 26 and May 30, respectively, were before the vacation bench on Monday. Moments before their petition was taken up, their houses were razed. The demolition action, pending the appeal, was highlighted before the division bench. It, however, refused to stay the demolition action, orally remarking that it is being undertaken in compliance with the single judge's order.

## ‘Hard labour can’t be overlooked’: Delhi HC grants relief to open school students left out of JEE-Mains counselling

GNS News Agency, June 9

When the JEE-Mains exam results were declared last month, Om Upadhyay, a student of the National Institute of Open Learning (NIOS), found out he scored a whopping 97.7 percentile.

But he was far from happy. The reason?

The Mains result was declared on April 18, way before his Class XII results which will only be released by the end of June. And the last date of the JEE Mains counselling process — a prerequisite for getting admission in Delhi Technological University (DTU), Netaji Subhash University of Technology (NSUT), and Indraprastha Institute of Information Technology Delhi (IIIT-Delhi) — would end on June 19. "With these marks, I could have gotten into DTU... It was my dream," he had told The Indian Express last week. Aggrieved by this, Om (an EWS student), along with two other students (one who scored 91.66 percentile and an SC student who scored 72.54 percentile), moved the Delhi High Court on May 28 through advocates Ankit Singh Sinsinwar, Ravi Kumar and Dhananjay. Two days later, on May 30, they were granted relief by Justice Vikas Mahajan. "... no direction can be given to the JAC (Joint Admission Committee) to reschedule or defer the counselling dates. However, an important aspect which cannot be overlooked is that students put hard labour for two to four years, or maybe more, while preparing for JEE (Mains)... and they should not get ousted from consideration [during] counselling despite having attained good percentile and rank only on the ground that result of Class XII was not been declared timely by the education Board concerned conducting such qualifying exam....," Justice Mahajan ruled. The three open school students had moved court against JAC, a consortium of institutions, for admission to undergraduate programmes in Delhi government-funded premier universities offering engineering and architecture programmes. The admissions are done based on the rank of students in the JEE Mains exam.

The Class XII marksheet is relevant only to the extent that it assesses the minimum qualifying marks, which are 60% or more for BTech courses offered by NSUT and DTU and 70% for the same courses at IIIT-Delhi. While the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) and Indian Certificate of Secondary Education (ICSE) have declared results of the Class XII examination, open school students have been left in the lurch. The open school examinations concluded on May 19, while the JEE Mains result was out a month earlier, on April 18. The plea stated, "In the past, JAC released its schedule for counselling in a manner so that the last date [to apply] is post the declaration of Class XII result by NIOS. This was done to accommodate students of Class XII, who appeared through open school..." "However, to the shock and surprise of petition-



The three open school students had moved court against JAC, a consortium of institutions, for admission to undergraduate programmes in Delhi government-funded premier universities

ers, commencement of online registration and choice filling was to be done from 21.05.2025 (May 21) and the last date and time for online registration and choice filling was 02.06.2025 (June 2), till 10.30 pm," stated the plea. Passing a list of directions, Justice Mahajan noted: "It is true that students have no control over the declaration of result by the Board conducting Class XII examination nor they are in any way responsible for the delay in declaration of result, but at the same time it cannot be overlooked that operational difficulties might occur if, at this belated stage, few students are allowed to participate in the counselling without having Class XII result." First, it directed NIOS to declare the Class XII results before June 17, giving the students three days before the last day of counselling concludes.

"In case Class XII result is not declared by NIOS before the opening of single-day window on 19.06.2025, the Respondent/JAC shall permit the petitioners to register themselves on a single-day window available on 19.06.2025, without insisting upon the Class XII result, either physically or making necessary changes on their online portal, with a condition that seat allotment will be made by JAC to the petitioners only if they can furnish the result of Class XII before the declaration of seat allotment result of second round," read the second direction. The HC also directed JAC to notify other candidates similarly placed as the three students about the court order and allow them to register for counselling on a single-day window, which will be made available on June 19. "In the present petitions as well, some of the petitioners have scored a good percentile and ranks. Some of them are even from the marginalised sections of society. They will be deprived of participation in counselling and consequent admission to the course and institute of their choice for reasons beyond their control..." the court ruled.

## In relief for Delhiites, govt to soon waive ‘pending, inflated’ water bills: Minister



GNS News Agency, June 9

In a major relief to residents of the national capital, the Delhi government is soon going to waive "pending, inflated" water bills, along with the late payment surcharge, Water Minister Parvesh Sahib Singh said Monday. Addressing a press conference on the BJP completing 100 days in power and the achievements of his departments, he said, "A scheme to waive all domestic water bills is under preparation and it will be implemented soon. Once it is launched, all domestic water bills will be reduced by around 90%..." "But until this scheme is officially launched, I have already said that if someone hasn't paid their bill, their connection won't be disconnected for now. The people of Delhi are aware that the government is bringing a new scheme, so everyone is waiting for it... So, until the bill payments are sorted out — and right now there are some technical issues — once that is resolved and the scheme is launched, it will reduce the inflated and pending bills up to 90%," he added.

He said that, currently, the software being used by the

Delhi Jal Board was developed and maintained by Wipro. "Their lease period has already ended, and they have been given an extension... the company has refused to make any further changes to the current system..." Once this is resolved, the scheme will be launched," he said. Sources said that under this scheme, the focus will be on waiving the Late Payment Surcharge (LPSC) of domestic bills. "LPSC charges are calculated at 18% interest plus compounding charges," said sources. Currently, in the domestic category, the outstanding bill amount is approximately Rs 12,000 to Rs 13,000 crore, out of which Rs 7,000 crore is LPSC. "If we waive that, we will still be able to recover at least Rs 5,000 to Rs 6,000 crore," said sources. "Because several residents have not paid their bills for the past 8-9 years, this is an incentive for them to pay the principal amount. Once LPSC is waived, the government will rationalise the bills and give a timeline to the people to pay the principal amount. They will be asked to pay the bills in three to four months. No more extensions or schemes will come after this," said sources. Besides, the minister also said that the government plans to upgrade the water billing system to address the challenges of revenue losses. According to officials, Delhi has approximately 29 lakh water connections. As per the 2011 census, Delhi has 34 lakh households. Last year, the previous AAP government also announced a one-time settlement scheme for pending water bills ahead of the Lok Sabha elections, claiming that it would benefit around 12 lakh consumers, of which 7 lakh will not have to pay any amount. However, the scheme hit a roadblock after the Finance Department raised questions and said that it would lead to financial implications. It said that the benefits of the scheme should not be given to the consumers who have not paid the bills for the last 11 years.

## DU student arrested for killing female friend at Sanjay Van, say police

GNS News Agency, June 9

DUA police officer said the two were close. The accused, however, suspected that the victim was talking to another boy and confronted her a few days ago. A Teenager was stabbed and strangled to death allegedly by her classmate at Sanjay Van, in Delhi's Mehrauli area on Sunday, police said. The accused, a BCom student, has been arrested. The two were students at the Delhi University's School of Open Learning. A police officer said the two were close. The accused, however, suspected that the victim was talking to another boy and confronted her a few days ago.

On June 1, the accused called the victim to Sanjay Van in the morning before she went to her college. "The victim left her house in the morning to meet the accused. Around noon, the victim told her mother that she would return shortly. When she did not return, her mother received a call from the father of the accused, saying that his son had been attacked with a knife in Sanjay Van and was hospitalised," said DCP (South) Ankit Chauhan. The teenager's mother reached Mehrauli police station, alleging her daughter had been abducted by the accused. CCTV cameras around Sanjay Van were analysed, and the ac-



cused was arrested by the police on Monday. During questioning, police said the accused claimed that it was the teenager who first attacked him with a knife, injuring him. "While defending himself, things got heated between the two. The teenager was stabbed thrice," a police officer said. "During questioning, he disclosed that he called the victim (deceased) on the pretext of meeting her in Sanjay Van... After killing her, he tried to burn the body. During the altercation, the accused sustained minor injuries. After that, he fled and went to a hospital for treatment," DCP Chauhan said.

## Uncertain about future, say doctors, staff of Mohalla Clinics; hold sit-in at Delhi Secretariat

GNS News Agency, June 9

At least 580 doctors and staff, who worked at Aam Aadmi Party's (AAP) flagship Mohalla Clinics, on Monday held a silent protest outside the Delhi Secretariat and sought clarity on whether they can continue to work at Urban Ayushman Arogya Mandir. The public healthcare centres were rebranded by the BJP after it came to power in February. In an interview with The Indian Express last week, Delhi Health Minister Pankaj Singh, amid prevailing concerns among the staff of the Mohalla Clinics, had said, "We have staff in the Arogya Mandirs, which are ready for the launch, but we are planning to absorb the existing staff of Mohalla clinics. I have discussed this with Chief Minister Rekha Gupta. They will have to reappear in an exam, and those who fulfil the criteria will get the jobs."

On Monday, as the Mohalla clinics remained shut, the doctors and staff held a sit-in outside the Delhi Secretariat till evening, saying they were uncertain about their future. The written orders from officials have contradicted the CM's assurances at her Jan sunwai camps that the staff will be absorbed at Arogya Mandirs, they claimed. Officials concerned could not be reached for a response on the latest demonstration. "Even the Health Minister said that those who fit the criteria under the National Health Mission will be hired... Some of the staff members have also been asked to sit at home while permanent employees from various hospitals have been transferred to their clinics," said Jitendra Kumar, president of the Aam Aadmi Mohalla Clinics (AAMC) union. Some doctors and staff members were called inside the Delhi Secretariat, where they met Health Minister's OSD Vaibhav Rikhari, and they submitted a memorandum, he added.

The doctors said that they had cleared the examina-



tion of the Delhi government, after which they were selected for the Mohalla Clinics, where they have been working for the last eight years. They said that all the staff at Mohalla clinics should be transferred to Ayushman Arogya Mandir without any service disruption. "Following the Assembly elections earlier this year, the staff have not been given salaries. Recently, an MOU (memorandum of understanding) of conditional extension of a maximum of one year or earlier was provided," read the memorandum submitted by the doctors. "Our problems are linked to the process of shifting from Delhi State Health Mission (DSHM) to National Rural Health Mission, fear of new eligibility criteria, and no clear-cut document for the smooth shifting of 100% of doctors and staff. The government, on one end, keeps its staff happy by paying them regular increments and promotions and dearness allowance... but on the other end, inhuman treatment is meted out to contractual professional staff of AAMC. After working for over eight years in AAMC, without any increment, we are on the verge of termination of our services at one stroke. Our OPD, linked to remuneration, is jeopardised by poor supply of drugs," it further added.

## BMC cancels tender for robotic water rescue vehicle tender over link with Turkey firm

GNS News Agency, June 9

THE BRIHANMUMBAI Municipal Corporation (BMC) has decided to scrap a tender for acquiring six remote-controlled life buoys or robotic water rescue vehicles after it discovered that the vendor that won the bid to supply it was ultimately sourcing it from a Turkey-based firm. The civic body's move comes amid the recent conflict between India and Pakistan, where the latter used drones supplied by Turkey to target India.

Confirming the development, a senior BMC official said, "The tender was floated last year and the shortlisting of bidders took place between January and February. All the bidders had submitted details of their vendors in their quotation. Since India had good ties with Turkey back then, we went ahead to shortlist the vendor. However, owing to the recent tensions, we decided to take a relook at the tender and refloat it." The official said that while the supplier of the boat-like floating devices was shortlisted, the BMC had not issued any Letter of Approval (LoA) and therefore, it had the legal right to roll the tender back. "We shall be float-ing a new tender for acquiring the boats and we will also be exploring whether it is possible to have the products manu-

factured by India-based firms to propagate the Make-in-India campaign. It will also be cost-effective," said the official. In September last year, the BMC had floated the tender to acquire six rescue boats which were to be used by the Mumbai Fire Brigade for operations in the sea. The cost of each boat was pegged at Rs 9.62 lakh while the total size of the tender was pegged at Rs 64 lakh, inclusive of taxes. Civic officials said that after the bidders submitted their responses, quotations were shortlisted. They said the shortlisted supplier was an Indian vendor who would acquire the product from Turkey based firm Maren Robotics and supply it to the civic body. In the website of Maren Robotics, the boats are branded as 'Maren Fasty — remote controlled and self propelled water rescue vehicle'. Sources said that multiple civic bodies in the Mumbai Metropolitan Region (MMR) have acquired these buoys from the same firm. These boats were to be deployed at the Girgaon, Dadar, Juhu, Versova, Gorai and Aksa beaches. Civic officials said that each of these boats would have a carrying capacity of 200 kg while the maximum operating speed would be 18 km per hour — nearly four times more than the manual life-boats that the civic body uses.



# U.K. moving to ‘war-fighting readiness’, says Starmer



GNS News Agency, June 9

Faced with new threats, notably from Russia, the U.K. is moving to 'war-fighting readiness', its Prime Minister, Keir Starmer, said, as his government released a strategic review of its defence capabilities and challenges.As an outcome of the review, the U.K. would build up to 12 attack submarines as part of the AUKUS (Australia, U.K. and U.S.) alliance. It would spend £15 billion on nuclear warheads, £1 billion on digital capability with a new 'CyberEM Command' and undertake improvements to housing for the military.Speaking at a BAE Systems shipyard in Glasgow,

Mr. Starmer, citing Russian aggression, said that the threats faced by the U.K. had reached new levels since the end of the Cold War. "The front line, if you like, is here," he said. We are moving to war fighting readiness as the central purpose of our armed forces," the Prime Minister added.Outlining the government's "NATO-first" defence strategy, Mr. Starmer said that the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), was a "fundamental source of our [ the U.K.'s ] strategic strength".Since coming to power in July 2024, the Labour government has committed to increasing U.K. defence expenditure to 2.5% of GDP by 2027 and has a stated ambition of 3% of GDP between 2029 and 2034. On Monday, Mr. Starmer refused to commit to a specific date, saying he did not believe in "performative fantasy politics". U.S. President Donald Trump has called on NATO allies to spend 5% of their GDP on arms....We will innovate and accelerate innovation to a wartime pace," Mr. Starmer said, adding the U.K. would be the fastest innovator in NATO.Mr. Starmer suggested that the post-Cold War 'peace dividend' which was reflected in higher welfare spending from available funds, would now be a 'defence dividend' derived from creating jobs in the defence sector. The Labour government has faced criticism for announcing cuts to welfare spending, and it has had to partially roll back some of these, such as cuts to a winter-fuel payment for senior citizens.

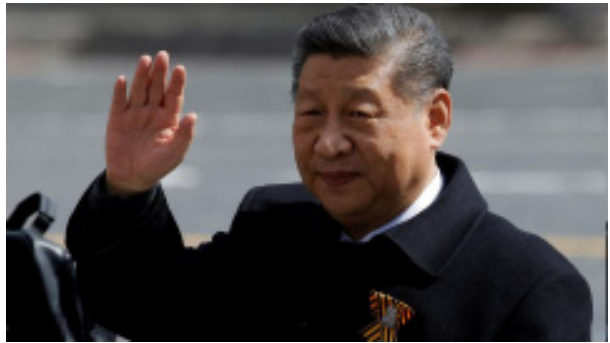
# China blasts U.S. for its computer chip moves and for threatening student visas

GNS News Agency, June 9

China blasted the U.S. on Monday (June 2, 2025) over moves it alleged harmed Chinese interests, including issuing AI chip export control guidelines, stopping the sale of chip design software to China, and planning to revoke Chinese student visas. "These practices seriously violate the consensus" reached during trade discussions in Geneva last month, the Commerce Ministry said in a statement. That referred to a China-U.S. joint statement in which the United States and China agreed to slash their massive recent tariffs, restarting stalled trade between the world's two biggest economies.

But last month's de-escalation in President Donald Trump's trade wars did nothing to resolve underlying differences between Beijing and Washington, and Monday's (June 2, 2025) statement showed how easily such agreements can lead to further turbulence.The deal lasts 90 days, creating time for U.S. and Chinese negotiators to reach a more substantive agreement. But the pause also leaves tariffs higher than before Mr. Trump started ramping them up last month. And businesses and investors must contend with uncertainty about whether the truce will last.

U.S. Trade Representative Jamieson Greer said the U.S. agreed to drop the 145% tax President Trump imposed last month to 30%. China agreed to lower its tariff rate on U.S. goods to 10% from 125%.The Commerce Ministry said China held up its end of the deal, cancelling or suspending tariffs and non-tariff measures taken against the U.S. "reciprocal tariffs" following the agreement. "The United States has unilaterally provoked new economic and trade frictions, exacerbating the uncertainty and instability of bilateral economic and trade relations," while China has stood by its commitments, the statement said.It also threatened unspecified retaliation, saying China will "continue to take resolute and forceful measures to safeguard its legitimate rights and interests".And in response to recent comments by President Trump, it said of the U.S.: "Instead of reflecting on it-



self, it has turned the tables and unreasonably accused China of violating the consensus, which is seriously contrary to the facts."Mr. Trump stirred further controversy on Friday (May 30, 2025), saying he will no longer be nice with China on trade, declaring in a social media post that the country had broken an agreement with the United States.

Hours later, Mr. Trump said in the Oval Office that he would speak with Chinese President Xi Jinping and "hopefully we'll work that out," while still insisting China had violated the agreement. "The bad news is that China, perhaps not surprisingly to some, HAS TOTALLY VIOLATED ITS AGREEMENT WITH U.S."Mr. Trump posted. "So much for being Mr. NICE GUY!"The Trump administration also stepped up the clash with China in other ways last week, announcing that it would start revoking visas for Chinese students studying in the U.S.U.S campuses host more than 2,75,000 students from China.Both countries are in a race to develop advanced technologies such as artificial intelligence, with Washington seeking to curb China's access to the most advanced computer chips. China is also seeking to displace the U.S. as the leading power in the Asia-Pacific, including through gaining control over close U.S. partner and leading tech giant Taiwan.

# Elon Musk denies taking drugs after White House appearance with black eye

GNS News Agency, June 9

Elon Musk on Saturday denied a report that he used ketamine and other drugs extensively last year on the 2024 campaign trail.The New York Times reported Friday that the billionaire adviser to President Donald Trump used so much ketamine, a powerful anesthetic, that he developed bladder problems.

The newspaper said the world's richest person also took ecstasy and mushrooms and traveled with a pill box last year, adding that it was not known whether Musk also took drugs while heading the so-called Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE) after Trump took power in January.In a post Saturday on X, Musk said: "To be clear, I am NOT taking drugs! The New York Times was lying their a\*\* off."He added: "I tried 'prescription' ketamine a few years ago and said so on X, so this not even news. It helps for getting out of dark mental holes, but haven't taken it since then."

Musk first dodged a question about his drug use at a bizarre farewell appearance Friday with Trump in the Oval Office in which the Tesla and SpaceX boss sported a noticeable black eye as he formally ended his role as Trump's main cost-cutter at DOGE, which fired tens of thousands of civil servants.News of the injury drew substantial attention as it came right after the Times report on his alleged



drug use. The daily recalled erratic behavior such as Musk giving an enthusiastic Nazi-style salute last year.Musk said he got the injury while horsing around with his young son, named X, when he told the child to hit him in the face. "And he did. Turns out even a five-year-old punching you in the face actually is..." he added, before tailing off.Later Friday, when a reporter asked Trump if he was aware of Musk's "regular drug use," Trump responded: "I wasn't." "I think Elon is a fantastic guy," he added.Musk has previously admitted to taking ketamine, saying he was prescribed it to treat a "negative frame of mind" and suggesting his use of drugs benefited his work.

# Waqf protests against Modi government, not Hindu community: AIMPLB president Maulana Khalid Saifullah Rahmani

Public attending the public meeting organised by All India Muslim Personal Law Board to oppose the Waqf Amendment Act, 2025, at Dharna Chowk in Hyderabad oAll India Muslim Personal Law Board (AIMPLB) president Maulana Khalid Saifullah Rahmani on Sunday asserted that series of demonstrations against the Waqf Amendment Act, 2025, would continue, emphasising that the 'fight' was against the Union government and not against the Hindu faith or community.Mr. Maulana Rahmani, flanked by faith leaders from various religious communities, including Sikh and Christian, and Muslims affiliated to different sects and schools of thought, as well as politicians, was addressing a public meeting organised by the AIMPLB at the Dharna Chowk. He charged the Union government with attempting to undermine the unity of those opposing the legislation. "Our fight is only against the Central government. It is not against our Hindu brothers. The AIMPLB is of this view, and will continue with our protests," he said. He sought to buttress his argument by pointing out that 228 Members of Parliament had opposed the Waqf Amendment Bill, 2025. These MPs, he noted, were not all Muslim, yet had voted against

the Bill in the spirit of secularism and justice. "This is a country of love, brotherhood, tolerance, and generosity. We are certain that our Hindu brothers and those who stand for justice will continue to support us," he said. He also expressed his gratitude to members of the Sikh and Christian communities who joined the protest and spoke against the Act.All India Majlis-e-Ittehadul Muslimimeen (AIMIM) legislator Akbaruddin Owaisi, who shared the stage with Maulana Rahmani, pledged support for the AIMPLB's campaign against the Act. He alleged that the Waqf legislation was not intended to protect waqf properties but to ruin them. He stressed that unity among protesters was essential for the withdrawal of the Act. "Those who think they can weaken our resolve through this law will fail. We will not give up our prayers, hijab, or waqf. We will continue our struggle within the framework of the Constitution," Mr. Owaisi said, expressing confidence that sustained pressure would force the Modi government to withdraw the legislation.Jaleesa Yaseen, representing the AIMPLB's women's wing, said the Act raised fundamental questions about Muslim identity and sought to strip the community of its rights.

# The view from India newsletter: How Ukraine hit airfields deep inside Russia



GNS News Agency, June 9

Ukraine carried out its largest drone attack inside Russia on Sunday, targeting at least four military airports in four different regions (across four time zones) in the world's largest country. Unnamed officials of the Security Services of Ukraine (SBU), the country's spy agency, have claimed that the attacks "destroyed" more than 40 Russian warplanes, including strategic bombers that can carry nuclear missiles, causing damages amounting to \$7 billion. President Volodymyr Zelenskyy claimed in a social media post the attack, which followed a Russian strike at a military training base in Ukraine, killing at least 12 soldiers, produced "an absolutely brilliant result". While the Ukrainian claims of destroying Russian strategic bombers are not independently confirmed, Russia's Ministry of Defence stated that five regions came under drone attacks and that several aircraft in two bases, one close to the border with Norway and the other in Siberia, caught fire. It said the fire was extinguished, other attacks were repelled and that there were no casualties. Russia also saw two bridges collapse in Kursk and Bryansk regions, both close to the Ukraine border, killing at least seven people and wounding 76 others. Russian officials say explosives were used to destroy the bridges. All this happened when Russian and Ukrainian officials were preparing to sit together for direct peace talks in Istanbul on Monday.

It is not clear how Ukraine pulled off such an audacious drone attack thousands of kilometres away from the frontline. According to Ukrainian claims, the four regions that were attacked are: Ryazan, Ivanov, Murmansk and Irkutsk. The Olenya air base in Murmansk, close to the Norwegian border, is around 1,900 km from the frontline. Belaya airbase in the Siberian region of Irkutsk is 4,300 km away from Ukraine. Russian officials said Amur, close to the Chinese border, also came under attack, which was repelled. The attacks on these bases demonstrate Ukraine's growing capability to hit anywhere in Russia as well as its sprawling undercover operations in Russian soil.Per the Ukrainian version, the attack was in the plans for about one and a half years. SBU officials say Ukraine had secretly transported 'first person view' drones (FPVs transmit a live video feed from its front camera to a pilot's screen) into Russian territory on trucks. Drones were kept in wooden containers on trucks which were moved closer to the targets undetected. On Sunday, the wooden containers were opened remotely and the FPV drones, attached with explosives, were launched to the airfields. The Russian Defence Ministry has confirmed that the drones that hit Olenya and Belaya were launched "from the immediate vicinity" of the airfields. Mr. Zelenskyy wrote in his social media post that "our people involved in preparing the Operation were withdrawn from Russian territory in time". Head of the Ukraine's Security Service Vasyi Maliuk looks at a map of an airfield,

amid Russia's attack on Ukraine, in an unknown location in Ukraine, in this handout picture released June 1, 2025

Among the planes that were "destroyed" are Russian Tu-95, Tu-22M3 and A-50 aircraft, according to the SBU. The Tu-95 bombers, which carry guided cruise missiles, can hit targets from thousands of kilometres afar (Tu-160 is Russia's most advanced strategic bomber). The A-50a are early warning jets that detect enemy aircraft and fire and feed intel on Russian fighter planes. "Russian strategic bombers are all burning delightfully," claimed Vasily Malyuk, the SBU chief, after the attack. According to The Economist, Russia's fleet of strategic bombers is relatively small — it operates less than 90 Tu-22s, Tu-95s and Tu-160s. If Ukraine's claims of destroying Russian bombers are true, it's a heavy blow to President Vladimir Putin and his forces.Even if Ukraine is exaggerating Russia's losses, the fact that it carried out such a massive attack deep inside Russian territory can be seen as a tactical gain, at a time when Moscow's forces have launched a new summer offensive and are making incremental territorial advances in the Sumy region. If Ukraine were planning such an elaborate attack for months, there would be questions on why the Russian intelligence failed to detect and deter them. Russia's military bloggers were quick to term June 1 a "dark day" in the history of Russian aviation. Some others, especially the nationalist sections, called it "Russia's Pearl Harbour" and demanded a similar response from the Kremlin to that of the U.S. during the Second World War. Mr. Putin, who has faced criticism at home from the nationalist sections for "not doing enough" in the war, might come under greater pressure to retaliate heavily.The attack is also a heavy blow to U.S. President Donald Trump's public push to end the Ukraine war. When Russia carried out drone attacks in Ukraine late last month, Mr. Trump had said "Putin had gone absolutely crazy" and that "Putin is playing with fire". Now, with the Ukrainian attack, the war has been pushed to a new level. And Mr. Trump's room for peace manoeuvre is shrinking fast.

1. Israel is used to condemnation, international community must impose sanctions to end war'

In this interview, Israeli author and columnist Gideon Levy tells Suhasini Haider that India, with good relations with both sides, can influence outcome, warns IMEEC may be permanent casualty of war.

2. Will there be a lasting ceasefire in Gaza? | Explained

What has the U.S. mediated through special envoy Steve Witkoff to ease the situation? What are the terms of the proposed ceasefire? Why did the last ceasefire fail? What happened after its collapse? What have international agencies warned regarding starvation in Gaza? writes Stanly Johny.

3. Alan Garber | The man who stood up to Trump

The Harvard president, who pushed back against the Trump administration's meddling with the university's affairs, is trying to do a delicate balancing act — shielding the institution from political assault while undertaking reforms that may ensure its survival, writes Aaratrika Bhaumik.

4. Foreign students face uncertainty as Trump steps up attack on universities

In April, the federal government froze more than \$2 billion in grants and contracts with Harvard, citing non-compliance with requests to modify hiring and admissions policies, dismantle diversity-equity-inclusion programmes, and conduct ideological vetting of international students, writes Anisha Dutta.

5. Pakistan's India war

Pakistan, dominated by a military mindset, is contriving to find ways and means of undermining India's progress, writes M.K. Narayanan.

# Serbia's protesting students rally to mark 7 months since train station tragedy

GNS News Agency, June 9

Thousands of people on Sunday (June 1, 2025) vowed to keep on fighting for justice and the rule of law in Serbia as they demanded that President Aleksandar Vucic call a snap parliamentary election following months of persistent demonstrations that have challenged his firm grip on power in the Balkan country.Protesters led by university students blocked bridges in the capital Belgrade and rallied in 30 other Serbian cities and towns as they also marked exactly seven months since a concrete canopy collapsed at a train station in the north, killing 16 people and sparking the massive wave of anti-corruption protests. "The whole of Serbia has risen," protesting students said in a speech that was read at all the rallies at the same time, "There will be no more silence, there will be no more surrender!"

Many people in Serbia believe that the deadly November 1 canopy collapse in Novi Sad was the result of flawed renovation work on the station building, and they link the disaster to alleged government corruption in major infrastructure projects with Chinese state companies.President Vucic, whom critics have accused of imposing authoritarian rule in Serbia since coming to power over a decade ago, initially dismissed the possibility of holding early elections but on Friday (May 30, 2025) suggested they could take place, though without saying exactly when.Sunday's (June 1, 2025) protests included commemoration ceremonies for the victims of the Novi Sad crash and student marches and blockades. In Belgrade, crowds halted traffic at two key bridges over the Sava River for three hours, while protesters in Novi Sad carried a white wreath for the canopy collapse victims as they walked toward the crash site.Mina Miletic, from Belgrade, said she is encouraged by so many people fighting together for the same goal: "The rule of law and life in a decent country."President Vucic has



accused the protesters of working for unspecified Western powers to "destroy Serbia."

Pro-government media on Sunday (May 30, 2025) described the blockades in Belgrade as "terror" and falsely alleged that "only a handful" of people joined the rallies.Most media in Serbia are controlled by the ruling populists, often lashing out at government opponents and accusing them of anti-state activities.The student movement is seeking a snap vote, arguing that the current government cannot meet their demands for justice for the crash victims. Presidential and parliamentary elections are otherwise due some time in 2027.No one has been sentenced in connection with the tragedy in Novi Sad and doubts prevail that ongoing legal proceedings will uncover the alleged corruption behind the crash.Serbia is formally seeking European Union entry but the ruling populists have been accused of clamping down on democratic freedoms, including free media. President Vucic's authorities have stepped up pressure on protesters, including police detentions, intimidation and physical attacks.

# Telangana STF hails move to set up Young India Integrated Residential Schools

GNS News Agency, June 9

Khammam: Telangana State School Teachers Federation (STF) state president Devarakonda Saidulu lauded the State government's decision to establish Young India Integrated Residential Schools.The integrated residential schools, being set up under one umbrella for SC, ST, BC, minority, and economically weaker sections of upper caste social groups, would create a sense of equality. The schools would set new standards in the field of education, he said.

Saidulu, along with federation leaders, called on Deputy Chief Minister Bhatti Vikramarka, shared their views about the schools, and presented a painting of the Integrated Residential School to him.





# Integrating modern medicine with ancient wisdom



There has always been a gulf, and perceived incompatibility, between modern medicine and integrative medicine. While modern medicine is focused largely on abnormalities and finding cures for them, integrative medicine is focused on the entire continuum of human healthcare engagement: prevention, maintenance and cure, or to put it more specifically in medical treatment terms, rejuvenation, restoration and rehabilitation. Ancient medical systems such as ayurveda, yoga, acupuncture and tai chi have great potential for the human body, brain and mind, as many research papers have revealed. It has been pointed out too, that we may be erroneous in calling these older systems complementary, as they not only preceded much of modern medicine as we know it but have stood the test of time.

Integrative medicine sits well within the philosophy that healthcare must be pluralistic, inclusive and adopt complementary approaches that restore equilibrium (the healthy condition) in an individual. The National Center for Complementary and Integrative Health, United States, emphasises that integrative medicine is a holistic approach to health and well-being, using a coordinated and conjoint but optimal use of allopathy and complementary medicines. Integrative medicine may be defined as a 'single-window' healthcare service that adopts an evidence-based blend of traditional and modern medicines, with optimal use as either a combination or as monotherapy. Here we present one client's healing journey from a plethora of long COVID symptoms, to a state of well-being, with an approach that combines the best of modern science and the wisdom of ancient medical traditions.

Mr. S, a 52-year-old businessman, consulted us, burdened as he was by a complex web of physical and psychological challenges. Following a COVID-19 infection two years ago, he had begun experiencing persistent cognitive lapses, fluctuating moods ranging from irritability to agitation, muscular stiffness, low back pain, and a host of gastrointestinal issues including bloating and acid reflux. Compounding these problems were fatigue, palpitations, dizziness, sleep disturbances, and increased sensitivity to noise and light — symptoms that, taken together, seriously eroded his capacity to function both at work and at home. A comprehensive multidisciplinary evaluation conducted by our team of a physician, a psychologist, a physical therapist, and an electrophysiologist uncovered several key findings. Although Mr. S's EEG and ECG were normal, precision tests revealed significant autonomic dysfunction detected as Postural Orthostatic Tachycardia Syndrome (POTS). POTS is diagnosed through a significant increase in heart rate on changing postures (usually 30 beats or more when one progresses from lying to standing) accompanied as well in some cases by a drop in blood pressure (systolic > 20 mmHG and diastolic > 10 mmHG) on standing up.

Mr. S also suffered from marked anxiety, moderate depressive symptoms, and mild cognitive impairment. His score of 17 out of 30 on our comprehensive autonomic symptom checklist highlighted the extent of his dysautonomia. In light of these findings, the care team decided on an integrated treatment strategy, merging established modern medical practices with ancient healing wisdom to holistically address both his physical and psychological ailments. Central to his modern medical management was the judicious use of pharmacotherapy to stabilise autonomic imbalances, manage mood-related symptoms, and alleviate discomfort. The autonomic nervous system takes its origins in our limbic (emotional) brain, and the use of drugs that stabilise brain activity is, therefore, both logical and necessary. Augmenting this approach was a cutting-edge novel intervention Transcutaneous Auricular Vagus Nerve Stimulation (taVNS). Vagus nerve stimulation has long been studied for its role in modulating the balance between the body's sympathetic ("fight or flight") and parasympathetic ("rest and digest") systems. In taVNS, a small electrode stimulates the auricular branch of the vagus nerve near the ear. These sessions, administered four times weekly for 20 minutes each, are designed to prompt a parasympathetic response, helping to calm hyperactive stress circuits in the body. Research increasingly indicates that taVNS can reduce heart rate variability issues, lower inflammation, and alleviate mental health symptoms — making it particularly relevant for managing complex dysautonomia. Neuromodulation of this kind "paces" the nervous system, like the cardiac pacemaker.

Mr. S's psychological care included 10 hours of Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) to mitigate severe anxiety and moderate depression including cognitive retraining exercises to help his neurocognitive symptoms. It is well known that neurocognitive dysfunction that is perceived but not detected in formal testing, also called subjective cognitive dysfunction, is a common outcome of depression and anxiety. Under the guidance of a clinical psychologist, he learned to identify distorted thought patterns, improve stress management skills, and adopt healthier coping strategies. Muscle relaxation techniques further supported this process, helping him gain mastery over the physiological manifestations of anxiety — such as muscle tension and shallow breathing. His practice of cognitive retraining also helped in his gaining confidence about his cognitive performance. Physical therapy formed another pivotal dimension of his treatment. Through manual therapy, electrotherapy, and graduated exercise regimens, Mr. S found relief from muscle spasms, built endurance, and improved both gait and coordination.

Meanwhile, complementary approaches from naturopathy and ayurveda provided a well-rounded, integrative model of care. Treatments such as acupressure, reflexology, and abdominal mud packs helped stabilise his digestive system and offered a soothing counterpoint to the physical and psychological stresses he had been enduring. Shiroabhyangam—a gentle ayurvedic head massage with warm kshirabala oil — further enhanced relaxation, improved sleep initiation, and encouraged a sense of inner calm. A structured yoga regimen completed his mind-body therapeutic journey. Incorporating pranayama (breathing exercises), sukhshma vyayama (gentle stretches), chanting, and yoga nidra (deep relaxation), the programme empowered Mr. S to calm his overactive sympathetic drive and strengthen his parasympathetic tone. In tandem with a balanced, gut-friendly dietary approach, his digestive issues were addressed by reducing acid reflux triggers, incorporating probiotics to support healthy gut flora, and adopting smaller, more frequent meals to alleviate bloating. After five

weeks, Mr. S reported markedly reduced dizziness, numbness, and muscular pain; substantial improvement in mood and sleep; and greater overall resilience. With his autonomic dysfunction significantly mitigated, he returned to a more productive and satisfying daily routine, bolstered by sensible nutrition, regular exercise, and continued yoga practice.

Comprehensive and integrated care, including but not restricted to yoga, tai chi, qigong, acupuncture and other mind-body practices, are recommended as add-on interventions in mainstream care and such an approach is rapidly gaining application globally for persons with chronic diseases. In a large study of people with chronic neuropsychiatric symptoms in the U.S., it was found that 43.8% of U.S. adults with at least one neuropsychiatric symptom, used at least one Complementary and Alternative Medicine (CAM) therapy. The multiplicity of symptoms appeared to be an important predictor of integrative medicine being considered. Other important considerations were the duration and chronicity of the complaints and the recommendation of the conventional care provider to consider CAM. Twenty per cent of patients used CAM because standard treatments were either too expensive or ineffective, while 25% used CAM because it was recommended by a conventional health care provider. Adults with at least one neuropsychiatric symptom were more likely to disclose the use of CAM to a conventional healthcare provider (47.9%). Our experience with Mr. S, one of over 15,000 people with chronic disease that we have treated using integrative medical therapy, indicates that such an approach holds promise for individuals experiencing dysautonomia as part of long COVID, and indeed a plethora of other chronic symptoms and diseases, especially in our experience, those affecting the brain and mind.

Emerging data globally indicates that post-viral syndromes can involve persistent autonomic disruptions — symptoms such as palpitations, fatigue, and orthostatic intolerance often linger, long after the acute infection has remitted. Combining modern techniques such as taVNS, targeted medications, and structured rehabilitation with holistic therapies — yoga, meditation, acupuncture, and evidence-based traditional remedies — can help recalibrate the autonomic nervous system and foster a meaningful recovery. Reviewing the available research data including discussions at expert forums such as the World Congress of Neurorehabilitation (Vancouver, Canada, May 2024), where Buddhist Clinic had the opportunity to present a full symposium on integrative approaches to neurorehabilitation, the consensus appears to be that integrative medicine is the need of the hour, in an ageing world burdened by chronic disease. Bringing complementary and alternative treatments into the mainstream and seamlessly integrating them with modern (allopathic) medicine and treatments is therefore not just desirable, but essential. Integrative medical practice is criticised in some quarters. These criticisms arise from safety concerns, lack of well-designed efficacy studies, limited knowledge about drug interactions, less robust regulatory controls over products, perceived bias against CAM in mainstream medical journals, and conflict between research and clinical practice. Research in complementary and alternative healthcare approaches has increased in recent years, and sufficient data that support the benefits of certain practices in some illnesses are being reported. In addition, work in the field of non-pharmacological care research for conditions like cancer points out that these practices have become 'essential and critical' in providing optimal care and support to elders with this condition. With the support for integrative medicine by the Government of India, the future growth of such research appears bright. In our experience, the service paradigm has to be based on a McDonald's model: combining prescription (the Mac meal) with choice (just fries or a burger as one deems fit). For conditions of health and mild impairment, the choice model may work well, as it encourages patient autonomy; but in conditions of disease, where restoration and rehabilitation are required, a prescription model drawn up by the healthcare team may work better. The core of integrative medicine lies in its unique ability to encourage patient choice and participation in care; to be complementary (combining the modern with the traditional, seamlessly); to support in acute conditions and take the lead in chronic conditions; to focus on symptoms rather than diagnosis; and to take a practical, problem-solving approach to health and wellness. Most importantly, perhaps, combining modern medicine with ancient wisdom, leverages the power of human touch and communication, both powerful tools in the journey to health and well-being. Thus, as Mr. S's journey reveals, the synergy of modern medicine and ancient wisdom offers great hope for individuals confronting chronic diseases including those dealing with the complex aftermath of viral illnesses such as Covid. A truly holistic path to restored health and well-being has been brought to life by bringing together healing traditions, both modern and ancient.

## WhatsApp officially launches on iPad with full feature support, multitasking, and privacy controls



Hyderabad: It is a major update that was long requested by users WhatsApp is now officially open for the iPad. Core features of the popular messaging platform cobbled together to fit the gigantic screen for the larger experience. Users can stay connected with the ease of handling all devices. Enjoying high-quality video and audio calls to up to 32 people along with screen sharing capabilities while flipping the camera between front and rear that new experience of WhatsApp on the iPad makes it perfectly fluid for personal and group communications. Made with iPadOS integration the app supports multitasking features such as Stage Manager, Split View, and Slide Over, allowing users to chat while browsing the web or collaborating on a project during a call-what-a-win for productive or casual use. Support is also in place for Apple Magic Keyboard and Apple Pencil, enabling further usability enhancement on the iPad. This app uses WhatsApp's multi-device technology to keep all the messages, calls, and media synced across iPhone, Mac, and pretty much all other devices while retaining end-to-end encryption for privacy.

# Iran has amassed even more near weapons-grade uranium, says UN watchdog says



APVienna: Iran has further increased its stockpile of uranium enriched to near weapons-grade levels, a confidential report by the U.N. nuclear watchdog said Saturday. In a separate report, the agency called on Tehran to urgently change course and comply with its years-long probe. The report comes at a sensitive time, as the administration of U.S. President Donald Trump seeks to reach a deal with Tehran to limit its nuclear program. The two sides have held several rounds of talks, so far without agreement. The report by the Vienna-based International Atomic Energy Agency — which was seen by The Associated Press — says that as of May 17, Iran has amassed 408.6 kilograms (900.8 pounds) of uranium enriched up to 60%. That's an increase of 133.8 kilograms (294.9 pounds) — or almost 50% — since the IAEA's last report in February. The 60% enriched material is a short, technical step away from weapons-grade levels of 90%. A report in February put this stockpile level at 274.8 kilograms (605.8 pounds). There was no immediate comment from Tehran on the new IAEA report.

What does the report say?

The IAEA report raised a stern warning, saying that Iran is now "the only non-nuclear-weapon state to produce such material" — something the agency said was of "serious concern." Approximately 42 kilograms of 60% enriched uranium is theoretically enough to produce one atomic bomb, if enriched further to 90%, according to the watchdog. The IAEA report, a quarterly, also estimated that as of May 17, Iran's overall stockpile of enriched uranium — which includes uranium enriched to lower levels — stood at 9,247.6 kilograms (20,387.4 pounds). That's an increase of 953.2 kilograms (2,101.4 pounds) since February's report.

Iran has maintained its nuclear program is for peace-

ful purposes only, but the IAEA chief, Rafael Mariano Grossi, has warned that Tehran has enough uranium enriched to near-weapons-grade levels to make "several" nuclear bombs if it chose to do so. Iranian officials have increasingly suggested that Tehran could pursue an atomic bomb. U.S. intelligence agencies assess that Iran has yet to begin a weapons program, but has "undertaken activities that better position it to produce a nuclear device, if it chooses to do so." Iran's Foreign Ministry and the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran said in a joint statement that the IAEA report was based on "unreliable and differing information sources" and accused it of being biased, unprofessional and lacking crucial, updated information. "The Islamic Republic of Iran expresses its disappointment about the report, which was prepared by imposing pressure on the agency for political purposes, and expresses its obvious objection about its content," the statement read.

The statement reiterated that the country's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, who has final say on all state matters, issued a religious decree that nuclear weapons would not be part of the country's defense arsenal. However, Iran stressed that under international law, the country has a right to a peaceful nuclear program, including uranium enrichment. The statement said the uranium enrichment was under "transparent" monitoring by the IAEA, which the IAEA denies. The statement also accused the IAEA of turning a blind eye toward the U.S.'s 2018 withdrawal from the nuclear deal. Omani Foreign Minister Badr al-Busaidi, who is mediating the U.S.-Iran talks was in Tehran on Saturday to present the latest U.S. proposal for ongoing talks.

Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi wrote on X. The talks seek to limit Iran's nuclear program in exchange for the lifting of some of the crushing economic sanctions the U.S. has imposed on the Islamic Republic, which have strained relations for almost 50 years. The fifth round of talks between the U.S. and Iran concluded in Rome last week with "some but not conclusive progress," al-Busaidi said at the time. Israel said Saturday's report was a clear warning sign that "Iran is totally determined to complete its nuclear weapons program," according to a statement from Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's office. It said IAEA's report "strongly reinforces what Israel has been saying for years — the purpose of Iran's nuclear program is not peaceful." It also added that Iran's level of enrichment "has no civilian justification whatsoever" and appealed on the international community to "act now to stop Iran." It is rare for Netanyahu to make statements on Saturday, the Jewish day of rest, underlying the urgency with which he sees the matter.

# The challenges of data centres trying to meet their climate goals

A team of researchers from Microsoft and WSP Global has published a groundbreaking study in Nature demonstrating that advanced cooling methods like cold plates and immersion cooling can cut data centre emissions by 15-21%, energy use by 15-20%, and water consumption by 31-52% compared to traditional air cooling. The life cycle assessment, led by Husam Alissa of Microsoft, Mukunth Natarajan, and Praneet Arshi of WSP, among others, also provided actionable insights to help the Information and Communications Technology (ICT) industry meet its climate goals. "Our [life cycle assessment] has shown that reducing data centre energy use through advanced liquid-cooling technologies will lead to marked reductions in data centre environmental impacts," the authors wrote in their paper.

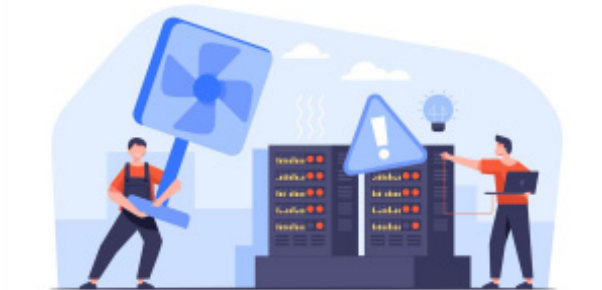
Electronics versus rising temperatures Electronics heat up like crowded kitchens: billions of microscopic switches (transistors) are like cooks working nonstop, bumping into each other while flipping electrical dosas (data). The tighter they are packed — that is smaller the chips are — or the more tasks they handle, the more they collide and create heat, just like a packed kitchen gets hotter, needing fans and ACs to cool down. A laptop is like a kitchen with one burner: a simple fan suffices. A data centre is like a thousand laptops working at full speed in a single room, generating heat like a massive bonfire compared to a single candle. Without cooling, the intense heat will melt the hardware in minutes.

Heat slows down electrons, like runners in thick mud. If the chips get too hot, they may malfunction or altogether fail. Cooling keeps them running smoothly, ensures a longer lifespan and fast and reliable performance, and prevents heat damage. Just like an athlete needs water to stay sharp in a race, electronics need efficient heat removal. Race to cut emissions In data centres, cooling consumes nearly as much power as computing, like an AC fighting oven heat in a busy kitchen. To curb climate change, the ICT industry needs to cut emissions by 42% by 2030 (from its 2015 levels). Data centres need greener designs that use less energy and water, and have lower greenhouse gas emissions to help meet global climate goals and keep warming below 1.5°C. Urgent upgrades to energy, efficiency, and cooling are critical. Chips are also getting smaller, faster, and more energy-efficient, like upgrading your phone every year without draining the battery faster. As the demand for cloud services increases, so must data centre capacities and heat mitigation strategies. Ice packs and oil baths

Two prominent cooling techniques have emerged as viable alternatives. Cold plates, also known as direct-to-chip cooling, are small heat exchange modules equipped with microchannels to enhance heat transfer. Think of a cold plate like an ice pack strapped to a feverish forehead, but for computer chips. It sits directly on hot components, with small coolant-filled channels absorbing heat into tiny channels filled with coolant. When it becomes warmer, the coolant — such as 25% polyethylene glycol and 75% water — flows away and dumps the heat outside, while fresh coolant entering the veins keep the cycle going. This method is more efficient than fans the same way swapping a handheld fan for an ice-cold bath is better. In a cold-plate system, the liquid-to-air heat transfer ratio ranges from 50% to 80%, sometimes more. The second technique, immersion cooling, is like dunking a hot frying pan into a pool of heat-hungry oil instead of blowing air on it. The oil, which is good at dissipating heat within itself, soaks up 100% of the pan's heat and keeps it from overheating. In the one-phase cooling method, like swirling cold water around the pan, the oil stays liquid but carries heat away. In two-phase cooling, the technique works the way water cools in a mud pot: the coolant fluid bubbles into vapour at a low temperature, rises into a cooling coil, condenses, drips back down, and repeats. "These techs cut corrosion, boost reliability, and slash carbon footprint — all while running silent without fans," the researchers wrote. Pioneers like Microsoft and Alibaba are already deploying these systems at scale.

Green or just less dirty?

To truly lower the carbon footprint of cooling technologies, scientists, policymakers, and lawmakers need to



weigh its full impact. While the new solutions are innovative, they face hurdles. Coolant fluids involve different regulations, and complex designs delay deployment. Using them is like swapping plastic straws for paper: they are greener, but not without trade-offs. The world could end up trading one ecological problem for a different, even worse, one. If the electricity for an electric car comes from a coal power plant, the car's carbon footprint is still high. Similarly, cooling gains can backfire if pollution is merely shifted elsewhere. The study team's cradle-to-grave life cycle assessment evaluated air-cooled, cold-plate, and immersion cooling across emissions, energy, and water use, proving that sustainability demands systemic thinking, not isolated fixes. Twin engines of a green data centre

The assessment revealed that with grid electricity, cold plates and immersion cooling cut greenhouse gas emissions by more than 15%, energy use by more than 15%, and water consumption by more than 31% — making them superior to conventional cooling technologies in use today. With 100% renewable energy, the team found the cuts could jump to 13% for emissions, 15% for energy, and 50% for water. Switching to renewables slashes emissions by 85-90%, energy use by 6-7%, and water demand by 55-85%, regardless of cooling tech," the researchers wrote. Thus, life cycle assessments can reveal sustainability trade-offs either within the same cooling technology or when comparing different technologies. Ultimately, the calculus is clear: ICT's climate future hinges on tackling how the industry cools its data centres.

## Samsung unveils One UI 8 Beta, bringing personalized AI and enhanced productivity to Galaxy devices

Hyderabad: Samsung has officially announced the beta rollout of One UI 8, its latest software update built on Android 16. Redefining the Galaxy user experience, One UI 8 introduces an advanced multimodal AI agent, productivity improvements, and deeper personalization. Early-bird access is granted for Galaxy S25, S25+, and S25 Ultra users in Germany, Korea, the UK, and the US. Close-quartered collaborative efforts with Google saw the integration of real-time design feedback into One UI 8 as the UI launches alongside Android 16 for the very first time. It opens AI-powered multimodal capability, contextual UX, and suggestions for foldables.

Highlights include Now Bar and Now Brief that deliver curated insights to assist with task management. Privacy, from the Sa release of Knox Vault, is treated as paramount, giving the user complete control over processing both on-device and in the cloud AI. One UI 8 simplifies everyday workflows. Auracast audio streaming allows device connectivity across the range, from Galaxy Buds3 to hearing aids, by way of QR codes, and repair center visits become easy via NFC-enabled support tools. The updated reminder app organizes your trips and works, still, with voice instructions.



## Bitcoin crosses \$100k: What are some crypto dangers you should be aware of?



suring that the data collected in India to create and run A.I. tools within the educational sector as well as other fields are appropriately gathered and that students don't blindly follow the output of the technology. "A.I. biases baked into the current data sets are a big issue. So if you're making decisions based on flawed or biased data sets and their corresponding A.I. tools, there will be worse or problematic actions taken," said Mr. Patnaik, the former Rajya Sabha member. "In the Indian context, as a civil servant and public official, I have the experience to know that we cannot create A.I. systems that are built only upon data collected through formal official channels such as government records, consumer purchases, online behavior, etc. because a lot of insights and answers to problems in India come through informal data channels from entities like street vendors, labourers, unskilled workers, and others in informal sectors," Mr. Patnaik added. Although potential A.I. risks to education in India were highlighted in the OpenAI study, major concerns around other prominent use cases of the technology deserve just as much or more attention in the coming months, according to some tech-policy experts like Mr. Krishnan from IIT-Madras and Mr. Patnaik, the former Rajya Sabha member. Mr. Krishnan said he was surprised that the results of OpenAI's risk perception survey didn't highlight threats like the role of A.I. in the military and warfare while Patnaik said he would have expected the study to highlight how the technology could be used negatively or positively to impact climate change. EdTech executives like Mr. Sharma from Schoolnet say that the future of A.I. in education is full of excitement and innovation because of the potential to democratise and scale access to world-class educational tools across India including among the poorest schools and students. "Soon we will have an A.I. avatar or teacher trained on Einstein, Aristotle, Tagore, you know the best of the best, and every student then gets access to a genius teacher," said Mr. Sharma."

tors and venture capital funding, MBA students increasingly gain hands-on experience in launching start-ups. Platforms like Kickstarter and Y Combinator provide valuable ecosystems for students looking to pitch ideas, develop products, and gain hands-on experience developing revenue-generating businesses even while they study. This allows them to apply classroom knowledge in a real-world setting and equips them with practical skills in leadership, product development, and market strategy. Business Performance Optimisation: A successful business requires more than a great idea; it demands efficient operations and strategy alignment across all departments. Many MBA programmes incorporate real-world projects where students analyse a company's operations in areas like financial accounting, marketing, and operations management. ERP systems — such as SAP and Oracle — are widely used to streamline processes and improve operational efficiency. Familiarity with such tools can help optimise performance, whether by improving workflows, managing resources, or driving profitability. Leveraging Tech and AI: As businesses increasingly turn to automation and AI, MBA students must learn how to leverage these technologies to enhance efficiency and streamline operations. Tools like Zapier allow users to automate routine tasks while AI-driven platforms, such as chatbots, transform customer service by providing fast, efficient solutions to customer inquiries. A PwC report stated that that AI can potentially increase business productivity by 40% by 2035.



# How safe are facial wipes for your skin? Dermats weigh in



Whether it's for removing makeup or refreshing a sweaty face, facial wipes are our go-to for their sheer convenience. But is there a danger lurking behind this ease?What's in my bag? – My wallet, makeup essentials, my earphones, a box of snacks, and, of course, a pouch of facial wipes.

It's surprising how facial wipes have become an indispensable part of our everyday bags, amongst other things, and there are reasons behind that. Facial wipes are convenient, and more often than not, they come in handy in tricky situations (think spilling some tea when the tissue comes to your rescue). Of course, it's also useful during a quick change to remove makeup, amongst other utilities.Additionally, we cannot deny the fact that after the pandemic our inclination towards hygiene has increased manifold and these wipes sometimes just double as surface wipes too. That probably justifies the current wet wipes market in India, which is about Rs 744 crore and this is expected to grow annually by 18.38 per cent and reach Rs 2,155 crore by 2027.Now, here's the thing: we often tend to overlook a problem when it has innumerable uses. So, the question is, are we doing the same thing when it comes to facial wipes, or are they just as harmless as a dove? India Today spoke to experts and here's what we understand:Facial wipes are convenient, and more often than not, they come in handy in tricky situations. (Photo: Unsplash)

The problem of plentyFacial wipes are infused with a mix of ingredients designed to cleanse your skin. While most wipes are dermatologically tested, certain chemicals in them might not suit every skin type, particularly if you have sensitive or acne-prone skin.Dr Shireen Furtado, senior consultant, medical and cosmetic dermatology, Aster CMI Hospital, Bengaluru, explains, "With the proliferation of options, it becomes important to evaluate the ingredients, effectiveness, and overall quality of these products to determine their value in skincare routines."He adds that the market is replete with various facial wipes brands, but it is always necessary to check their efficacy and suitability for diverse skin

types. Not all products are created equal; some may contain harsh chemicals or allergens that could potentially harm the skin rather than provide the intended cleansing or moisturising benefits. A flip around, and ingredients list at the back of the packaging can spill a lot of beans.What to keep in mindWhen selecting a facial tissue, it is essential to consider various factors and ingredients that may influence both the quality and suitability of the product for your needs. Dr Deepali Bhardwaj, a Delhi-based dermatologist, suggests that wipes shouldn't be used on the face unless absolutely necessary. And if at all it has to be, certain things have to be kept in mind.

Check ingredients to ensure if there is presence of any additives such as lotions or fragrances that could affect skin sensitivity. "Ensure the wipes contain hydrating ingredients like aloe vera, hyaluronic acid, or Vitamin C, and are free from alcohol. They should also have minimal perfume, as excessive fragrance can irritate the skin and lead to blackheads or whiteheads. The alcohol in the perfume can linger on the skin, and applying cream over it may cause further irritation while attracting dust and impurities," Dr Bhardwaj mentions.Dr Furtado also shares a few aspects to keep in mind while purchasing facial wipes: Key aspects to evaluate include the softness and strength of the tissue (preferably choose wipes that have good feedback/good word-of-mouth review)As well as check if there is presence of any additives such as lotions or fragrances that could affect skin sensitivity. Furthermore, the environmental impact of the product, including whether it is made from recycled materials or is biodegradable, should also be taken into account to ensure a responsible purchase.Makeup/facial wipes over cleanser?There's a quintessential Bengali expression, "Iyadh", that describes a state of being that's more than just procrastination or laziness. Why bring it up here? Because while we can't stress enough the importance of a good skincare routine, many women might be tempted to skip cleansing and opt for a quick swipe with facial or makeup wipes out of sheer Iyadh—and that's a big no-no.Experts warn that facial wipes can be convenient, but they should never replace your regular skincare routine."When it comes to removing makeup, there are much better options. You can use an essential oil, a cream, or, ideally, a cleanser. A cleanser is the best choice, and for optimal results, you can double cleanse—first removing the makeup with the cleanser, then using it again as a face wash. Just using wipes is a big no-no," advises Dr Bhardwaj.Experts warn that facial wipes can be convenient, but they should never replace your regular skincare routine.Swipe right on wipes?Well, it depends, as Dr Bhardwaj suggests, using wipes when it is absolutely necessary."If you absolutely need to use a facial wipe, reserve it for times when your face is really dirty, and water isn't available. However, if you do have access to water, splashing your face and gently patting it dry with soft tissue is a much better option," she

# Does colouring your hair lead to greying?



Does colouring your hair actually lead to greying, or is it just a myth stopping you from achieving that hair makeover of your dreams? Ironically, the answer isn't black or white—it lies somewhere in the grey.

"New hair, new me" – they say it for a reason! Colouring your hair is one of the best ways to embrace a makeover. Like your overall style, your hair colour is also an expression of your personality. While some go bold with vibrant shades (think pink, green, or blue), others prefer the timeless elegance of natural browns or the glamorous allure of mahogany. The colour options are endless, and so is the variety of products available to choose from.However, despite the excitement of choosing a new shade, there's often a lingering concern associated with hair colouring – premature greying. A common perception, especially among Indian households, suggests that altering one's natural hair colour with dyes or chemical products inevitably leads to greying.This belief has been around for years, leading many to be resolute in their avoidance of hair colour. Doesn't it remind you of that time your parents sternly warned you not to "ruin" your tresses by colouring them in your 20s?

But how true is this perception? Does colouring your hair actually lead to greying, or is it just a myth stopping you from achieving that hair makeover of your dreams? Ironically, the answer isn't black or white—it lies somewhere in the grey.What experts sayHair colouring or not, younger generations (millennials and Gen Z) are experiencing premature greying at an alarming rate anyway. Experts blame it on genetics, nutritional deficiencies, stress, poor lifestyle choices such as alcohol consumption and smoking, several medical conditions, and environmental factors like pollution, UV rays, and oxidative stress."Hair greying is predominantly influenced by three factors: genetic predisposition, sun exposure, and stress. The process of greying occurs when melanocytes, the cells that produce pigment in hair follicles, reduce their activity or die off. This is a natural biological process and is not triggered by hair colouring," says Dr Geetika Srivastava, dermatologist, and founder of Influennz Skin and Hair Clinic, Delhi.Experts state that hair colouring is not directly linked to greying, and there is currently no meta-analysis or sufficient scientific evidence to support such a connection."Hair dyes only affect the outer layer of your hair, but not the follicles that determine the colour. Though frequent use of harsh chemical dyes dam-

ages your hair by making it dull and brittle, they are not the cause of your hair turning grey overnight," says Dr Ruben Bhasin Passi, consultant, dermatology, CK Birla Hospital, Gurugram.

Bleach to be blamed? However, the involvement of bleaching – a process used to lighten natural hair colour to deposit artificial colour – cannot be ignored."When you start colouring your hair, it may contribute to an increase in greying, primarily due to the bleach used in the process. Global colouring and high-light techniques, in particular, can damage hair roots and overall hair quality because of the harsh chemicals involved," says Delhi-based dermatologist Dr Deepali Bhardwaj."Permanent and semi-permanent hair dyes typically rely on chemicals like hydrogen peroxide and ammonia to deposit or lighten colour. These chemicals oxidise the natural melanin in your hair, leading to a permanent colour change. Over time, repeated exposure can make hair appear lighter even in its uncoloured state," adds Dr Srivastava.According to a study published in PubMed Central, the accumulation of hydrogen peroxide in hair follicles contributes to greying.This, however, can be managed by choosing darker hair colours or temporary hair dyes that do not require bleaching.Many modern hair colour products have evolved to be gentler. They are often enriched with antioxidants to help combat oxidative damage, feature ammonia-free formulas, and contain nourishing ingredients that protect and condition the hair.To enjoy hair colouring without compromising hair health, choose high-quality products, practise moderation, and follow a rigorous hair care routine.Hair colour and hair healthHair colouring, in general, can also have significant effects on hair health: Dehydration: Bleaching agents strip hair of its natural oils, leaving it dry and brittle. Weakened structure: Frequent colouring disrupts protein bonds in hair, making it prone to breakage and split ends.Scalp sensitivity: Chemicals in dyes can irritate the scalp, causing redness, itching, or allergic reactions. Loss of shine: Repeated colouring damages the hair cuticle, reducing elasticity and natural shine."Certain allergies and autoimmune conditions, such as ashly dermatosis, can be triggered by chemicals in hair dyes. This condition gives a grey hue to the skin, starting from the face and spreading across the body. These rare but serious side effects highlight the need for caution," says Dr Bhardwaj.How to minimise hair colour damageHere are some expert-approved tips to minimise damage caused by hair colour: Opt for darker or temporary colours, as these don't require bleaching and are gentler on the hair. Space out colouring sessions. Touch up grey strands every 6–8 weeks instead of colouring the entire head. Choose ammonia-free products and low-chemical dyes, as they are less harsh and safer for long-term use.Regularly apply deep conditioning masks and oil treatments to restore moisture and prevent damage Support hair health with a protein-rich diet and supplements like biotin and zinc, especially before (15 days prior is a good time) and after colouring sessions.Experts also recommend home remedies like using a curd mask every week, and steaming the scalp twice a month to keep

# Under pressure on the battlefield, Ukraine turns to drones to hurt Russia

Ukraine carried out its largest drone attack inside Russia on Sunday, targeting at least four military airports in four different regions (across four time zones) in the world's largest country. Unnamed officials of the Security Services of Ukraine (SBU), the country's spy agency, have claimed that the attacks "destroyed" more than 40 Russian warplanes, including strategic bombers that can carry nuclear missiles, causing damages amounting to \$7 billion. President Volodymyr Zelenskyy claimed in a social media post that the attack, which followed a Russian strike at a military training base in Ukraine, killing at least 12 soldiers, produced "an absolutely brilliant result".

While the Ukrainian claims of destroying Russian strategic bombers are not independently confirmed, Russia's Ministry of Defence stated that five regions came under drone attacks and that several aircraft in two bases, one close to the border with Norway and the other in Siberia, "caught fire". It said the fire was extinguished, other attacks were repelled and that there were no casualties. Russia also saw two bridges collapse in Kursk and Bryansk regions, both close to the Ukrainian border, killing at least seven people and wounding 76 others. Russian officials say explosives were used to destroy the bridges. All this happened when Russian and Ukrainian officials were preparing to sit together for direct peace talks in Istanbul on Monday.According to Ukrainian claims, the four regions that were attacked are: Ryazan, Ivanov, Murmansk, and Irkutsk. The Olenya air base in Murmansk, close to the Norwegian border, is around 1,900 km from the frontline. Belaya airbase in the Siberian region of Irkutsk is 4,300 km away from Ukraine. Russian officials said Amur, close to the Chinese border, also came under attack, which was repelled. The attacks on these bases demonstrate Ukraine's growing capability to hit deep inside Russia using cheap drones and innovate tactics, most likely involving undercover operatives.Per the Ukrainian version, the attack was in the plans for about one and a half years. SBU officials say Ukraine had secretly transported "first-person view" drones (FPVs transmit a live video feed from their front camera to a pilot's screen) into Russian territory on trucks. Drones were kept in wooden containers on trucks, which were moved closer to the targets undetected. On Sunday, the wooden containers were opened remotely, and the FPV drones, attached with explosives, were launched into the airfields. The Russian Defence Ministry has confirmed that the drones that hit Olenya and Belaya were launched "from the immediate vicinity" of the airfields. Mr. Zelenskyy wrote in his social media post that "our people involved in preparing the Operation were withdrawn from Russian territory in time".

This seeks to rewrite the rules of warfare. Traditionally, countries try to attack faraway enemy bases using surface-to-surface or air-to-surface long-range missiles. Ukraine lacks the capacity to mount such an aerial attack against Russia. So it turned to drones, which it was manufacturing at an industrial scale ever since the war broke out in February 2022. Ukraine claimed to have made 2.2 million drones in 2024, and aims to make 4.5 million this year. Drones play the central role in Ukraine's counterattack strategy. Among the planes that were "destroyed" are Russian Tu-95, Tu-22M3 and A-50, according to the SBU. The Tu-95 bombers, which carry guided cruise missiles, can hit targets from thousands of kilometres afar. The A-50 are early warning jets that detect enemy aircraft and missiles, and feed intel on Russian fighter planes. "Russian strategic bombers are all burning delightfully," claimed Vasily Maluk, the SBU chief, after the attack. Russia's fleet of strategic bombers is reportedly small — it operates less than 90 Tu-



Ukraine claimed its Sunday attacks destroyed over 40 Russian warplanes, including nuclear-capable bombers; Russia says the strikes were repelled with no casualties; the attack was in the works for 18 months, says Kyiv; the strike came as both sides were preparing for peace talks in Istanbul

22s, Tu-95s and Tu-160s. (Tu-160 is Russia's most advanced strategic bomber). If Ukraine's claims of destroying some "30%" of Russian bombers are true, it's a heavy blow to President Vladimir Putin and his forces.

Even if Ukraine is exaggerating Russia's losses, the fact that it carried out such a massive attack deep inside Russian territory can be seen as a tactical setback for Moscow. If Ukraine were planning such an elaborate attack for months, there would be questions on why the Russian intelligence failed to detect and deter them.Russia's military bloggers were quick to term June 1 a "dark day" in the history of Russian aviation. Some others, especially the nationalist sections, called it "Russia's Pearl Harbour" and demanded a similar response from the Kremlin to that of the U.S. during the Second World War. Mr. Putin, who has faced criticism at home from the nationalist sections for "not doing enough" in the war, is likely to come under greater pressure to retaliate heavily.Battlefield vulnerabilities

But the Ukrainian attack doesn't mask the country's battlefield vulnerabilities. Russia has launched a Spring offensive in the Sumy region, where its forces are making incremental advances. The Russian army took 507 sq km in May, against 379 sq. km in April and 240 square km in March, according to data from the U.S.-based Institute for the Study of War. From June 2024 to May 2025, Russia gained a total of 5,107 sq. km (less than one per cent of Ukrainian territory before the war), while Ukrainian forces only regained 85 sq. km. Ukraine has not taken any major territorial gains since its Kherson offensive in late 2022. It's a gamble in Russia's Kursk region failed as Russia captured swathes of territories in Ukraine's east last year and then pushed Ukrainian troops out of Kursk with help from North Korea. In recent months, Russia has stepped up air strikes and drone attacks across Ukraine, straining the country's already weak air defences. But despite the weaknesses on the ground, Kyiv remains defiant and audacious as the latest attack shows.What is to be seen is how the Ukrainian attacks are going to impact U.S. President Donald Trump's push to end the war. When Russia carried out drone attacks in Ukraine late last month, Mr. Trump had said "Putin had gone absolutely crazy" and that "Putin is playing with fire". But on his watch, Ukraine, America's ally, has carried out its most ambitious attack on Russia, that too on the eve of peace talks. The Istanbul talks are set to proceed as per plans. Both the Russian and Ukrainian delegations are in Turkiye. But the Russian response to the Ukrainian attack is almost guaranteed, which could further complicate the diplomatic process.

# Can being your child's 'soulmate' backfire?

Parents today want to be more involved in their children's lives, leading to the rise of soulmate parenting. But can being too involved cause problems?We live in an era where expressing emotions openly has become the norm, and this shift has significantly influenced modern parenting. Gone are the days when fathers sat on the sidelines with a straight face, watching mothers shoulder the responsibility of childcare. Today, fathers actively embrace parenthood, sharing the joys, challenges, and moments of raising a child alongside mothers—and sometimes even taking the lead.This wave of free-flowing emotions has brought parents closer to their children, giving rise to soulmate parenting, where both parents are deeply involved in every aspect of their child's life.But could being too involved unintentionally harm your relationship with your child?

Understanding soulmate parentingSumalatha Vasudeva, psychologist, Gleneagles BGS Hospital, Bengaluru, tells India Today that soulmate parenting is a modern approach where a parent takes on multiple roles to nurture a deeper emotional connection with their child."The parent acts as a best friend, providing companionship and trust; a sensitive listener, understanding the child's emotions without judgement; a cheerleader, offering encouragement and motivation; and a diagnostician, identifying and addressing the child's developmental and emotional needs," she explains.Further, Dr Rahul Chandhok, head consultant, mental health and behavioural science, Artemis Hospital, Gurugram, says that this style of parenting is not only about developing strong bonds. It is about providing children with emotional resilience and self-awareness.When balanced with appropriate boundaries, this approach fosters a nurturing environment that can support emotional and intellectual growth.

Why are parents loving it?

The rising popularity of soulmate parenting can be attributed to its alignment with the increasing emphasis on emotional intelligence and open communication in relationships.Parents today are more aware of the need for a safe and nurturing environment that fosters their child's self-expression and individuality.This style of parenting is also seen as a response to the growing challenges children face, such as mental health issues and societal pressures, prompting parents to take a more supportive and engaged role.Dr Chandhok notes that new-generation parents, particularly millennials and Gen Z, are striving to form deeper emotional bonds with their children while managing the complexities of modern life.Soulmate parenting fosters a deeper emotional bond (Photo: Pexels/Andrea Piacquadio)Adding to this, Sumalatha Vasudeva highlights key principles of soulmate parenting: Empathy and active listening: Being emotionally available and validating the child's feelings Positive reinforcement: Celebrating achievements and building self-confidence Holistic support: Addressing physical, mental, and emotional well-being. Non-judgmental communication: Ensuring open dialogue to build trust.Collaborative problem-solving: Working with the child to navigate challenges.The Role of Parents in Soulmate ParentingEach additional role a parent plays impacts the child in different ways:As a best friend, the parent builds trust and reduces fear of judgement, encouraging the child to share their thoughts and feelings openly. However, overly prioritising friendship can blur boundariesMeanwhile, as a sensitive listener, the child feels understood and validated, which enhances emotional regulation and self-esteem. The parent instils confidence and motivation in the child as a cheerleader.Lastly, as a diagnostician, the parent identifies emotional, behavioural, or developmental concerns early, ensuring timely intervention and support.Why being your child's soulmate is beneficialAccording to Dr Chandhok, soulmate parenting strengthens the parent-child bond. Adopting various roles creates a nurturing environment where children feel safe to share their thoughts, fears, and



The parent acts as a best friend, providing companionship and trust; a sensitive listener, understanding the child's emotions without judgement; a cheerleader, offering encouragement and motivation; and a diagnostician, identifying and addressing the child's developmental and emotional needs," she explains.

aspirations without fear of judgement.He goes on to mention that the benefits of soulmate parenting are extensive, which can improve emotional security and allow children to develop a positive sense of self-worth and resilience.Parents will also have greater insight into the needs and emotions of their child, thus supporting them in an effective manner. Such parenting promotes positive reinforcement for the child, bringing more confidence and motivation to their activities.This parenting style fosters a balanced, healthy relationship where the child feels loved and understood.Not just this, but soulmate parenting benefits the child psychologically by promoting emotional intelligence and self-esteem, hence making them resilient. The different roles played by a parent create an atmosphere where children are valued, understood, and supported. This strengthens their confidence and encourages healthy emotional expression.Children raised in such a nurturing framework are more likely to have strong coping skills, secure attachments, and empathy.But there are issuesWhile soulmate parenting builds strong emotional bonds, it can pose risks if boundaries are not maintained.Sumalatha Vasudeva warns that excessive involvement can hinder a child's independence. And, relying too much on a parent for approval can weaken a child's resilience.Blurring boundaries can lead to a loss of parental authority, while overprotection may result in overdependence.If not properly balanced, soulmate parenting can have a negative impact (Photo: Pexels/Ketut Subiyant)Parents can also experience burnout, as constant emotional involvement is draining. Additionally, this style of parenting may set unrealistic expectations for the child, leaving them unprepared to cope when the parent is unavailable. A delicate balance is essential. While emotional support is crucial, being overly lenient or lacking authority can create challenges related to discipline, respect for boundaries, and accountability. Overindulgence can also cause role confusion, where the child sees the parent more as an equal than an authority figure.Do experts recommend?

Both Sumalatha Vasudeva and Dr Rahul Chandhok support soulmate parenting but stress the importance of balance."Effective soulmate parenting should be balanced with boundaries and structure to not only foster emotional connection and resilience but also maintain the authority to promote discipline and healthy independence in children," says Dr Chandhok."Soulmate parenting should complement, not replace, traditional parenting principles of discipline, responsibility, and independence," concludes Vasudeva.



# ‘Off-the-chart unacceptable’: Global airline body IATA frustrated with aircraft delivery delays, supply chain woes



‘Off-the-chart unacceptable’: Global airline body IATA frustrated with aircraft delivery delays, supply chain woes. Pandemic-induced disruptions to global supply chains continue to cast a shadow on the aircraft manufacturing ecosystem in the form of slower production rates and consequent delivery delays. (Credit: pexels.com) Global airline industry body International Air Transport Association (IATA) has expressed frustration at persisting supply chain issues that have contributed to aircraft delivery delays and mounting aircraft delivery backlog, saying that manufacturers are letting the carriers down and the situation is driving up their costs. According to IATA’s estimates, the aircraft delivery backlog exceeds 17,000—sharply up from the 10,000-11,000 pre-pandemic—with an implied wait time of 14 years.

IATA, which has around 350 member airlines, also warned that tariff wars could further aggravate supply chain constraints and production limitations should countries walk away from a decades-old multilateral agreement that exempted aircraft from trade tariffs. While so far there have been no indications of aircraft prices going up due to tariffs, IATA Director General Willie Walsh said that airlines will “strongly resist” any attempt by manufacturers to increase prices. In 2025, 1,692 aircraft are expected to be delivered to airlines. While this would mark the highest level since 2018, it is almost 26 per cent lower than the estimates from a year ago. According to IATA, which has around 350 member airlines, further downward revisions are likely, given that

supply chain issues are expected to persist in 2025 and possibly to the end of the decade. Walsh described that scenario as “off-the-chart unacceptable”. “Manufacturers continue to let their airline customers down. Every airline is frustrated that these problems have persisted so long. And indications that it could take until the end of the decade to fix them are off-the-chart unacceptable,” Walsh said Monday at IATA’s annual general meeting in Delhi.

Notably, Indian airlines have placed massive aircraft orders over the past few years, with around 1,700 planes to be delivered over the current and the next decade. Air India, which expects to receive over 500 aircraft over the coming years, has seen aircraft delivery delays of six months to a year, but does not currently expect the situation to worsen, the airline’s CEO and MD Campbell Wilson recently told The Indian Express. Senior executives of a few global carriers have expressed frustration due to the aircraft delivery delays.

Pandemic-induced disruptions to global supply chains continue to cast a shadow on the aircraft manufacturing ecosystem in the form of slower production rates and consequent delivery delays. The situation has been further complicated with certain manufacturer-specific problems—like quality issues at Boeing and defects in Pratt & Whitney engines. Aircraft delivery delays persist at a time when airlines in various parts of the world are struggling to cater to a boom in travel demand, adding to their frustration. Supply chain issues have had significant negative impacts on airlines—driving-up leasing costs, increasing the average fleet age to 15 years from 13 a decade ago, halving the fleet replacement rate to 2020 levels of 5-6 per cent, and reducing the efficiency of fleet utilisation, IATA Said. “Engine problems and a shortage of spare parts exacerbate the situation and have caused record high groundings of certain aircraft types. The number of aircraft younger than 10 years in storage is currently more than 1,100, constituting 3.8% of the total fleet compared with 1.3% between 2015 and 2018. Nearly 70% of these grounded aircraft are equipped with PW1000G engines (of Pratt & Whitney),” the airline association added.

## IndiGo CEO defends India’s bilateral aviation policy amid criticism from Emirates President

Sparring with Emirates President Tim Clark, who once again criticised India’s restrictive policy for foreign carriers, IndiGo CEO Pieter Elbers on Monday said, “if one side makes more and more noise, it doesn’t mean that you are more and more right.” “It’s called the bilateral agreement, right? That means two sides have to agree on something,” Mr. Elbers said during a press conference at the Annual General Meeting of the International Air Transport Association (IATA) in New Delhi, when asked about India’s protectionist policies towards airlines.

On Sunday (June 1, 2025), Mr Clark had stated that India’s ambitions for developing hub airports to attract connecting passengers were not “compatible” with its restrictive policies for foreign airlines. The UAE has sought a revision of the air service agreement and a doubling of seat capacity between Dubai and India from 65,000 seats per week to 1,40,000 seats. However, the Indian government maintains that it needs to prevent leakage of passengers ferried by foreign carriers through their hub airports such as Dubai, Doha, and Singapore, at the expense of Indian carriers flying long-haul routes such as Air India.

IndiGo’s CEO described the Indian government’s approach as “completely fair and balanced.” Mr Elbers’s remarks, which are usually measured, come at a time when IndiGo is entering the European market, with Manchester and Amsterdam as its maiden destinations from early July.



The airline has also doubled its order of widebody Airbus A350 aircraft to 60, enabling it to offer non-stop flights across the world. Mr Elbers explained that historically there had been an imbalance where several countries with flying rights into India deployed capacity through their airlines for Indian destinations, while Indian carriers lagged behind. Sharing the stage with Mr Elbers was IATA Director General Willie Walsh, who expressed an opposing view. He said that while flying rights were an issue worldwide, India was now looking at a “fascinating opportunity” as it pivots from domestic to international connectivity. This transition would require greater access to international markets, which in turn would require reciprocity.

## How do heatwaves impact India’s labour productivity?

The monsoon has arrived more than a week in advance, giving a respite from the intense heat in India. A heatwave gripped India in early April, though heatwave conditions were observed as early as February 27–28 as large parts of the country witnessed temperatures soar. Heatwaves could have a drastic impact on the economy. In a report in 2024, the International Labour Organization (ILO) warned that more than 70% of all workers worldwide are at risk of exposure to excessive heat. It added that India lost an estimated \$100 billion from heat-induced productivity losses. Small businesses and informal workers like construction workers, farmers, street vendors and food delivery partners bore the brunt. Excessive heat can have a devastating impact on agriculture. Studies show that just 1 degree of warming reduces wheat yields by about 5.2% in India. Heatwaves, late in the rice growing season, can reduce yield. Indians at risk

Heatwaves, a period of unusually high temperatures compared to normal, occur mainly from March to June and hit a peak in May. Most States are prone to heat waves in varying degrees with Central, Northwest, East & north Peninsular India bearing the brunt. A recent report by CEEW states that about 57% of Indian districts, which account for 76% of the country’s population, face a high to very high heat risk. Delhi, Maharashtra, Kerala, Gujarat, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, and Uttar Pradesh face the highest heat risk. It notes that over the last 40 years (1981–2022), heat extremes in India have increased linearly. This led to landmark heatwaves in 2013, 2016, 2019, 2022, and 2024. “Nearly 23 States are heatwave-prone in India. There has been a linear increase in the number of very hot days and the number of very warm nights,” said D.r Vishwas Chitale, Senior Programme Lead, CEEW, who noted that the rate of increase in warm nights exceeds that of hot days. Rapid urbanisation has only exacerbated the issue as cities tend to retain heat during the day, which delays cooling after sunset, making nights warmer. This contributes to the “urban heat island effect”, where cities get hotter than neighbouring rural areas. The CEEW report noted that between 2005 and 2023, built-up areas have expanded rapidly in almost every Indian district, especially in Tier-II and Tier-III cities like Pune, Thoothukudi, Kolhapur, and Guwahati. “You’re not getting any relief from the daytime hot temperature even when you sleep at night. If there are no cooling mechanisms available to you, then your productivity is going to go down,” he said. A 2022 World Bank report points out that up to 75% of India’s



workforce, or 380 million people, depend on heat-exposed labour, potentially working in life-threatening temperatures. It also noted that 34 million of the projected 80 million global job losses from heat stress-related productivity decline would be in India. “The income losses for workers in the informal sector are likely to be greater as they are more likely to work outdoors and have less protection from heat,” Dr. Somanathan, Professor, Economics and Planning Unit, Indian Statistical Institute, said. “Net earnings of informal sector workers in Delhi were 40% lower during heatwaves compared to other days in May and June. They were also less likely to be able to go to work due to heat, slept less and less well, and were more likely to have a family member who was sick on hotter days,” he said. Blue-collar workers in factories also suffer. Dr. Somanathan’s 2021 study revealed a slowdown in productivity and increased absenteeism during hot days. “A 1 degree of warming is estimated to reduce manufacturing output by about 2%,” he said, adding that the losses will increase as the severity of heat waves increases due to global warming. Ironically, the solution lies in ensuring that productivity increases. “Increasing productivity is the best thing that can be done to protect workers because employers are more likely to invest in cooling for more productive than less productive workers,” he said. In rural India, heatwaves hit differently. “Typically, there is little agricultural activity in the peak of summer. But the summer season is also the season for a lot of non-farm activity. A large number of agricultural workers, and even farmers, go to work part-time in sectors like construction or road building, especially in the lean season,” Dr. T. Jayaram, Senior Fellow, Climate Change, MSSRF, said. “Construction activity heats up, and road building also attracts labourers, and they are prone to the direct risks,” he added.

## Study finds blood type incompatibility key factor for kidney exchange transplant in India



Blood group ‘ABO’ incompatibility could be a major factor driving kidney exchange transplants in India, where living donor transplants face numerous challenges, a study published in The Lancet Regional Health Southeast Asia journal has found. ABO incompatibility occurs when a donor’s blood group differs from that of a recipient, leading the recipient’s immune system to reject the transplanted organ. The study conducted by researchers, including those from G R Doshi and K M Mehta Institute of Kidney Diseases and Research Center (IKDRC), Ahmedabad, noted that a third of healthy and willing living donors in India are incompatible with their intended recipients, largely due to blood group mismatches.

The team said that no large-scale data is available on kidney or liver exchange transplants in low- and middle-income countries, including India. Kidney exchange transplants involve two or more donor-recipient pairs swapping donors to snable recipients to receive compatible kidneys. The IKDRC’s website explains, a donor of one pair of donor-recipient could donate a kidney to a recipient of a second pair while the donor of the second pair could donate to the recipient of the first pair. The exchange allows two ABO incompatible recipients to receive healthy, more compatible kidneys.

The study analysed 1,839 kidney exchanges from 65 centres across India, revealing that ABO incompatibility was the main reason for entering such exchanges in 1,610 (87 per cent) of the cases. The remaining exchanges were due to compatible pairs 126 (seven per cent) and sensitisation 103 (six per cent), according to the authors of the study. A notable gender imbalance was found, with more men (82 per cent) being recipients in kidney exchanges, and more women (80 per cent) being donors. The researchers also looked at 259 liver exchange transplants from seven centres across India. “The majority of (liver exchange transplants) were 2-way swaps (125 two-way versus 3 three-way swaps), predominately involving male recipients (222 male versus 37 females) and for ABO incompatibility,” the authors wrote.

## IMA opposes proposed integrated MBBS-BAMS course, calls it unscientific

The Indian Medical Association condemned the proposed introduction of an integrated course combining MBBS (Bachelor of Medicine and Bachelor of Surgery) and BAMS (Bachelor of Ayurvedic Medicine and Surgery) programmes at the Jawaharlal Institute of Postgraduate Medical Education and Research (JIPMER), Puducherry. Calling the move “unfortunate”, it said this “unscientific mixing of various systems of medicines will not benefit doctors or patients”. The Central government had earlier announced plans to integrate modern and Ayurvedic medicine under one academic curriculum, with a new integrated medical programme expected to be launched at the premier healthcare institute in Puducherry. “It is unfortunate that the Union government seems to have decided to go ahead with its plans to unscientifically mix systems of medicine. Reports indicate that the first integrative course mixing MBBS and BAMS would be started in the premier institution of JIPMER, Pondicherry,” said the IMA in a statement.

The MBBS is the foundational undergraduate medical degree that prepares students to practice as physicians and surgeons. It typically takes five and a half years to complete and includes a year of mandatory internship. The BAMS, on the other hand, is a degree focused on Ayurveda, the traditional Indian system of medicine. The BAMS too is a five-and-a-half-year programme and requires four and a half years of academic study and a one-year mandatory internship. The MBBS and BAMS are currently offered in India as two separate degree programmes.

The IMA said it had pointed out several times that mixing of “incompatible systems” was an “irreversible catastrophe”. It appealed to qualified Ayurvedic physicians to defend their system, warning that “mixopathy takes away the right of the patient to choose care of his/her choice”. “Let all systems retain their pristine purity. Refrain from producing hybrid doctors who will be only qualified quacks,” said the IMA, adding that the misadventure will set back healthcare by a century. It further said India is the “frontier of medicine today” and infrastructure and expertise exist to undertake any medical intervention at a fraction of the cost elsewhere. “Indian doctors are the backbone of medical



services in several western countries. IMA fails to see any compelling reason or logic in the ill-advised government move,” it said. The IMA added there are reasons to believe that this move would be catastrophic to Ayurveda as well. “Having failed to convince the government, IMA has no option but to take the people into confidence. IMA appeals to the nation to resist this indiscretion for the health of future generations,” the members said. It said India has seen life expectancy grow from 32 years in 1947 to 70.8 years in 2025 and this has been possible because of eradication of diseases like smallpox and neonatal tetanus by vaccines and access to modern maternal and child healthcare, while highlighting the positive role of antibiotics and other modern drugs in treating diseases like tuberculosis, plague, cholera and typhoid. It stated that advances in cancer care, advent of insulin and other drugs for diabetes and hypertension, as well as huge strides in managing heart diseases and stroke have a significant role in enhancing the healthcare ecosystem. The association also cited mixing of medicine systems in China and said the move had failed there. “China failed in its experiment of mixing modern medicine and Chinese traditional medicine; this also resulted in decimation of their traditional medicine. India has a robust chain of hospitals and public health services with 779 medical colleges and 1,36,325 MBBS doctors per year. We should not give away that advantage that our robust medical education system has created,” the statement said.

## Chronic stress contributes to cognitive decline and dementia risk – two healthy-ageing experts explain what you can do about it

The probability of any American having dementia in their lifetime may be far greater than previously thought. For instance, a 2025 study that tracked a large sample of American adults across more than three decades found that their average likelihood of developing dementia between ages 55 to 95 was 42%, and that figure was even higher among women, Black adults and those with genetic risk. Now, a great deal of attention is being paid to how to stave off cognitive decline in the ageing American population. But what is often missing from this conversation is the role that chronic stress can play in how well people age from a cognitive standpoint, as well as everybody’s risk for dementia.

We are professors at Penn State in the Center for Healthy Aging, with expertise in health psychology and neuropsychology. We study the pathways by which chronic psychological stress influences the risk of dementia and how it influences the ability to stay healthy as people age. Recent research shows that Americans who are currently middle-aged or older report experiencing more frequent stressful events than previous generations. A key driver behind this increase appears to be rising economic and job insecurity, especially in the wake of the 2007-2009 Great Recession and ongoing shifts in the labour market. Many people stay in the workforce longer due to financial necessity, as Americans are living longer and face greater challenges covering basic expenses in later life. Therefore, it may be more important than ever to understand the pathways by which stress influences cognitive ageing. Although everyone experiences some stress in daily life, some people experience stress that is more intense, persistent or prolonged. It is this relatively chronic stress that is most consistently linked with poorer health. In a recent review paper, our team summarised how chronic stress is a hidden but powerful factor underlying cognitive ageing, or the speed at which your cognitive performance slows down with age. It is hard to overstate the impact of stress on your cognitive health as you age. This is in part because your psychological, behavioural and biological responses to everyday stressful events are closely intertwined, and each can amplify and interact with the other. For instance, living alone can be stressful – particularly for older adults – and being isolated makes it more difficult to live a healthy lifestyle, as well as to detect and get help for signs of cognitive decline. Moreover, stressful experiences – and your reactions to them – can make it harder to sleep well and to engage in other healthy behaviors, like getting enough exercise and maintaining a healthy diet. In turn, insufficient sleep and a lack of physical activity can make it harder to cope with stressful experiences. A robust body of research high-

lights the importance of at least 14 different factors that relate to your risk of Alzheimer’s disease, a common and devastating form of dementia and other forms of dementia. Although some of these factors may be outside of your control, such as diabetes or depression, many of these factors involve things that people do, such as physical activity, healthy eating and social engagement.

What is less well-recognised is that chronic stress is intimately interwoven with all of these factors that relate to dementia risk. Our work and research by others that we reviewed in our recent paper demonstrate that chronic stress can affect brain function and physiology, influence mood and make it harder to maintain healthy habits. Yet, dementia prevention efforts rarely address stress. Avoiding stressful events and difficult life circumstances is typically not an option. Where and how you live and work plays a major role in how much stress you experience. For example, people with lower incomes, less education or those living in disadvantaged neighborhoods often face more frequent stress and have fewer forms of support – such as nearby clinics, access to healthy food, reliable transportation or safe places to exercise or socialise – to help them manage the challenges of aging. As shown in recent work on brain health in rural and underserved communities, these conditions can shape whether people have the chance to stay healthy as they age. Over time, the effects of stress tend to build up, wearing down the body’s systems and shaping long-term emotional and social habits. Lifestyle changes to manage stress and lessen dementia risk. The good news is that there are multiple things that can be done to slow or prevent dementia, and our review suggests that these can be enhanced if the role of stress is better understood. Whether you are a young, midlife or an older adult, it is not too early or too late to address the implications of stress on brain health and ageing. Here are a few ways you can take direct actions to help manage your level of stress:- Follow lifestyle behaviors that can improve healthy ageing. These include: following healthy diet, engaging in physical activity and getting enough sleep. Even small changes in these domains can make a big difference.- Prioritise your mental health and well-being to the extent you can. Things as simple as talking about your worries, asking for support from friends and family and going outside regularly can be immensely valuable.- If your doctor says that you or someone you care about should follow a new health care regimen, or suggests there are signs of cognitive impairment, ask them what support or advice they have for managing related stress.- If you or a loved one feel socially isolated, consider how small shifts could make a difference.



# Virat Kohli’s ‘18 till I fly’ dream takes off as RCB universe conspires to try giving their talisman the elusive IPL trophy

GNS News Agency, June 9

Couple of years ago, a bespectacled Virat Kohli unexpectedly opened his heart out to a small gathering of RCB women players. They had had a disastrous season that year, their first, and Kohli didn’t just offer vague consultative words, but dipped into his own experiences, his failures, his insecurities and his long wait for the IPL trophy. “If we don’t win I am not going to go to my grave thinking only if I had won the IPL I would have been a happy man dying; it doesn’t happen like that!” he smiled. He wasn’t done yet. “I have needed constant reminders even from youngsters. I have been under pressure, I have been insecure, tried to protect my performances, tried to protect my reputation, ‘oh I am Virat Kohli I need to perform every game, can’t get out’ and then the youngsters come and tell me why I didn’t hit that ball.. I was like yeah they are right.” I was caught up with ‘me me me’, and what I should do, how people are looking at me and who I am, and in all that stuff that I forgot how to play the game. That’s all we need to remember how not to complicate this.” Some of those frank words wouldn’t have surprised those who had closely seen him play in the IPL over the years. Especially that ‘can’t get out’ mode that he would occasionally get stuck in. In the last couple of years, he has tried his best to shrug that off, extend himself in the powerplay, play the big shots if required without fussing too much about the what-if scenario of getting dismissed. He might have told AB de Villiers not to say the old RCB slogan ‘ee-saala cup namde’ (This year, the cup will be ours) according to the South African, but he hasn’t been shy of fronting up to the potential triumph. Sometime early in the tournament, as a promotional piece for the tournament for the official broadcasters, he was in an advert where he referenced the 18th year of tournament and how it ties up with his jersey no 18. The advert, that threw up other assorted connections to the number 18, ended with him knocking the wooden table – ‘touch wood’, the universal gesture for preventing bad luck.

Perhaps, due to the long 18-year wait, his age, and fear that his retirements from international T20 and Test cricket, in particular, threw up, there seems to be sympathy in the air – for him, from a large section of fans. The RCB captain Rajat Patidar has also pitched the final almost as a throwback to how the Indian team and the cricketing nation as a whole saw the 2011 world cup as a tribute to Sachin Tendulkar. “We will try and win this for him,” Patidar said on eve of the final. “He has done so well for India and RCB over the years.”

This year Kohli has been pretty smart with the way he has handled his emotions. The post-wickets screaming reactions have unsurprisingly been intact, of course, but the way he has dealt with certain scenarios during batting have been interesting. When the aggressive-needlers like Digvish Rath have bowled at him, he has stubbed out potentially tense scenes with a smile. Rath had once pulled away before releasing the ball, but Kohli just hunched on his bat and smiled. Just as he had done in the Champions Trophy when the Pakistani spinner Abrar Ahmed, who had given a send-off to Shubman Gill, stopped a ball on follow-through and fired it just over Kohli’s head.



But on other occasions, when he might have stayed quiet, he has fired away. Like he did with Shreyas Iyer. During the game in Bangalore this season, Iyer was presumably being heckled by the crowd behind him when he was fielding near the boundary. And when he won the game, Iyer turned around, cupped his palm around the ear, as if to say ‘can’t hear any noise now that you lost’. In the next encounter between the two teams, Kohli remained unbeaten to seal a win, turned to Iyer and pumped his fists furiously. Kohli also was seen explaining that celebration to Shreyas, who didn’t seem too thrilled. In another game, in Delhi incidentally, he told KL Rahul, who had previously done the circle-the-turf celebration to suggest the Bangalore ground belongs to him, that he had planned to do it had he remained unbeaten till the end.

It remains to be seen how well he bats in the IPL final on Tuesday. There has been a lull in his performances in the big ICC tournaments for a while, but he corrected it with a stunning 76 in the T20 world cup final last June in Barbados. But in the Champions Trophy final this March, he was dismissed for just 1. His three IPL finals too have been a bit of a mixed bag. In 2009 in the chase against Deccan Chargers who were dismissed for just 143, Kohli fell for just 7 as RCB went from 99 for 4 to 129 all out. In the 2011 final against CSK, he hit a 35-ball 32 as the chase went nowhere and in the 2016 final, that he has talked about as his big heartbreak, he was dismissed for a 35-ball 54, triggering a stunning collapse. He gets one more chance to course-correct that on Tuesday. In that chat with the RCB women players, he had talked about how empty he had felt when his captaincy came to end in the IPL after the 2021 season. “The time that my captaincy tenure was ending here, I was left with no belief. I was gone. The tank was absolutely empty. That was my own perspective saying I can’t handle it anymore but next season, new people came with new ideas. They were excited, individually I wasn’t but we reached three playoffs in a row.. and now I have that excitement.” And now, under Rajat Patidar’s captaincy and the celebrated Andy Flower’s coaching, Kohli gets his date with destiny. This season, the likes of Jitesh Sharma, Phil Salt and Romario Shepherd have nailed their walk-on parts, and crucially taken the risks so Kohli can script the lead role on the page, at a pace and tenor amiable to him. Will the 18-year wait end for him or will it be the talismanic Shreyas Iyer who ends Punjab Kings’s own 18-year wait for the trophy?

## Gukesh’s coach explains how world champion solved Magnus Carlsen and Arjun Erigaisi puzzles

GNS News Agency, June 9

For the second straight game at Norway Chess, world champion Gukesh Dommaraju managed to squeeze water out of stone, grinding away from a disadvantageous position until a win appeared. On Sunday, it was world no 1 Magnus Carlsen who lost a game which he should have won against Gukesh. On Tuesday, it was Arjun Erigaisi, who also had a significant advantage on the board and on the clock at one point, but then saw Gukesh force a resignation in 92 moves. Both victories were the first time Gukesh had defeated them in classical chess (he had lost six times to Arjun before Monday). The two wins also helped Gukesh go from at the bottom of the six-player standings to second spot. “I was just losing at some point, was slowly getting outplayed. From the opening, nothing went my way,” Gukesh said. “But once I got to this position, I had to keep making moves that don’t lose on the spot. And then in the time scramble, things happen.” On Sunday and Monday, things happened, alright! But as Gukesh’s second Grzegorz Gajewski would explain to journalists from India covering the Norway Chess tournament in Stavanger after the game, Gukesh was making them happen. More on that later. First, here’s what was happening on the board on Monday: Arjun had the upper hand as per the eval bar until the 24th move. Gukesh had barely 15 minutes on his clock at this stage. Arjun had 37. In the previous games where the world champion had lost, he had admitted that his time management had not been the best. At Norway Chess, players get 120 minutes on their clock and have no increments in the first 40 moves, rather than from the first move itself. Then they get just 10 seconds per move from move 41, which makes managing their clock a critical skill. By move 27, Gukesh was up a pawn on the board. By move 30, both players had just over seven minutes left on their clocks. This was also the phase where Gukesh mounted his comeback. After making Arjun’s king run around a few times using his rook, Gukesh gobbled up another pawn from Arjun on move 48. One move later, he had just a minute left on his clock. From here on, every move both players made, earned them just a 10-second buffer. Gukesh has often been accused of being a player who cannot play well in the faster time controls because his calculative style needs time to flourish. But in the last two games, he was using his calculation skills to pressure his opponents.

While plenty of focus has been paid on Carlsen’s blunder on the board that allowed Gukesh to start a fightback in the previous round, it must be pointed out that the only reason the game had stretched for so long was that Gukesh had ignored the voice at the back of his mind asking him to throw in the towel. The teenager had admitted that he was close to resigning against Carlsen, but had opted to soldier on instead. “I remember being that age myself and sometimes your energy, your fighting qualities and your optimism are bigger than the quality of your moves. For a long time, Gukesh was just blindly pushing,” Carlsen said. “When you’re in such trouble (as in the game against Carlsen) and you keep fighting and you get rewarded for it, you have even more faith that it makes sense to keep fighting. So the very next day (versus Arjun), when you’re again in trouble, you definitely know what to do, you just keep fighting,” Gajewski told journalists from India at Stavanger after the win over Arjun.

Gajewski then explained how Gukesh’s ability to calculate had worked to his advantage even in dire time scrambles. “It’s not like other players give up very quickly.



“Gukesh fights and fights and fights no matter how bad the positions are,” remarked chess legend Susan Polgar on X. “This was also the strength of Carlsen for years.” Gukesh’s coach Grzegorz Gajewski offered a breakdown of how Gukesh had turned around games against Carlsen and Arjun.

But usually, when Gukash is in trouble, at some point the game is reaching a conversion stage (converting the advantage into victory). Conversion stage of the game requires calculation and precision. This is exactly where Gukesh stands in the way, because he demands the very highest level of accuracy and precision from you. And if you’re not up to it, you might mess up the position, even if you’re number one in the world,” Gajewski said. “Simply put, Gukesh has extraordinary calculation abilities, which combined with his fighting spirit, help him defend so many positions.” World champion Gukesh walks out of the playing hall after beating Arjun Erigaisi at the Norway Chess tournament on Monday. World champion Gukesh walks out of the playing hall after beating Arjun Erigaisi at the Norway Chess tournament on Monday. “He fights and fights and fights no matter how bad the positions are,” remarked chess legend Susan Polgar on X. “This was also the strength of Carlsen for years. Mark of champions.” When asked about the comparison between Carlsen and Gukesh forcing their opponents to earn a win, Gajewski said: “As I recall, young Magnus would refuse to agree for a draw and would just keep playing those little-bit better positions that everybody thought would be easily drawn. And in the end, they weren’t... I don’t ever remember him having so many lost positions that he had to keep fighting in. But he was definitely a fighter.” Gajewski also pointed out that Gukesh had shown remarkable resilience in turning around a tournament that had started with defeats in his first two games, against Carlsen and Arjun. “He actually started the tournament with two losses and it did not discourage him from fighting. He didn’t lose his spirit. That’s a very big success, regardless of how the tournament ends. This is a very nice thing to achieve here because from now on at every next tournament, if he starts badly, he will know that it doesn’t necessarily have to end as a bad tournament for him.” For a boy who considers Novak Djokovic as one of his sporting idols, Gukesh is now starting to demonstrate some of the qualities that the Serbian tennis ace is the patron saint of. Like Djokovic tends to find an appetite for a fight when two sets down — the former world no 1 has at least eight comeback wins in Grand Slams after being two sets down — Gukesh has now earned victories from nowhere. “That’s a nice comparison,” Gukesh said after beating Arjun, “but maybe I will just try and get some good positions (from the start) from now on.”

## Sumedha Pathak beats out ‘inspiration’ Rubina Francis for Para World Cup shooting gold

GNS News Agency, June 9

Moments after 28-year-old Sumedha Pathak won her first WSPS World Cup individual gold in the women’s P2 10m air pistol SH1 final in Changwon, Korea, she was hugged by Paris Paralympics bronze medallist and compatriot Rubina Francis, who finished seventh in the same category. For Sumedha, who edged out another Indian, Shrishti Arora, to win the gold with a score of 235.2, and many of her peers, Francis is an inspiration. “Rubina mam has always been an inspiration for me and other shooters and whenever we compete at the shooting range, we see each other as inspiration as well motivating,” Sumedha told The Indian Express from Changwon, Korea.

Daughter of pharmaceutical entrepreneur Brijesh Chandra Pathak, a young Sumedha would always be keen in her studies as well as listening about her father’s social work in their hometown of Varanasi. In 2013, after complaining of fever and body pains, she was diagnosed with Multidrug-Resistant Tuberculosis resulting in spinal paralysis. The Pathak family would then spend months in hospitals in Delhi as well Kolkata before the youngster recovered, with her body movement below her chest being completely nil. “After spending more than a year in recovery at different hospitals, when we returned home, the first thing I told Sumedha was to have belief that we will excel in whatever way we can. We live in a joint family and the entire family ensured that Sumedha always remained focussed on her goals whether it be studies or whatever field she chose,” says father Brijesh Chandra Pathak. Sumedha would top the CBSE 12th exam in commerce stream in specially abled division in India with 91.04 percent in 2016. It was in 2018 that her father, along with consultation with international shooters Asif and Ajit Singh Suryavanshi and coach Santosh Tiwari, got a makeshift shooting range built at their home.

While Sumedha would start with pistol shooting, the coaches would face the problem of setting the right posture for the youngster. “Sumedha’s body movement is very restricted and hence we could not make her start in rifle shooting. Initially, when she started pistol shooting, her upper body would fall ahead. So we would start with the dry shooting part, working to increase her upper body and shoulder strength. Once we could achieve the right posture and balance on a wheelchair, we increased shots to 40-60 shots daily and she would train for 2-3 hours,” remembers coach Santosh Tiwari. Father Brijesh too talks about the initial struggles. “While we had built the shooting range at the parking space of our home, Sumedha used to spend a lot of time for physiotherapy sessions too. During 2020-2021, early Covid-19 times, we got a new range built inside our home. We are lucky that the whole shooting community of Varanasi and UP would support her. (When the new) shooting range (came up) in Varanasi in 2024, it meant that the likes of Sumedha could dream of training at a world class facility one day in Varanasi,” says Pathak. In 2022, Sumedha made the Indian Para shooting team and was part of the Indian pistol team which won the silver medal in the WSPS World Cup in France and Korea respectively. In 2023, Sumedha finished seventh in women’s P2 10m air pistol



SH1 in the Hangzhou Asian Para Games. “In shooters like Sumedha, the main challenge for coaches is to strike a balance between the upper body strength suited for their shooting style. While the technique can be tweaked based on the posture, the upper body strength has to be the strongest and she has been able to work on that,” says national para pistol coach Subash Rana.

In Khelo India Para Games in March this year, Sumedha had scored a score of 237.5 to win the gold. On Monday, she qualified at the second spot with a score of 565 behind Francis, who shot 566. In the final, Sumedha was placed third after the second series before she made her way to the gold medal elimination round followed by her winning the gold with a score of 235.2. “The Khelo India gold made Sumedha believe that she can win big in finals too and to edge out Rubina then also helped her confidence. While she has won team medals before, this individual gold is a new beginning for her,” says Jaiprakash Nautiyal, chief coach Indian Para Shooting team. Nitin Sharma is an Assistant Editor with the sports team of The Indian Express. Based out of Chandigarh, Nitin works with the print sports desk while also breaking news stories for the online sports team. A Ramnath Goenka Excellence in Journalism Award recipient for the year 2017 for his story ‘Harmans of Moga’, Nitin has also been a two-time recipient of the UNFPA-supported Laadli Media Awards for Gender Sensitivity for the years 2022 and 2023 respectively. Nitin mainly covers Olympics sports disciplines with his main interests in shooting, boxing, wrestling, athletics and much more. The last 17 years with The Indian Express has seen him unearthing stories across India from as far as Andaman and Nicobar to the North East. Nitin also covers cricket apart from women’s cricket with a keen interest. Nitin has covered events like the 2010 Commonwealth Games, the 2011 ODI World Cup, 2016 T20 World Cup and the 2017 AIBA World Youth Boxing Championships. An alumnus of School of Communication Studies, Panjab University, from where he completed his Masters in Mass Communications degree, Nitin has been an avid quizzier too. A Guru Nanak Dev University Colour holder, Nitin’s interest in quizzing began in the town of Talwara Township, a small town near the Punjab-Himachal Pradesh border. When not reporting, Nitin’s interests lie in discovering new treks in the mountains or spending time near the river Beas at his hometown.

## Pioneer hockey coach Pratima Barwa, who produced players like Salima Tete & Sangita Kumari, no more

GNS News Agency, June 9

Pratima Barwa, a hockey coach who trained many adivasi girls in Jharkhand and helped shape Olympians like Salima Tete, Sangita Kumari and Beauty Dungdung, has passed away at the age of 46 following a brain hemorrhage at a Ranchi hospital. Barwa, a native of Kocha village in Khunti’s Torpa block, had suffered a seizure on May 27 while holding her infant son in her arms. She breathed her last on Sunday morning after surviving for four days in the ICU. Her funeral was held at her village in the evening.

Khunti, known for its rich tribal identity, has long been a cradle of Indian hockey. It was from this very region that Jaipal Singh Munda emerged to become the captain of the Indian hockey team that won gold at the 1928 Amsterdam Olympics. Nearly a century later, Barwa carried forward that legacy, not with a stick in hand, but with an unwavering commitment to nurture young girls in the sport. Her coaching, often in remote fields with bare minimum facilities, produced several Adivasi hockey stars.

“She dedicated her entire life to hockey,” said Sanjeeta Barwa, her younger sister. “She started playing in Class 5 after being selected for Gumla’s training programme. Later, she trained at the Bariatu Hockey Centre and then joined the Punjab Hockey Academy before returning to Jharkhand.” Barwa played for Jharkhand for nearly two decades, though a leg injury put paid to her chances of making it to the national team. After her playing career, she became a full-time coach under the Jharkhand government’s Department of Tourism, Sports and Youth Affairs. Barwa was initially posted in Simdega, one of Jharkhand’s hockey hubs, where she served for over a decade before being transferred to Khunti. Until her illness, she was coaching at the School of Excellence (SS+2) in Khunti, a residential centre nurturing young tribal talent. “She produced many state, national-level and international players. She worked with the likes of Salima Tete, who is now the captain of the Indian hockey team, Sangita Kumari and Beauty Dungdung,” Sanjeeta said.

Born into a hockey-loving adivasi family, Barwa drew inspiration from her father Late Gopal Barwa, a CRPF jawan and local player, and her uncles who played in village tournaments. She grew up watching matches dubbed the “Khasi Cup” and “Murga Cup,” where goats and chickens were prizes. Tough childhood Her sister remembers her struggles with clarity. “She came up the hard way — no money, limited resources — but she never gave up. Even when she had seizures in the 2000s, she recovered and guided the Jharkhand team at the Rourkela nationals in 2023.” Even while battling illness, she remained hopeful about returning to the field,” said her tearful sister. “She told me, ‘I want to get better and go back to training my girls.’” Former India captain Asunta Lakra, currently a national selector, recalled her deep bond with Barwa, describing her as a quiet force in Jharkhand’s grassroots sports movement.

“I first met Pratima didi at the Sports Authority of India (SAI) centre in Bariatu, Ranchi, in the late 1990s. She was our senior — strict but gentle, a natural leader who kept the team disciplined without ever raising her voice,” Asunta told I. “She would say, ‘I want to be a turning point in at least one girl’s life.’ No one talks about it, but every single international player coming from Simdega or even Jharkhand today — they were once under her care,” Lakra claimed. “She never sought the limelight and didn’t get the recognition she truly deserved — not from the system, not even from us



sometimes.” Barwa’s husband, Sukra Lohra, is a CRPF jawan currently posted in Raigarh, Chhattisgarh. They married in 2018 and have a one-and-a-half-year-old son. He remembers how passionate his wife was about hockey, often choosing to be on the ground over holidays at home. “She would say, ‘I couldn’t play much, but I want to make sure the children I coach get every opportunity,’” he recalls. Jharkhand Chief Minister Hemant Soren called Barwa’s passing an irreparable loss for the state and the Indian hockey fraternity. “The untimely demise of hockey coach Pratima Barwa ji, who gave many talented international hockey players to Jharkhand and the country, is extremely saddening,” he wrote on social media. He called her “an ideal for the hardworking daughters of Jharkhand.”

## Neeraj Chopra Classic on July 5 in Bengaluru

GNS News Agency, June 9

Hyderabad: The Neeraj Chopra Classic 2025 is set to now take place on July 5 at the Sree Kanteerava Stadium in Bengaluru, organisers JSW Sports announced on Tuesday. Initially scheduled for May 24, the event was deferred keeping security in mind, and to show solidarity with the nation. This landmark event, India’s first-ever International Javelin competition, is spearheaded by India’s most decorated Olympian, Neeraj Chopra, in collaboration with JSW Sports and sanctioned by the Athletics Federation of India (AFI).

District by Zomato is the official ticketing partner, and tickets can be purchased through the District app by Zomato. Previously purchased tickets remain valid for those who have not claimed a refund. Fans are encouraged to secure their spots early to be part of this historic event.

“Bringing the Neeraj Chopra Classic back this quickly has taken an enormous collective effort, and we’re happy to confirm its return on July 5. Our teams have worked tirelessly, and the unwavering support from the Athletics Federation of India, the Karnataka Olympic Association, the Government of Karnataka, and our partners made this possible,” Karan Yadav, Chief Commercial Officer of JSW Sports said. “The energy around this event is bigger than ever, and we’re set to deliver a celebration of javelin that’s bolder, better, and even more unforgettable,” he said. Ticket pricing for the Neeraj Chopra Classic ranges from Rs 199 to Rs 9,999, ensuring accessibility for all fans. For a premium experience, five corporate boxes accommodating 15 guests each are available at Rs. 44,999.



# Revisiting Mani Ratnam and Kamal Haasan’s Nayakan, not as a gangster epic, but as an existential melodrama in disguise



Rarely in cinema does a man weep after revenge. When he does, it is often framed as relief, a final letting go. A wound closed, the audience applauds. Justice, they think, has been served. But Nayakan refuses such ease. When Naicker (Kamal Haasan) kills the policeman who murdered his foster father, he does not feel triumph. There is no music to lift him, no silence to dignify the act. Instead, he walks to the policeman’s house. The widow sits in grief. And there, in the wreckage of a family broken by his hand, Naicker sees the child. The child who does not know, cannot know that the man standing before him ended his father’s life. He walks up to Naicker, unaware, and says only this: “My father is dead.” Naicker breaks. He does not cry for the man he killed. He cries for the boy. For the knowledge that vengeance, even when justified, is never clean. That violence does not end with the act; it seeps and spreads. That the blood of the guilty leaves the innocent stained. This moment does not ask for sympathy. It does not moralize. It simply shows that in the world Naicker inhabits, every gain is a loss, every justice a wound, every act of power a compromise.

This moment is the soul of Nayakan. It is where Mani Ratnam’s vision breathes deepest. It is where the film stops looking outwards and turns inwards. For the first time, Naicker begins to question the single belief that carried him through life. As a boy, he is told by his foster father: “Anything that helps others is not wrong.” The line strikes him not as advice, but as truth. No wonder, from that point on, the film moves with an inevitability. The next time we see him, he is grown. He has aged, both in years and in belief. That one sentence has become the axis of his world. Through it, he finds purpose: to stand against the systems that wronged him, to protect the people around him, to rewrite the balance with his own hands. So when he kills the policeman, he does more than avenge his father’s death. He removes a figure of power who brought fear and violence to his community. In that act, Naicker becomes Nayakan — the people’s hero.

So he becomes the law himself. Not through power alone, but through presence. Through a kind of authority the city cannot name but must obey. He rises up the ladders of survival and influence. Yet he never leaves behind the words that gave him direction. Nor the people he sees himself in, Tamils, scattered at the edges of Bombay, caught in a city that never lets them forget they do not belong. He becomes a don, yes. But also a figure people turn to. A woman with a dying child comes to him, not the state. It is Naicker who brings her to the doctor. It is Naicker who forces care into a system built on neglect. It is Naicker who adopts the very child who made him pause, the son of the man he killed. He ensures the boy and his mother are taken

# Avantika Malik admits she isn’t friends with ex-husband Imran Khan, is ‘bitter and hurt’ over divorce but won’t ‘poison’ daughter against him



Former actor Imran Khan’s ex-wife, Avantika Malik, said that she doubts she’d get married again after what she has been through in her life. In a new interview, Avantika said that she didn’t want to repeat the same mistakes that led her parents to separate, and was devastated when her relationship with Imran ended in 2019. The two had been together since they were teenagers, and have a daughter, Imara. Avantika said that she makes sure to not pass on whatever resentments she may hold against Imran onto their daughter, and admitted that they have a long way to go before they can be friendly again.

In an interview with Nayandeep Rakshit, Avantika said that while she and Imran are cordial with each other and on the same page as co-parents to Imara, she can’t say that

# Pankaj Tripathi reveals he hasn’t signed anything new for a year, has learnt to said no: ‘Don’t want to be counting my days on set’

Pankaj Tripathi made his debut 20 years ago with Prakash Jha’s 2005 crime action film Apaharan. He continued to play small parts for years before gaining recognition as a formidable actor. He continued to do those parts for money, but now, he feels he’s in a place that he can say no. “I’m practising to say no. Every person should know their boundary. Beyond that, I just say no politely: ‘Thank you, friend. This is where I draw my line.’ I kept working for 16-18 hours, kept saying the actors have left, it’s just the labour left behind now. But now, I politely say no and say I’ve met my commitment for the day,” said Tripathi. In the interview with The Hollywood Reporter India, he continued, “The story should excite me. Now, I don’t want to do projects for money because I’ve come beyond that phase now. I shouldn’t be counting the number of days left on set. It happened to me

care of, as though by doing so he might contain the fracture within himself, he might redeem himself. But life is not that simplistic. It does not resolve so neatly. He can bend the world outside to his will, but not the one within. That one keeps returning, without warning.

It happens again. His wife is killed in a gangland crossfire. Another cost, another silence. And this time it is his daughter who stands before him. She does not accept the world he has made. She questions it. And in her eyes, he sees again the doubt he thought he had buried. Once again, he breaks. And once again, he has no words. Because heroism, as the film insists, is a distant construction. From afar, it can look clean. Up close, it is compromise, pain, and solitude. It carries a weight the hero cannot set down. It asks more than it gives. Once again, he turns away, not out of indifference, but out of fear. He sends his children away from him. Not only to protect them from the world he inhabits, but to protect himself from seeing who he’s become through their eyes. Perhaps that’s why he never wanted his son to follow him. He wanted the cycle to end with him. He believed he could carry it all alone, that his choices would contain their damage within his own body. But fate is not so obedient. Life does not bend to the logic of sacrifice.

It is only fitting that the life he built, the power, the protection, the violence consumes what he most hoped to preserve. His son is lost to the very world Naicker once vowed to fight. His bond with his daughter splinters under the weight of all that has gone unsoken. He believed that by sending her away, he could silence the questions. That distance could shield them both, from each other, from the past. But truth does not wait at the door. It finds its way in. And in the film’s most searing moment, (where Ratnam pays homage to Yash Chopra’s Deewaar), his daughter stands before him, questions him about the kind of life he has lived? About what kind of justice leaves bodies in its wake? Naicker, like Vijay in Deewaar, reaches for justification. He speaks of pain, of oppression, of the choices he had to make. He insists it was for others, for those who had no voice. But, like Ravi, she does not accept this. She sees through the worn narratives. She knows that no amount of suffering gives a man the right to remake justice in his own image. That the cost of such power cannot be passed on to others. However, the tragedy of Naicker’s life is that it has already happened. The tragedy is not that he failed, but that he believed he could control where the consequences would land. The story of Nayakan remains suspended between two truths: that he lived by a principle meant to help, and that it slowly consumed him. That he rose for his people, and in doing so, lost his place amongst them. That he tried to end a cycle, and could only delay it. Hero. Don. Father. Fugitive. All of them are real. But none of them are enough. And it’s here that Mani Ratnam reveals what the film has always been. Not a gangster epic. Not a Tamil Godfather. Not a collection of nods to Salim-Javed. All of that is perfunctory. The real story is something else. It is the story of a man’s gradual collapse. A man who believed he was saving others, only to realise too late that all along, he was trying to save himself. From guilt. From doubt. From the unbearable silence within. No wonder the film begins with Naicker as a boy, asking his father what is good and what is bad. No wonder it ends with his grandchild asking him the same question. No wonder the story begins with a child killing a policeman for killing his father. And ends with a policeman’s son killing a gangster for the same reason. No wonder, we call it poetic justice.

they are friends. Asked if she can be friends with Imran after what they went through, she said, “I hope. But we don’t (talk), not really. It’s cordial, but friends is a very strong term. We’re not there yet. Maybe some day.” In the same interview, Avantika opened up about how fabulous Imran is as a father, and said that she would never deny their daughter a healthy relationship with him. “I know what it was like to go through life without a close intimate relationship with my father, I knew the price I paid for that, and there’s no way I would want that for my child. I want her to have an incredibly beautiful relationship with her father. I cannot negatively impact that in any way, because then I’m doing damage to her. We get caught up in our own resentments, maybe because we want to hurt the other person... If you’re going to poison your child, it’s because you are hurt and bitter. I was very clear that my emotions can’t creep into her.” Avantika said that it took her years to get over the separation. She said that both she and Imran tried their best to make the marriage work, but hinted that she wasn’t the one who chose to end things. “I would have found it very difficult to walk away and to say this is it. It is mostly because of the kind of human being I am. I am extremely emotional. Another reason is that because my parents marriage didn’t work, I thought I always had this pressure to make mine work. I was too adamant that what was my reality as a child cannot be my reality as an adult. That fear was too deep to walk away,” she said.

a while ago. I thought I’ve made so many sacrifices and gone through so many struggles only to count the days left on set? This is very wrong.” Tripathi revealed though he didn’t announce it, he hasn’t done a film for a year. “I went on a break for self-reflection and physical healing. Which is why I’ve lost so much weight. I work out in some form or the other for two and a half to three hours for six days a week. I travelled a lot too. I stayed in my village for 15 days and also spent some time abroad,” he added. Tripathi clarified he continued to do brand endorsements during this break, along with some patchwork shoot of Anurag Basu’s upcoming romantic anthology Metro In Dino. “Anurag da’s film doesn’t get completed so easily. After editing, he feels like reworking a scene. So I did that,” said Tripathi. He said no to producers claiming that he doesn’t have the time to do any more projects.

# ‘Raja Kaiya Vacha’: The Ilayaraja magic Malayalam music didn’t know it needed



There’s something in “Isaignani” Ilayaraja’s songs that one can’t find in those composed by others. Not just in his Tamil compositions, even his Malayalam tracks evoke a feeling that’s difficult to articulate. Take, for instance, “Aalippazham Perukkaan” from My Dear Kuttichathan (1984), the first Indian film shot in the 3D format. It’s not just another song; it’s a childhood anthem for Malayalees, a track that defined the formative years not only of the kids of that era but also of their children. Unlike typical songs crafted specifically for kids, often overloaded with manufactured cuteness, it seems Ilayaraja’s intention was to go beyond merely delighting children; he also sought to reach the child within every adult and take them on a joyful ride back to their own childhood. Rather than having singers S Janaki and SP Sailaja use artificially high-pitched voices to mimic children, he allowed them to retain much of their natural adult tone. The result was a carefully balanced rendition that didn’t fully enter the childlike register but still resonated deeply with both kids and the children in adults alike.

In many ways, the song filled a gap in the hearts of listeners that they didn’t even know existed. Truth be told, Raja Kaiya Vacha (If Raja lays his hands), the songs would quietly fill the voids in our hearts. Although the industry had many filmmakers focused solely on commercial ventures, it was in Vyamoham (1978) helmed by cinema legend KG George that Ilayaraja made his debut in Malayalam. By then, he was already making significant strides in Tamil cinema. Among the tracks he composed for Vyamoham, “Poovaadikalil” and “Neeyo Njaano” stood out for their unconventional pacing and composition. Given that Malayalam cinema already boasted several talented composers and with Raaja quickly becoming a sensation across South India, with the Telugu and Kannada industries also eager to work with him, he did not return to Malayalam cinema for some time. Yet, Raaja was not someone one could ignore. He kept delivering astonishing work, one composition after another, in all languages. Regardless of the film’s genre or the emotional context, Ilayaraja consistently crafted jaw-dropping songs. Thug Life controversy explained | From Kamal Haasan’s controversial remark on Kannada language to petition in Karnataka high court

What set him apart wasn’t just the melody; it was the intricate sangathis and subtle nuances embedded in each track, combined with his extraordinary orchestration skills. These elements made Raaja even more popular. With Malayalees’ beloved singers like S Janaki, KJ Yesudas, SP Balasubrahmanyam and Vani Jairam, among others, delivering some of their finest performances in collaboration with him, it didn’t take Malayali filmmakers long to realise that this was not ‘just another music composer’. However, it took some time for Ilayaraja to truly settle into the Malayalam industry and get his first major breakthrough. That moment came with director Balu Mahendra’s Olangal (1982). It was a perfect platform for Raaja to bring out his A-game, and he did, and how. Not just one, but all three songs in the album — “Kuliradunnu Maanathu”, “Thumbi Vaa Thumbakudathin” and “Vezhaambal Kezhum Venalkkudeeram” — became evergreen classics, celebrated to this day for their beauty and emotional depth. Each track, set against a different emotional backdrop, struck the perfect musical and emotional chords. Thus, he effortlessly carved his place permanently in the hearts of the audiences here.

# Javed Akhtar on Pakistani actors wishing death upon him after choosing ‘hell over Pakistan’ remark: ‘If their prayers had effect, the country wouldn’t be in...’



Last month, noted lyricist and screenwriter Javed Akhtar, who is often targeted for his views on patriotism and religion, says that if there comes a time he has to choose between Pakistan and hell, he would prefer to go to hell. At the event, the lyricist — who identifies himself as an atheist — said extremists from both India and Pakistan shower abuses on him on a daily basis.

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Just as much as he tried to understand the regional ethos and aesthetics, Ilayaraja also contributed to elevating Malayalam songs to another level, where they could be savoured by people from other regions as well. While his tracks were rooted in the local, they were also strikingly universal, with a richer orchestration and a fondness for using choruses to evoke a sense of togetherness and belonging. Regardless of one’s mother tongue, Raaja’s songs — like arrows laced with compassion and serenity — pierced the hearts of listeners. Otherwise, how is it possible for a man who still doesn’t know Malayalam fluently to craft a lullaby like “Alliyilam Poovo” (Mangalam Nerunnu, 1984) that’s as dear to Malayalis as 19th-century poet and musician Irayimman Thampi’s “Omanathinkal Kidavo”? The same Raaja who composed the peppy “Maane Madhurakkarimbe” (Pinnilavu, 1983) also created the jubilant romantic track “Vaalittezhuthiya Neelakkadakkannil Meeno” (Onnanu Nammal, 1984), the children’s song “Thannannam Thaannannam” (Yathra, 1985), the semi-classical “Neelaloitha” (Kaveri, 1986) and the evergreen romantic melody “Poonkaattinodum” (Poomukhappadiyil Ninneyum Kaathu, 1986). While the maestro kept delivering exceptional albums one after another, his work in legendary filmmaker P Padmarajan’s Moonnam Pakkam (1988) set a benchmark for how a composer should truly enter the soul of a narrative, creating music that serves the story, rather than forcing a soundtrack onto it. Ilayaraja composed two songs for Moonnam Pakkam, one of the most acclaimed tragedies in Malayalam cinema history — “Unarumee Gaanam”, sung by G Venugopal, and “Thaamarakkili Paadunnu”, sung by KS Chithra, MG Sreekumar and Raaja himself. His compositions were so attuned to the film’s emotional core that it feels impossible to believe the music and the narrative weren’t born together, like two peas in a pod.

At the start of the 1990s, Raaja collaborated twice with veteran filmmaker Fazil and delivered back-to-back mesmerising albums. Ente Sooryaputhrikku (1991) told the story of a young woman searching for her estranged birth mother, while Pappayude Swantham Appoo (1992) revolved around a widower and his desperate attempts to love and be loved by his terminally ill son, whom he had long neglected while grappling with the grief of losing his wife. Tracks like “Aalapaman Thedum”, “Olathumpathu”, “Enn Poove Pon Poove”, “Snehathin Poonchola”, and “Kaaka Poocha Kokkara” were not only brilliant compositions but also brought out the best in their vocalists, giving Malayalis unforgettable musical moments. In 1996, the maestro gifted Malayalam cinema one of his finest albums with Priyadarshan’s Kaalapani, starring Mohanlal and Tabu. Each track offered a fresh experience — rich in orchestration, rhythmic complexity and emotional depth — and collectively, they touched listeners in an unprecedented way. He continued to offer gems with films like Guru (1997), Kaliyoonjal (1997), Oru Yathramozhi (1997) and Friends (1999). The year 2000 marked the beginning of his fruitful collaboration with director Sathyan Anthikad, and the two have worked together on several acclaimed films since. Their musical drama Kochu Kochu Santhoshangal (2000) was widely appreciated, and their partnership continued to shine in films like Manassinakkare (2003), Achuvinte Amma (2005), Rasathanthram (2006), Vinodayathra (2007), Innathe Chinthha Vishayam (2008), Bhagyadevatha (2009) and Kadha Thudarunnu (2010). Some of their most beloved tracks include “Ghanashyaama”, “Kodamanjin Thaazhvarayil”, “Shivakaradhamarukalayamaay Naadam”, “Marakkudayai”, “Melleyonnu”, “Chendaykkoru Kolundeda”, “Thamarakuruvikkku”, “Enthu Paranjaalum”, “Attinkarayorathe”, “Thevaram Nokkunnundu”, “Mandaarappoo Mooli”, “Swapnangal Kannezhuthiya”, “Aaro Paadunnu”, and “Kizhakkumala Kammallitta”. Meanwhile, he also composed for Hariharan and MT Vasudevan Nair’s epic period drama Kerala Varma Pazhassi Raja (2009), starring Mammooty. His most recent work here was Clint (2017). Although Malayalam cinema has witnessed many talented composers, it is undeniable that the industry wouldn’t have reached such heights without Ilayaraja’s invaluable contributions. As he continues to soar, audiences eagerly await his return to the industry.

“If you’re on one side, the abuses come only from one side. But if you’re on neither side, you get abuses from both sides. So I get abuses like, “Kafir, jehnumi, mardood, tu toh jehnum mein hi jaega (You’ll go to hell).” And from the other side, I get, ‘Jihadi, Pakistan chala ja’ (Go to Pakistan, traitor). People can call me a jihadi too? They have quite an imagination,” said Akhtar. In the interview with The Lallantop, Akhtar reasoned that if all the fundamentalists of India want him to go to either Pakistan or hell, he’d choose hell. “Pakistan felt really bad by that. But I said you don’t issue me a visa anyway,” said Akhtar. His last appearance in Pakistan was two years ago when he attended an event to commemorate legendary poet Faiz Ahmed Faiz.

Pakistani actors Imran Abbas, Mishi Khan, and Asim Mehmood criticised Akhtar’s ‘hell over Pakistan’ remark, with Mehmood going to the extent of wishing death upon him. “If their prayers had that effect, then they wouldn’t be in the state they’re in today,” responded Akhtar, laughing. He reasoned that India being in a crisis suits Pakistan’s agenda. “Your stability is in the claim that you can point to India’s state and say why you formed Pakistan in the first place. But if a Javed Akhtar earns respect and money, then it doesn’t suit you. How would Shah Rukh Khan, Aamir Khan, and Salman Khan being such big stars suit them either? Their existence is proving your basic argument wrong,” said Akhtar. He argued that Pakistani actors would be wishing today if they’d have stayed back in India, they would’ve prospered like Indian actors did. He pointed out the example of Pakistani actor Bushra Ansari, who recently advised Akhtar to stay as quiet on Pakistan as veteran Indian actor Naseeruddin Shah. She also claimed that Javed would not even get a house on rent in India. “She’s a very fine actor! If she was in India, she’d be a global name by now. I’ve seen a couple of her plays, so I know how good she is. This sadness of not making it like Indian actors did has stayed with them,” said Akhtar. Last month, Akhtar said in an interview with PTI that this is not the time to even think about whether Pakistani artists should be allowed to work in India.