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When Philosophy meets AI

When I chose to study Philosophy for my post-graduation at the Arts College of Osmania University in Hyderabad during the early 1980s, very few of my friends were pleased with my decision. Understandably, they had concerns about my future employability, given the uncertain prospects of what was then seen as one of the most abstract disciplines in the humanities.

But I was drawn to Philosophy by an inner inclination that I could not ignore. As the years passed, I could never have imagined that, more than four decades later, this once so-called godforsaken field, of which the most celebrated credential seemed to be the endorsement of the great Socrates, the father of Western Philosophy, would rise as a vital guide in the present age of artificial intelligence (AI). In today's world, shaped by rapidly advancing science, economy, and technology; Philosophy has quietly reclaimed its relevance, reminiscent of the biblical verse: "The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone." It all began when I happened to glance through an article written by Marco Argentii, the Chief Information Officer at Goldman Sachs, published on April 16, 2024, in the Harvard Business Review. In the article, he expressed a sense of unpredictability and concern about the reliability of AI systems, noting that they may not always function as intended. This observation was based on his own firsthand experience in the current technological environment. He explained that the root cause of many unintended outcomes lies in the absence of critical thinking skills, which are necessary for understanding and managing the complexities involved in AI construction.

Geoffrey Hinton, the 2024 Nobel Prize winner in Physics and widely regarded as the godfather of AI, has stated that the chances of catastrophic consequences from AI have become more real and pressing than ever.

ICICI Bank and Tata Memorial Centre (TMC) lay foundation stone for advanced cancer care block in Visakhapatnam



Hyderabad: ICICI Bank, in collaboration with Tata Memorial Centre (TMC), today announced commencement of the construction of a new building at the Homi Bhabha Cancer Hospital and Research Centre (HBCHRC) in Visakhapatnam, Andhra Pradesh. With a commitment of over ₹550 crore, the Bank is funding the construction of a state-of-the-art facility spanning nearly 3.9 lakh square feet, equipped with cutting-edge medical technology.

Once operational, the eight-storied new building—ICICI Foundation Block for Child and Blood Cancer—will serve 3,000 patients annually. Currently, HBCHRC, Visakhapatnam has a capacity of handling 6,200 patients annually. Designed as one of the largest specialised cancer facilities in eastern India, the new building will house over 215 beds. It is expected to be completed by 2027, subject to necessary approvals. ICICI Foundation for Inclusive Growth, the CSR arm of ICICI Bank, will oversee its implementation.

The foundation stone was unveiled by Mr. Pradeep Kumar Sinha, Chairman, ICICI Bank; in the presence of Mr. Sandeep Batra, Executive Director, ICICI Bank; and Dr. Sudeep Gupta, Director, Tata Memorial Centre, Mumbai. Mr. Sinha also inaugurated the N.K. Rao Auditorium in the presence of other dignitaries. ICICI Foundation has supported TMC with infrastructure and equipment for the new auditorium. Mr. Pradeep Kumar Sinha, Chairman, ICICI Bank said, "We are honoured to partner with TMC in a mission towards cancer care, that aligns with our philosophy of strengthening critical healthcare infrastructure in the country."

This project reflects our commitment to enabling accessible and high-quality medical care for individuals in need. This project, one of the largest in eastern corridor for child and blood cancer, will serve patients from Andhra Pradesh and nearby eastern states, helping address the growing need for cancer treatment."

On the occasion, Mr. Sandeep Batra, Executive Director, ICICI Bank stated, "At ICICI Bank, healthcare remains a focus of our CSR initiatives. Two years ago, we announced our partnership with TMC, an institution that has made a profound impact on cancer care in India, by committing ₹1,200 crore to set up three new blocks at TMC's centres in Visakhapatnam, Navi Mumbai, and New Chandigarh. Recognising TMC's latest requirements, we are pleased to enhance our commitment to ₹1,800 crore. Spanning a total area of 10.7 lakh square feet, these new blocks are designed to be equipped with state-of-the-art medical facilities and research wings. These blocks will together accommodate 19 LINACs* and 555 beds. Once fully operational, they will serve as regional hubs."

Dr. Umesh Mahantshetty, Director, Homi Bhabha Cancer Hospital & Research Centre, Visakhapatnam said, "We are grateful to ICICI Foundation for their generous donation, which will significantly contribute to the advancement of cancer treatment and research in Pediatric and Hematolymphoid Cancers in this region. The partnership with ICICI Foundation is a testament to the collective efforts of our institutions in providing top-notch care and improving cancer outcomes for patients across the country."

FinE Launches Finiversity to Transform Financial Literacy for All

Empowering Lives Through Accessible Financial Education in India



Hyderabad: FinE is excited to announce the launch of Finiversity, a groundbreaking online financial literacy platform, during a spectacular event at the Mercure Hotel on 12th June, 2025. This revolutionary initiative is designed to make financial education engaging, practical, and accessible for individuals across the spectrum from students to working professionals. The launch was graced by esteemed guests, including Mr. Jagadeeshwar, IAS (Retd.), former Principal Secretary to the Government of Telangana. In his address, he stressed the significance of financial literacy in today's world, saying, "Promoting financial awareness is crucial as we strive for a more informed and empowered population. Initiatives like Finiversity are vital for building a future where financial independence is accessible to all."

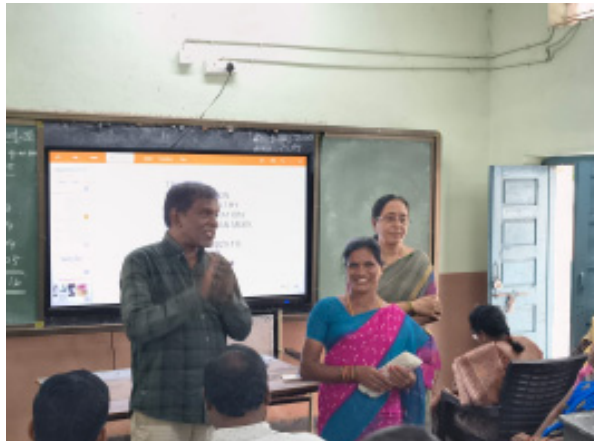
The event was led by Blesida Benny, a respected wealth manager and the visionary founder of FinE, who identified a significant gap in financial literacy among youth and professionals. This realization propelled her to develop a

solution aimed at bridging this critical gap. "Financial literacy is not just a skill; it's a necessity," said Benny during the launch. "With Finiversity, we aim to empower 20 lakh people in the next two years with real-world financial skills that can fundamentally change their relationship with money." Supporting this mission were distinguished guests such as Mr. RSV Badrinath, former Deputy Commissioner of Police, and Mr. Nulakajodu Madhu Vinay, a leading venture capitalist and director of FinE.

Their participation underscored the essential role of financial literacy in fostering sustainable economic growth and individual empowerment. The launch event featured a vibrant gathering of personalities from different sectors, including actors Sri Tej and Abhilash Shankara, renowned singer Laksha Naidu, and entertainers from the popular show Jabardasth. Their involvement exemplified the collective effort needed to cultivate a financially literate generation capable of navigating the complexities of modern finance.

Empowering Education in Mutharam

!""PS Ashokan"Indian Chronicle"Manthani, June 11""On June 10, 2025, ZPHS Mutharam hosted a strategic FLN Orientation for teachers across the mandal, focusing on goal setting and effective classroom planning in Telugu, English, and Mathematics. MEO Hari Prasad emphasized the need for activity-based learning environments using the new Period Plan Handbooks."" Simultaneously, Mid-Day Meal staff were trained to ensure nutritious, hygienic meals per state guidelines, while sanitation workers were urged to maintain clean, safe campuses essential for student health and learning.""Key educators including HM Padma Devi, HM Rajeshwar Rao, HM Lakshmi Rajam, Principal Kesari Santosh, and RPs Mallesham & Satish, along with CRPs, MRC staff, and all support teams, actively participated."" A united step toward quality education, student well-being, and institutional excellence across Manthani Mandal!



Think Infinity School Launched in a Grand Inaugural Ceremony“



““June 12, Indian Chronicle Rayalaseema co-ordinator””Think Infinity School was formally inaugurated today in a grand ceremony held at its Padipeta campus. The event was graced by the esteemed presence of His Holiness Shankar Vijayendra Saraswati Swamy, the Pontiff of Kanchi Kamakoti Peetam, who attended as the chief guest and bestowed his blessings upon the new institution. “During the ceremony, His Holiness addressed the gathering, emphasizing the true purpose of education. He spoke on the critical need for students to cultivate a balanced foundation of moral and traditional values alongside modern scientific knowledge. “Mr. Venkat Chivukula, Chairman of Think Infinity School, welcomed the distinguished guests and shared the vision behind the school. “Our mission is to establish an institution that provides a

superior standard of education and empowers future generations to excel,” he stated. “The school's Principal, Mr. Chakravarthy Sandeep, outlined the educational framework, future goals, and the comprehensive development programs designed for the students.

He elaborated on the school's commitment to fostering a holistic learning environment. “The inauguration was a resounding success, marked by the enthusiastic participation of a large number of students, parents, local elders, board members, and faculty. “About Think Infinity School: “Think Infinity School is an educational institution dedicated to nurturing young minds by integrating timeless values with contemporary learning. The school aims to provide a comprehensive educational experience that promotes academic excellence and personal growth.

Karnataka forms special police force led by Mangaluru top cop to tackle communal violence

GNS News Agency, June 12

MangaluruThe members of the force will have special powers, uniforms, and dedicated vehicles to enhance their operational effectiveness. (Express photo)The Karnataka government has formed a Communal Violence Control Force to tackle communal tensions and violence in the state's coastal and Malnad regions and appointed Mangaluru Police Commissioner Sudheer Kumar Reddy as its head. The 248-personnel force will operate under Western Range Inspector-General Amit Singh's supervision until further directives, according to a home department statement. The new force will specifically target communal ten-

sions in the coastal districts of Dakshina Kannada and Udupi, along with Shivamogga district in the Malnad region. Director-General and Inspector-General M A Saleem has deployed 248 personnel, including three inspectors who previously served with the state's Anti-Naxal Force, for the new force, the home department said. The formation of the force follows recent murders in the state's coastal region. Rowdy-sheeter and Hindutva activist Suhas Shetty was murdered in Mangaluru on May 1 and eleven people were arrested in connection with the crime. Shetty had five cases against him—four in Mangaluru city and one in Dakshina Kannada district.

No stranger to chaos: Meet MCD's newly elected Standing Committee chairperson

GNS News Agency, June 12

Eight hundred and eighty-nine days after Delhi Lieutenant Governor VK Saxena appointed Satya Sharma as the presiding officer for the mayoral elections of the newly-reunited Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) at that time, he was Thursday elected as the Chairperson of the Standing Committee — cementing the BJP's return to assume full control of the civic body. The development is expected to bring to a formal close one of the most turbulent periods in the MCD's political history. In 2023, Sharma's appointment marked the first major flashpoint at the MCD in what would become a prolonged standoff between the BJP and the AAP.

The AAP, which had won the municipal polls in December 2022, had objected to Sharma's nomination, calling it a breach of an established precedent, where the seniormost councillor is traditionally named the protom speaker or presiding officer for the first sitting of the House. Instead, Sharma, a BJP councillor from Gautampuri, was chosen by the L-G, triggering immediate pushback and setting the stage for a prolonged conflict. That conflict would play out dramatically. Over three separate House sittings between January and February in 2023, attempts to elect a mayor collapsed into chaos — councillors hurled bottles, stormed the well, and overturned furniture as each session was adjourned without a vote to elect the mayor. Addressing the press after one such meeting, which had been adjourned in chaos, Sharma had alleged, “Meri baazu pe unhone (AAP councillors) mukka Maara hai, mujhe bhi chot lagi hai, baaki councillors ko bhi hurt hua hai (They punched me on my arm, I got hurt, other councillors also got hurt).” The AAP had dismissed the claims. While AAP's Shelly Oberoi was eventually elected the mayor following a Supreme Court directive in February 2023, Sharma has since continued to be nominated as the presiding officer for subsequent mayoral elections in 2024 and 2025, reflecting the L-G's continued trust in her to oversee proceedings amid political deadlock. Over the next two and a half years, this initial bone of contention had evolved into a series of political battles between the two parties — over Standing Committee elections, budget approvals, nominations, and procedural control. After losing the Assembly elections in February this year, AAP lost the numerical advantage in the MCD House gradually as the BJP managed a string of defections in their favour.

In April, the BJP also won the mayoral elections, reversing the outcome of the 2022 civic polls. Yet, it was Sharma's election on Thursday as Chairperson of the MCD's Standing Committee—a body that acts like the financial backbone of the civic body, with no proposals over Rs 5 crores being able to proceed without its approval—that has given MCD's complete institutional backing to the BJP. “I am originally a resident of Meerut, Western Uttar Pradesh, and the assembly constituencies of East Delhi have a majority of residents of Western Uttar Pradesh, which significantly influences the election results,” Sharma said. As a three-time councillor, Sharma has held various roles in the East Delhi Municipal Corporation over the last two decades, including chairpersonships of the ethics, building, and education committees. She was the mayor of East Delhi in 2017. During her tenure, she oversaw the launch of the 7.8-MW waste-to-energy plant in Shastri Park. Sharma also claims to have been a great support in helping the BJP candidate win the Muslim-dominated Usmanpur region. Her father-in-law, Jagdish Chandra Sharma, was also an RSS volunteer since childhood and has held key organisational positions, serving as both President and General Secretary of the Vishwa Hindu Parishad in the Yamuna Vihar area of Delhi. Sharma said that both her maternal and paternal grandfathers, Rameshwar Dayal Sharma and Babu Ram Sharma, were a part of India's Independence struggle.

Woman, 27, held for murder of 54-year-old husband three weeks after marriage



The accused says she was scared to have sexual relations with the victim

GNS News Agency, June 12

The Sangli police Wednesday arrested a 27-year-old woman for allegedly murdering her 54-year-old husband with an axe nearly three weeks after they got married. The police said that prima facie the dispute arose as the woman, Radhika Ingle, did not want to have physical relations with her husband Anil Lokhande and she was scared of making further excuses.

An officer said the incident took place on Tuesday night around 11.30 pm when Ingle allegedly hit Lokhande on his head with an axe that led to the death. She called up her relative and told her about the ‘mistake she committed’. The relative then alerted the police who came to their residence, registered a murder case and arrested Ingle. An officer said that this was Lokhande's second marriage and his first wife had died due to cancer. He had two daughters, both of whom were married, so he felt lonely. Ingle, on the other hand, too was staying alone with her mother and wanted some support as they were not doing well financially.

An official said during interrogation, she told them that due to a medical condition, she could not give birth and was also hesitant to have physical relations. Soon after the wedding on May 17, the deceased tried to have physical relations with her but she refused it by giving some excuse.

She said that she was scared she would no longer be able to avoid physical relations and hence she decided to murder him on Tuesday night,” said assistant police inspector Deepak Bhandawalkar from the MIDC Kupwad police station in Sangli where the murder case was registered. The officer added, “This is the version that she has given. We have so far checked if there is any other motive but so far nothing else seems to be the case. We are, however, still investigating the matter. She will be produced before the court on Friday.”

AITUC Condemns Government's "Thirst for Power" Over Promises, Demands End to Visakhapatnam Steel Plant Privatization



“CPI Leader Harinath Reddy: "This is a Government of Deception, Not Development; Super Six Promises Have Been Abandoned"" June 12 Indian Chronicle Rayalaseema co-ordinator""As part of a nationwide call to action, the Tirupati District Committee of the All India Trade Union Congress (AITUC) today staged a major protest (dharna) at the District Collector's office. The demonstration, led by AITUC City General Secretary N.D. Ravi, centered on the urgent demands to save the Visakhapatnam Steel Plant from privatization and to reinstate all terminated contract workers." Addressing the protest, Comrade Harinath Reddy, a member of the CPI State Secretariat, condemned the central government's policies. "Visakha Steel is the right of the Andhra people, built on the sacrifice of 32 lives," he stated. "Since Narendra Modi came to power, his government has made it a mission to sell off profitable public sector undertakings to private capitalists at throwaway prices. The privatization of Visakhapatnam Steel is proceeding at a rapid pace." "He outlined the key demands on behalf of the protesting unions: " * Immediately halt the privatization of the Visakhapatnam Steel Plant." * Allocate captive mines to the plant to ensure its financial viability." * Reinstate the 4,200 contract workers who were unjustly terminated." * Scrap the proposal to hand over the steel plant's land to the

Adani Group." Reddy also criticized the state's coalition government under Chandrababu Naidu, accusing it of rapidly implementing the central government's anti-worker policies. "It is shameful that this government has approved the four new Labour Codes, which abolish 44 hard-won labour laws established since the British era. This move destroys the eight-hour workday, paving the way for 12-to-15-hour workdays," he said. "AITUC District President Chandrasekhar Reddy and General Secretary Radhakrishna also spoke, lambasting the state government's performance. "The coalition government celebrated its first 100 days by patting itself on the back, but as it nears one year, it has proven to be a government that deceives the people, not one that serves them. The 'Super Six' schemes have been abandoned. They are fooling the five crore people of Andhra Pradesh with false propaganda while failing to deliver on their promises." "The leaders highlighted that the government is targeting low-level employees, wages are not keeping pace with rising prices, job security has vanished, and promises of unemployment benefits and free bus travel for women have been broken." "Call for Nationwide General Strike"

The AITUC leaders issued a powerful call to action for the entire working class and the citizens of Andhra Pradesh to participate in a nationwide general strike on July 9th, 2025. The strike aims to demand the complete repeal of the anti-worker Labour Codes and to protest the government's failed policies. "The protest saw participation from numerous union leaders, including CPI District Executive Member Chinnam Penchalaiah, CPI City Secretary Jella Viswanatham, and AITUC leaders Sriramulu, C.H. Sivakumar, K.Y. Raja, Govindaswamy, and many others." "About AITUC: "The All India Trade Union Congress (AITUC) is the oldest trade union federation in India. It is dedicated to safeguarding the rights and promoting the interests of the working class across all sectors of the economy."

Bompalli Witnesses Grand Celebrations of Sri Ranganatha Swamy Brahmotsavam.



“PS Ashokan"Indian Chronicle"June, 12""Peddapalli Mandal: The sacred environs of Sri Bhudevi Sametha Sri Ranganatha Swamy Temple in Bompalli village came alive with spiritual magnificence as the annual Brahmotsavam was celebrated with grandeur and religious solemnity. On this auspicious occasion, Peddapalli MLA Sri Chintakunta Vijayaramana Rao participated in the rituals and offered special pujas, accompanied by prominent local dignitaries and devotees." "The temple priests accorded the MLA a ceremonial reception, invoking Vedic hymns and bestowing divine blessings. In a gesture of reverence, he was

honoured with traditional temple insignia and felicitated in accordance with age-old customs. "Earlier, local Congress Party leaders of Bompalli extended a warm and respectful welcome to the MLA, adorning him with silken shawls and expressing their appreciation for his presence during the spiritual observance. "The divine event drew enthusiastic participation from a wide spectrum of the community, including Congress party cadres, Youth Congress leaders, devotees, villagers, and spiritual aspirants, all of whom contributed to the sanctity and success of the celebration. The Brahmotsavam stood as a testimony to the region's deep-rooted spiritual heritage and communal harmony."

BC communities push Congress for cabinet berths, key posts in Telangana

GNS News Agency, June 12

Hyderabad: After leaders and their supporters, communities are now mounting pressure on the Telangana Congress to recognise the contributions of their MLAs and allot cabinet berths and other key posts in the government. The demand has further intensified following the induction of three Ministers into the Cabinet on Sunday, with three more berths still remaining vacant. Discontent continues to simmer among Congress MLAs who were overlooked for Cabinet positions.

On Thursday, members of the Munnuru Kapu, Golla Kuruma and Yadav communities met TPCC president Mahesh Kumar Goud at Gandhi Bhavan, urging the party to prioritise MLAs and leaders from their communities in the next phase of Cabinet expansion and suitably post allotments. Interestingly, while the Telangana Congress has

claimed that social justice was reflected in the distribution of Cabinet berths, as well as in the appointment of vice presidents and general secretaries, however, members from these BC communities have expressed disappointment with the recent decisions of high command. Munnuru Kapu representatives demanded that Vemulawada MLA Aadi Srinivas be given a Cabinet berth. A large number of community members from different districts turned up at Gandhi Bhavan to press their demand for justice. Similarly, Alair MLA and Government Whip Beerla Ilaiiah said that although the Congress party remained committed to social justice, injustice had been done to the Golla-Kuruma communities in the recent appointments. He pointed out that in the united Andhra Pradesh Cabinet, the Golla-Kuruma communities had representation. Now, despite the Yadav population in the State touching 22 lakh and the Kuruma population nearing six lakh,

TUWJ (IJU) Delegation Urges District Collector to Ensure 50% Tuition Fee Concession for Journalists' Children in Private Institutions

“PS Ashokan"Indian Chronicle"Manthani, June 12""Peddapalli, Telangana – In a compassionate appeal aimed at safeguarding the educational interests of journalists' families, representatives of the Telangana Union of Working Journalists (TUWJ), affiliated with the Indian Journalists Union (IJU), submitted a formal memorandum to District Collector Sri Koya Sriharsha, requesting the implementation of a 50% tuition fee concession for the children of working journalists enrolled in private educational institutions. "The delegation comprised TUWJ District President Burrampudi Sampath Kumar Goud, Vice President Narayanadas Ashok, Peddapalli Press Club President Chintakindi Chandramogili, Mandal President Veeramalla Vidyasagar, along with senior journalists Md. Ghouse Basha and Md. Ibrahim. The team personally met the Collector on Wednesday and submitted a detailed representation highlighting the financial constraints endured by journalists across the district. "They emphasized that over 600 media professionals, engaged in



both print and electronic platforms, are relentlessly serving as a vital link between the government and the public, often while grappling with modest earnings and precarious job conditions. Despite their critical societal role, journalists are compelled to bear the burden of exorbitant tuition fees to secure quality education for their children in private schools. "The delegation urged the Collector to exer-

cise his administrative capacity to direct the District Education Department to issue appropriate instructions to private schools, advocating for a 50% fee waiver on humanitarian and moral grounds. They also drew attention to past instances where similar concessions were extended by way of official directives. "Responding with empathy and assurance, Collector Sri Koya Sriharsha

conveyed that the matter would be given serious consideration and promised to explore actionable measures to facilitate the requested concessions. "The delegation also extended their advocacy to the Assistant Director of the District Education Office, Smt. Sharada, to whom they submitted a parallel memorandum, seeking institutional support and coordination for the initiative.

Task Force Cracks Down on Spurious Seed Sales in Manthani Mandal



"PS Ashokan"Indian Chronicle"Manthani, June 12""In a coordinated enforcement drive to curb the circulation of spurious agricultural inputs, the Task Force team comprising Agricultural Development Officer (ADA) Anjani, Mandal Agriculture Officer Dasari Navya, and Sub-Inspector of Police Ramesh conducted surprise inspections at several agricultural input dealer outlets across Manthani mandal today."

"During the inspections, the officials sternly warned that any unauthorized sale of seeds or fertilizers would invite stringent legal action. Dealers were explicitly instructed

to adhere strictly to government regulations and maintain transparency in their transactions. "The officials emphasized that dealers must provide valid receipts for all seed purchases made by farmers. Furthermore, they cautioned that if seeds are found being sold in unlabelled or loose packets in villages, or if such activities come to light, the public is encouraged to report them directly to the Mandal Agriculture Officer for immediate action. "This initiative reflects the administration's firm commitment to protecting farmers' interests and ensuring the quality and authenticity of agricultural inputs in the region."

Vivek Venkataswamy Takes Charge as Labour Minister, Vows to Transform ITIs into National Centres of Excellence.

“PS Ashokan"Indian Chronicle"June, 12""Hyderabad – Labour Minister Mr. Vivek Venkataswamy, addressing his first public engagement after assuming office, emphasized his commitment to revitalizing Industrial Training Institutes (ITIs) across Telangana. " "This is my first visit in my new capacity as the Minister for Labour, and it brings back memories of my father, who also served in this very role and gave special attention to the ITI sector," he remarked. "The Minister expressed pride in the opportunity and laid out a visionary roadmap to uplift technical education in the state. " "Telangana currently has 65 ITI institutions. It is imperative that we upgrade them with the latest technologies. Our goal is to make Telangana's ITIs the best in the country. " "Drawing from his extensive background as President of the Industries Association for both Telangana and Andhra Pradesh, Mr. Venkataswamy highlighted the critical importance of skill development. " "Our Chief



Minister, Shri Revanth Reddy, is always at the forefront when it comes to empowering youth through skill training. We must ensure our students are equipped with market-ready skills that translate into real employment opportunities. "The Minister urged institutional heads to take proactive steps: "Focus on increasing student admissions. Appoint quali-

fied faculty wherever there are shortages. "Ensure students receive industry-relevant training. "Addressing infrastructure gaps, he stated: " "I have been informed that institutions like the one in Mandamari lack adequate facilities. I will ensure that every ITI is equipped with proper infrastructure. "Reaffirming his commitment, Mr. Venkataswamy con-

cluded: " "I will remain accessible to all stakeholders. I intend to personally visit every ITI in the state.

I will also work diligently to secure central funding. An estimated ₹4,000 crore is required to elevate skill development programs, and I will coordinate with the Chief Minister to bring in the necessary resources."

Tirupati temple management initiates legal action for unauthorised sale of ‘Tirupati laddus’



GNS News Agency, June 12

No travel across the globe, no long queues for darshan and no crowds. All that one had to do to get ‘Tirupati Laddu’ in the US was log on to the e-commerce website PushMyCart and place an order.The Texas-based Mahita LLC, the owner of PushMyCart, is among those services that have received a legal notice from the management of the Sri Venkateswara temple over the ‘Tirupati Laddu’ – the first-of-its-kind move by a temple in India to safeguard the sanctity and intellectual property of the ‘Tirupati Laddu’.The Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams (TTD) which manages the temple, has initiated legal action against multiple unauthorised entities that it claims was found selling or promoting products under the name of ‘Tirupati Laddu’ in violation of its registered Geographical Indication (GI).

The notices were served for unauthorised commercial exploitation of the Tirupati Laddu name and falsely associating their offerings with the temple, the TTD said on Friday. The legal notice to PushMyCart, a copy of which is with The Indian Express, revealed how the platform was unauthorisedly using the GI. One, the platform had linked themselves to TTD by listing the body as a “vendor”.The

legal notice read: “Unauthorised use of the registered GI, coupled with the false association created through your product description and social media content reflects a calculated and dishonest intent to infringe upon TTD’s rights over the Tirupati Laddu”. Then in the Q and A section linked to the laddus, PushMyCart platform had vouched, “Yes, devotees of Tirupati Balaji want to buy Tirupati Laddus online, which is now available on PushMyCart”. The Q and A also said, “PushMyCart sends the Tirumala Tirupati Laddu prasad to the USA and other countries”.

According to the legal notice, some of the laddus could have been obtained by devotees who had received the laddu prasadam from the temple. The sale of prasadam for commercial purposes by any third party is “illegal”, the notice pointed out. When asked the TTD did not reveal how many laddus were being sold through e-commerce platforms per annum.The legal notices, however, highlighted that the Tirupati Laddu is a protected GI under the Geographical Indications of Goods (Registration and Protection) Act, 1999. “The preparation of the laddu is done exclusively within the Tirumala temple under the supervision of TTD, following a time-honoured and sanctified process. Unauthorized use and sale of the name not only infringes legal rights but also undermines the spiritual sanctity of the offering,” the TTD said.In response, PushMyCart acknowledged receipt of the legal notice and suspended its product listings pending legal review. Several other vendors have also taken down their listings following TTD’s proactive outreach.TTD EO J Syamala Rao said that the ‘Tirupati Laddu’ is not just a product, “but a sacred prasadam with deep spiritual and cultural value”. “We are committed to taking all necessary legal steps to prevent its misuse and to protect the trust of crores of devotees worldwide,” he said.The TTD said that this is among the first instances in India where a temple offering protected under GI law has been defended through formal legal channels on international platforms.

Live-in partner arrested after woman’s body found stuffed in suitcase in Hyd

GNS News Agency, June 12

The Cyberabad police Friday announced the arrest of a man in connection with the death of a woman whose body was found stuffed inside a suitcase in Bachupally on Wednesday.The police Thursday arrested Vijay Toppa alias Wilson, 30, a native of Nepal and a chef at a fast food centre in Bachupally. The deceased woman was identified as Tara Bohra, 33, a Nepalese woman, who recently started living together with the accused. He reportedly confessed to strangling her during an argument about her pregnancy, the police said.On Wednesday, the suitcase was discovered in a secluded area of Vijaya Durga Owners Association Colony, Bachupally, after a local watchman reported the same to the police. Upon inspection, the body of a woman, initially estimated to be between 25-30 years old, was found inside.

According to the police investigation, Bohra and Toppa met and developed a relationship through Facebook. Bohra, who was already married and had two children, arrived in Hyderabad on April 15 and began living with Toppa in a rented room in Indiramma Colony, Bowrampet. The murder allegedly occurred in the early morning hours of May 23. The couple reportedly had a heated argument concerning



Bohra’s pregnancy. In a fit of rage, Toppa strangled her with a nylon thread from a bag. He then stuffed her body into a large suitcase, carried it on his shoulders, and dumped it before fleeing, said K Suresh Kumar, Deputy Commissioner of Police (Balanagar zone).Five special teams were swiftly formed to apprehend the perpetrator. The police utilised CCTV footage from a local store and other intelligence to track Toppa’s movements. He was being produced before the court on Friday for judicial remand proceedings.

Long wait continues for driving licence, RC applicants in Punjab

GNS News Agency, June 12

Four months ago, Ropar resident Harjeet Singh purchased a second-hand commercial heavy haulage trailer. He had got the transport vehicle refinanced from a bank. He had applied for a Registration Certificate at the Mohali Regional Transport Office (RTO) in Punjab in January. However, even after four months, he is yet to get a printed copy of his RC.

Harjeet Singh, who was anticipating to make money through the commercial transportation of the newly purchased heavy vehicle, is among the 5 lakh people in Punjab who have been waiting for their Driving Licence (DL) and RCs since last December, due to the state government’s delay in issuing the documents.

The government landed in a soup after Smart Chip Private Limited, which was entrusted with the printing of driving licences and RCs in chip cards, exited prematurely in November last year.“I have made umpteen rounds at the RTO office. I am told to go back and wait. I have started paying instalments to the bank, but my trailer continues to be in the parking lot. In the absence of an RC, I am unable to get a national permit for the heavy commercial vehicle,” said Singh, who agrees that many such small transporters like him are on the verge of getting into depression.“How can anyone pay such heavy instalments with a vehicle waiting to ply on the roads? If we ply them illegally, there is a huge fine if we get caught,” Singh He said not only were the RCs and DLs not printed, but no other work was also being taken up. “I am waiting to get the hypothecation removed of another vehicle from its RC. However, that too is not being done. Whenever I go there, they tell me that after the Vigilance crackdown on transport officers, the work is pending.”Daljeet Singh, a cab driver, has also been struggling to get the RC of a car he purchased to ply as a taxi. “I have not been able to get the RC from RTO in Mohali. I have visited the RTO several times, but to no avail. I cannot take my car to Chandigarh and other places outside the state as I do not have a printed RC,” he said.He added, “For other vehicles, I am unable to get a fitness certificate from the RTO. And, no fitness certificate means I cannot get a national permit. My work has stopped. I am frustrated.”On April 21, the state government told the Punjab and Haryana High Court that there was a pendency of 4.5 lakh RCs and DLs.

A government official told The Indian Express that they had been able to clear this pendency by half after purchasing the chip cards. A traffic expert, Kamal Soi, however, contested the claim of the government. “There is no change in the pendency. It continues to remain the same. New applications are added every day. Do you know anyone who is getting the DL and RC? No one,” said Soi, who is planning to file a public interest litigation (PIL) in two to three days.“They do not have a system. I am preparing a case of how the people are harassed, but the government is looking away,” he added.Meanwhile, a senior government officer said that they were in the process of inviting tenders for the printing of these documents. “The process will take two to three months. After that, everything will be streamlined,” the officer said. “We have called employees from



The Punjab government landed in a soup after Smart Chip Private Limited, which was entrusted with the printing of driving licences and RCs in chip cards, exited prematurely in November last year.

other departments on deputation to the transport department. We will assign them duties. Some will man the driving test tracks, others will be printing the documents. We hope that the work will be streamlined,” he added.The development came after the High Court on April 21 asked why the government is not getting this work done by people on contract, as there was no shortage of unemployed people in the country. The court had ordered the Punjab government to file an affidavit in the matter.Soi pointed out that the government cannot invite tenders till they get a stay vacated on inviting tenders from the High Court. “All they have to do is submit to the HC that people are suffering, and the stay should be vacated. But they cannot even do that. They are caught up in a scam. The system is not working,” Soi remarked.

The government has tried to allot the contract twice. Though tenders were floated, the process got mired in litigation after a private company opposed it in the High Court.In a PIL, Neha Shukla, who is also awaiting her driving licence, told the High Court that the people of Punjab have to wait for months for an RC.Soi has been demanding that the government award the contract to the Central Government’s National Informatics Centre Services Inc (NICSI) so that the backlog is cleared. Since the government asked the company for a security deposit, the matter did not proceed further. “We do not want any stop-gap arrangement. We will allot the contract to a company now so that the work goes on smoothly.”In April, the government had put former Vigilance chief S P S Parmar under suspension along with two other officers, including Swarandeep Singh and Harpreet Singh Mander, after the government busted an alleged transport documents racket. The suspensions were said to be due to their alleged failure to act against corruption in the transport department. However, Mander and Swarandeep were reinstated a few days ago.

‘What Maharashtra wants will happen’: Uddhav Thackeray confirms talks with MNS; Sanjay Raut hints ‘process has begun’



GNS News Agency, June 12

Amid growing talks over a possible reconciliation with cousin Raj Thackeray, Shiv Sena (UBT) president Uddhav Thackeray on Friday confirmed that discussions—at least informally—are underway with the Maharashtra Navnirman Sena (MNS), saying that the party is now looking into “minute details” of a potential alliance.“There is no confusion in my mind or that of my Shiv Sainiks. Even MNS workers are in touch with us, and there is no confusion in their minds either,” Uddhav told reporters at his residence, Matoshree.When asked directly about the status of the talks, he replied, “Let us contemplate some minute details.” He added, “I will not give a message—I will give news. And what is in the hearts of the people of Maharashtra—that will happen.”

Uddhav’s remarks come a day after Raj’s son Amit hit out at Shiv Sena (UBT) leaders for giving sound bites daily and instead called for a direct conversation between the two cousins.“Alliances are not formed through media sound bites or newspaper headlines. Direct dialogue is necessary,” Amit had said on Thursday, adding that the two leaders have each other’s phone numbers.He revealed that it was Raj who had taken the initiative to start talks, not just during the COVID-19 pandemic when he called Uddhav,

then the Maharashtra chief minister, but also earlier in 2014 and 2017.Asked about his own views, Amit said, “Whatever Raj Thackeray wants is what I want,” but reiterated that “two brothers should talk — others talking won’t help.”On Friday, Shiv Sena (UBT) MP Sanjay Raut added to the momentum, saying that the “process has begun”. “We Sainiks are positive because the two leaders—the brothers—are positive. When we talk about phone calls between them, who knows? Maybe they have already spoken. How would we know?” Raut told reporters.“Once the due process is completed, you will see the fruits of it. There is positivity among the workers of both parties,” he said.Raut also quipped that he may soon visit Raj’s residence. “I may drop by Raj Thackeray’s house for tea. After all, it is my house too.”The growing signals of rapprochement between the once-bitter rivals have now triggered responses across the political spectrum.

The Congress, a key ally of the Shiv Sena (UBT) in the Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA), extended support to the development. “If two brothers are coming together, we welcome it,” said party spokesperson Atul Londhe.However, Deputy Chief Minister and NCP leader Ajit Pawar offered a more guarded view. “If the two brothers are coming together or not, it is their lookout. What and how can we comment on that?”Shiv Sena (UBT) MLA Aaditya Thackeray, speaking earlier this week, had also signalled openness to the idea of working together. “Anyone who is committed to the welfare of Maharashtra and the Marathi people is welcome,” he had said, citing a recent protest jointly held by Sena (UBT)’s Deepesh Mhatre and MNS’s Raju Patil as an example of coordination on the ground.Despite the continued exchange of goodwill from both camps, political observers, however, remain cautious. “Unless there’s a face-to-face meeting between Uddhav and Raj, the rest is conjecture. But Uddhav’s remark today is the closest we have seen to confirmation,” a senior analyst said.Raj Thackeray had split from the undivided Shiv Sena in 2005 and launched the MNS in 2006, following a bitter succession dispute in the Thackeray family.

SSP Vigilance Jagatpreet Singh, who issued summons to Congress Ludhiana West bypoll candidate Ashu, suspended

GNS News Agency, June 12

Congress leaders including candidate AshuCongress leaders including candidate Ashu released photos of a meeting purportedly showing AAP candidate Sanjeev Arora addressing a group of officials including vigilance SSP Jagatpreet Singh. The Punjab government Friday suspended Jagatpreet Singh, Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP), Vigilance, Ludhiana, a day after he issued a summons to Congress leader Bharat Bhushan Ashu.

Alok Shekhar, Additional Chief Secretary, Department of Home Affairs, issued the suspension order. The order says that Jagatpreet Singh has been placed under suspension with immediate effect under Rule 4(1) (a) of the Punjab Civil Services (Punishment and Appeal) Rules, 1970, for his “grave misconduct and dereliction of duty”.The Punjab Vigilance Bureau summoned Congress leader and Ludhiana West bypoll candidate Bharat Bhushan Ashu in connection with a five-month-old school land misuse case. The summons relate to a First Information Report (FIR) filed on January 8, 2025, at Ludhiana’s Division Number 5 police station, accusing Ashu and others of cheating, criminal breach of trust, forgery, and conspiracy. The investigation was transferred to the Vigilance Bureau owing to suspected involvement of government officials. At least 25 others, including current and former school management committee members, were also summoned.

Government sources alleged that the SSP Vigilance issued the summons in connivance with Ashu to give him the benefit in the ensuing by-poll slated for June 19. However, Congress leader Raj Kumar Verka trashed the allegations and said it was just an excuse of the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) government.SSP Jagatpreet Singh suspended, ludhiana news, indian express The image released by Congress party purportedly shows SSP Jagatpreet Singh attending AAP candidate Arora’s meeting.“Does the AAP want to say that Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann, who is also the state home minister and to whom the Vigilance Bureau reports, is so helpless that he does not know what is happening right under his nose?” Verka told media persons.

Reacting to SSP’s suspension, Ashu, while speaking to The Indian Express, said it was a “cheap tactic of the ruling AAP government” and yet another U-turn which it has taken after facing widespread criticism.On allegations that



he was “in touch with the SSP” and “got summons issued to himself”, Ashu said: “Did I send the case file to the vigilance and ask them to send summons to me? Is Ashu so powerful in the AAP government that he can get summons issued to himself? They make police officers scapegoats as per their whims and fancies. Earlier, they had suspended Chief Director Vigilance SPS Parmar in a similar way. The AAP’s cheap politics cannot get dirtier than this.”Ashu further said that since the past two weeks as the campaigning for Ludhiana West by-election gathered pace, a “message” has been sent to all 28 police stations in Ludhiana “to dig out if any previous/old complaints” are pending against him so that he can be “implicated and harassed again.”Responding to the school land misuse case in which he was sent fresh summons, he said: “It has been over a decade since I had resigned from that school’s management committee. Twenty-seven others who also left the committee several years ago have been summoned just because they know me. This is the height.”Ashu also refuted allegations of any meeting being held between him and the suspended SSP in recent times.Meanwhile, addressing a press conference in Ludhiana, Ashu, along with other senior Congress leaders, released the photographs of a meeting, purportedly showing AAP Ludhiana West bypoll candidate-cum-Rajya Sabha member Sanjeev Arora addressing a group of officials, including Jagatpreet Singh.Kapurthala Congress MLA Rana Gurjeet Singh said, “This photograph is clear evidence of how the entire administration and the police machinery are working on the orders of the AAP candidate. He has no authority to address or order government officials or the police, but he is doing that. What the AAP is doing to win this election is morally and ethically wrong.”

23-year-old BTech graduate robs Uber, Rapido cab drivers in Delhi to repay debt, arrested

GNS News Agency, June 12

A BTech graduate aspiring for the Staff Selection Commission’s Combined Graduate Level (CGL) exam was arrested for allegedly robbing bike taxi drivers in Delhi after booking their services on Rapido or Uber apps, the Delhi Police said on Thursday.According to the police, the accused, identified as Javed Khan, 23, who hails from Rajasthan, allegedly committed the thefts at gunpoint on two occasions by taking the drivers to isolated spots at Gandhi Vihar and then fleeing with their motorbikes, phones, and cash.

Khan has been staying in Delhi at a cramped location in Mukherjee Nagar since 2024, along with other students aspiring to be bureaucrats. He told the police that he decided to rob Rapido and Uber drivers to repay his debt of Rs 35,000 that he owed to a friend, Rahul.The police said that the first robbery took place early on May 31, in which Javed booked an Uber bike service from New Delhi railway station to Gandhi Vihar. His modus operandi was to ask the driver to cancel the ride and take him to the destination offline under the pretext that the driver could keep the fare commission, the police said.“As soon as the rider arrived at 1.30 am, Javed told him that he would cancel the ride, to which the driver agreed. Around 2.30 am, when they reached Gandhi Vihar Drain, an isolated place near Yojraj Colony, Khan held a country-made pistol at the waist of the driver, Sonu, and threatened him to stop the motorcycle,” said an officer.

“The accused then robbed him of the motorcycle, a mobile phone, and cash Rs 2,000 at gunpoint and fled away



on the looted motorcycle,” Raja Banthia, Deputy Commissioner of Police (North), said.In another similar incident, Rapido driver Pradeep Singh told the police that he got a booking from Nizamuddin Railway Station to Gandhi Vihar on Monday, said an officer. However, on reaching the railway station, the ‘customer’, Javed Khan, cancelled the ride, and on reaching an isolated area, Singh was robbed of Rs 600 cash and his mobile phone, he added.Tracking the CCTVs from NDLS to Gandhi Vihar in Timarpur, the Delhi Police traced Khan to the Sankalp Bhavan area on Wednesday. Khan is a resident of Bharatpur, Rajasthan, the police said.On interrogation, Khan revealed that he was in debt and was prompted by his friend to resort to crime so that he could repay his loan. “Rahul provided him a country-made pistol with 17 live cartridges of .315 bore. and chalked out a plan for Khan to rob online motorcycle riders during odd hours. As per his planning, Khan booked the rides from different railway stations in late-night hours,” DCP Banthia said.

How an informer’s tip-off about ‘special salt’ helped Mumbai police bust party drugs racket, seize contraband worth Rs 24 crore



GNS News Agency, June 12

The Mumbai police were once known for cracking serious crimes, high-profile cases, and keeping a check on organised crime syndicates using their extensive network of khabaris (informers). With the help of reliable information shared by such informers, the city police have carried out several successful operations. In one such instance around 13 years ago, the Mumbai Crime Branch busted a party drugs racket, leading to the seizure of contraband worth nearly Rs 24 crore, while working on a reliable khabari’s tip-off about a ‘special salt’ being sold in the market.

The Crime Branch’s investigation into this narcotics case is linked to Vipul Saxena, a resident of Bihar’s Samastipur district. A diploma holder in Civil Engineering, Saxena came to Mumbai in 2007 with a dream of making it big. He tried his luck in the real estate sector and worked hard, but didn’t get much success. This prompted him to switch to the pharmaceutical sector, and he joined a pharma company. While working at the pharma company, Saxena read about medicines and drugs on the Internet. During this time, he also discovered that there is a high demand for amphetamine, a psychotropic substance and also a party drug. According to the police, Saxena also came in contact

with some pharmaceutical companies in Bengaluru during his stint at the company. He selected one of the medicine-producing companies, which was on the verge of shutting down. Saxena convinced a few people working at the company, and allegedly got a large amount of amphetamine cooked at the Bengaluru company’s factory at a cheaper cost. He then started making a list of dealers who would buy amphetamine from him.

Soon, he allegedly dispatched samples of the synthetic party drug to the dealers, but none of them showed any interest, citing its extremely poor quality. And, the packets of amphetamine remained at Saxena’s office in Goregaon. A youngster who worked at a tailoring shop next to Saxena’s office would often frequent his office. During one of his visits to the office, he observed that Saxena covered the white crystal powder packets with some clothes as if he were hiding them. This prompted the young man to realise that the packets contained some sort of ‘special salt’, and that it was expensive. He then decided to steal a packet, and sell it. While Saxena was out one day, the young man stole one packet from his office, and put a similar-looking packet of common salt, which he had bought from a grocery store. He cut open the stolen packet but couldn’t figure out what it was. He realised it was a sort of drug, but had no idea that the packet he was holding in his hand was worth lakhs of rupees. The young man then, in desperation to sell it, started looking for customers in the market, spreading the word that he had a big stock of a ‘special salt’. While he was looking to sell the drugs, a police informer got to know about it, and tipped off a Crime Branch officer about the “special salt”. The police then nabbed the youngster, and when they asked him about the antecedents of the packet, he led them to Saxena’s Goregaon office. From there, the police seized amphetamine worth nearly Rs 24 crore. Saxena was subsequently arrested under the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Act, he secured bail in the case after months. Crime Branch sources said the contraband seized from Saxena’s office also had the “real” salt packet that the young man had kept there as a cover for his theft.

Ex-domestic help, driver burgle Noida businessman’s house, arrested from Bihar

GNS News Agency, June 12

The Noida police arrested two men for allegedly stealing cash and jewellery worth Rs 1 crore from a businessman’s house. They have recovered jewellery, Rs 5 lakh in cash, and other items including knives from the accused who had been absconding for some time.

The accused identified as Samarjit, 19, a resident of Bihar’s Muzaffarpur district, and Sandeep Singh, 29, of Uttar Pradesh’s Gorakhpur, broke into the house of Noida-based businessman Saurabh Jain a few weeks ago, said a police officer at Sector 39 station that investigated the case. Samarjit had worked as the domestic help of Jain for about two-and-a-half years, while Singh was Jain’s driver, the police said. “Jain lives with his family in Sector-39 police station area and had recently reported a major theft at their house. While the family was away, one of the two men entered the house disguised as a woman and made away with the valuables from their house,” said Sumit Shukla, Additional Commissioner of Police, Noida. “Two months ago, Jain fired Samarjit. By then, he had become aware of all the keys and belongings in the house. He also knew about the lockers where the family’s cash and jewellery were kept. While leaving the house, he stole the master key of the house, knowing it would open all the doors,” said the additional police commissioner.

The police said that the other accused, Sandeep Singh, who studied till class nine, maintained good contact with Samarjit even after he was fired. “Singh would share with him the location of the businessman’s family every day. On the day of the theft, he informed Samarjit that the family would be going out for dinner. While Singh had taken out



Jain’s family, Samarjit dressed up in a woman’s attire and his face covered with a mask reached the businessman’s house and opened the door with the master key. He took the cash and jewellery kept in the cupboard, locked the house, and escaped by jumping over the wall,” said an officer. The police said that the CCTV cameras at the businessman’s house helped them identify the accused. Both suspects had fled to Bihar from when they were nabbed, the police said.

They had been in contact with goldsmiths to sell the ornaments, said the police, adding they are verifying the criminal antecedents of the suspects. The suspects have been booked under sections 305A (theft in a dwelling house, or means of transportation or place of worship), 331(4) (punishment for house-trespass and house-breaking) and 317(2) (Stolen property) of the Bharatiya Nyaya Samhita and relevant sections of the Arms Act.

Farmers await Rythu Bharosa as Yasangi harvest nears end



GNS News Agency, June 12

Hyderabad: As the Yasangi harvest season gets underway in Telangana, lakhs of farmers are still awaiting the promised Rythu Bharosa investment support, raising serious concerns among farmers. Unlike the previous BRS regime which ensured investment assistance under Rythu Bandhu was disbursed ahead of crop seasons, Rythu Bharosa funds have not yet reached many farmers. The Rythu Bharosa scheme, launched with much fanfare on January 26, promising Rs 6,000 per acre to all farmers in a phased manner. Chief Minsiter A Revanth Reddy himself assured that the disbursement of the investment support will be completed before March 31. Yet the disbursal remains sluggish.

Till now, the government claims to have deposited Rs 5,057 crore into the accounts of around 57 lakh farmers covering 84.28 lakh acres, mostly benefiting those with land-holdings under four acres. But approximately Rs 4,000 crore is still pending for nearly 13 lakh farmers, especially those owning more than four acres. The delay is attributed to a strained State treasury, with officials depositing funds in small tranches every 2-3 days.

This delay comes at a critical juncture, as Yasangi (Rabi) crops are already ready for harvest. In districts like Nalgonda, Nizamabad, and Kamareddy, procurement of paddy has started. Yet, many farmers say they are forced to manage without the vital investment support that was meant to ease cultivation expenses. Farmers are now caught in a cash crunch just as they prepare for the next monsoon crop cycle, set to begin in June. Despite the urgency, au-

thorities have diverted focus toward publicity allocating Rs 28.35 crore for flexi banners to list out Rythu Bharosa and loan waivers beneficiaries, even as the actual assistance remains undelivered for many. Officials themselves admit to lacking clarity on the exact area covered or the reasons for the lapses. Sources said Agriculture Minister Tummala Nageswara Rao is expected to provide clarity in this regard during first week of May. With that deadline missed and the Vaanakalam (Kharif) season looming in June, farmers now fear further delays in next season’s aid as well.

Old city of Hyderabad switches off lights to protest Waqf Act

Hyderabad: The All India Muslim Personal Law Board’s ‘Batti Gul’ protest against the Waqf (Amendment) Act evoked a positive response in Hyderabad and other parts of Telangana with people switching off lights for 15 minutes on Wednesday night.

There was near total darkness in several parts of the old city of Hyderabad and in many other areas, including Nampally, Mallepally, Toli Chowki, Mehdiapatnam and Golconda. Shopkeepers also stopped their business for 15 minutes to join the protest. In response to the call given by the AIMPLB, people switched off the lights of their houses, shops and business establishments from 9 p.m. to 9.15 p.m. to register their protest.

All India Majlis-e-Ittehad ul Muslimeen (AIMIM) president and Hyderabad MP Asaduddin Owaisi also switched off the lights of his residence at Shastripuram. Owaisi, who is one of the prominent members of AIMPLB, had appealed to people to make the ‘lights off protest’ a success. Talking to media persons, the MP said that the protest was a huge success. “There was a huge spontaneous reaction. Reports from Hyderabad, Telangana, and Karnataka show that people, irrespective of their religion, participated in the protest,” he said, and thanked people who made it a success.

Vegetable grafting technology can significantly boost vegetable yield, shows ICRISAT research



GNS News Agency, June 12

Hyderabad: A recent study by ICRISAT scientists proved that vegetable grafting – joining a high-yielding scion to a stress-tolerant rootstock – paired with Naturally Ventilated Polyhouse (NVPH) cultivation offered a powerful and climate-smart way to boost productivity and income. The research published in Frontiers in Agronomy, focussed on grafted tomato plants (scion onto Solanum torvum rootstock) grown under polyhouse conditions, comparing them with non-grafted controls in open fields. Results showed grafted tomatoes in NVPH yielded up to 63.8% more fruit, enjoyed 3–5 extra harvesting cycles, and exhibited larger leaf area, higher chlorophyll content, and greater environmental resilience.

Economic analysis revealed the highest gross and net returns—alongside superior benefit-cost ratios—under grafted NVPH systems, underscoring the technology’s potential to enhance both farm profitability and resilience to climate variability. ICRISAT researchers highlight the technique’s applicability for other vegetables and fruits like eggplant, chili, cucumber and melons. They believe that the quick adoption of the technology, backed by policy support, public-private partnerships, and “farmer training, could

transform lives of farmers across semi-arid tropics, improving nutrition, livelihoods, and food-system sustainability without genetic modification.”

The study in vegetable grafting established that tomato plants grafted onto Solanum torvum rootstocks and grown in polyhouses yielded up to 63.79% more than non-grafted plants in open fields. The enhanced performance was linked to improved plant vigor, extended harvesting periods (3–5 more pickings), and stronger resistance to environmental stresses. This outcome reinforced the potential of grafting to unlock higher productivity across multiple solanaceous vegetables facing similar challenges. “Vegetable grafting, especially when combined with protected cultivation, is a game-changer for smallholder farmers,” said Dr Stanford Blade, Deputy Director General – Research & Innovation, ICRISAT. “Our findings show that this approach not only increases yields and profits but also provides farmers with a practical, climate-smart solution for building system resilience.” “This study clearly shows how grafting can help revolutionize vegetable farming in regions facing climate variability,” noted Dr Ramesh Singh, Interim Director – Resilient Farm and Food Systems, ICRISAT. With the right support, this technology can transform horticultural production systems and improve nutrition and livelihoods. “Dr Rohan Khopade, the lead scientist behind this innovative research at ICRISAT, explained that while the initial focus was on tomatoes, the grafting technique developed is highly versatile. It can be applied to a broad range of vegetable crops—including eggplant, chili, cucumber, gourds, and melons—unlocking the potential to boost productivity across diverse agricultural systems. Principal Scientist – Agronomy at ICRISAT, Dr Gajanan Sawargaonkar, highlighted the success of the GoAP–ICRISAT collaborative project, which aims to double farmers’ incomes through grafted vegetable technology. He noted that the initiative has delivered significant benefits to farmers across Andhra Pradesh, with vegetable productivity increasing by an impressive 30% to 150%.

Haryana gears up for mock drill in 11 districts tomorrow; NCC, NSS volunteers and students to take part

GNS News Agency, June 12

NCC, NSS, students, haryana mock drill, indian express State government officers said National Cadet Corps (NCC), National Service Scheme (NSS), and Nehru Yuva Kendra Sangathan (NYKS) volunteers, along with school and college students, will participate in the mock drill. (Source: Express Archives) Haryana will hold civil defence mock drills in 11 districts Wednesday as part of the nationwide preparedness exercise ordered by the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) to assess the country’s readiness for any hostile attacks. On Monday, the Centre directed northern and western states and Union Territories to test and strengthen civil defence mechanisms to enhance preparedness for potential wartime scenarios. The direction from the MHA has come in the wake of the Pahalgam terror attack on April 22, and the diplomatic stand-off between Indian and Pakistan. As part of the national initiative, mock drills will be conducted at 259 locations across India, covering 13 sensitive zones under Category 1, 201 under Category 2, and 45 under Category 3. Among the 11 districts in Haryana where the mock drill will be conducted, 10 are in Category 2 and one is in Category 3. The timings of the mock drill will be finalised by Tuesday evening. The 10 districts in Category 2 are Ambala, Faridabad, Gurgaon, Hisar, Panchkula, Panipat, Rohtak, Sirsa, Yamunanagar and Sonapat. Jhajjar is the only district in Category 3. State government officers said National Cadet Corps (NCC), National Service Scheme (NSS), and Nehru Yuva Kendra Sangathan (NYKS) volunteers, along with school and college students, will participate in the mock drill. Union Home Secretary Govind Mohan is also set to review Tuesday the prepara-

tions for strengthening civil defence mechanisms. According to state government officers, mock drills will check preparedness for the operationalisation of air-raid warning sirens and train civilians on civil defence aspects to protect themselves in the event of a hostile attack. “Students will also be made aware of this exercise through these mock drills, which will entail crash-blackout measures, early camouflaging of vital plants and installations and updating and rehearsing evacuation plans,” a senior officer said. All these measures are part of the contingency plan that is put in place at such a time when the tensions between the two nations are escalating. The mock drills will also include the operationalisation of the hotline and radio-communication links with the Indian Air Force, testing the functionality of the control rooms and shadow control rooms. The police control rooms and hospitals’ emergency services will also remain on alert, and their coordination will be supervised during these drills,” the officer added. Fire services, civil defence, and home guards will all be part of these mock drills that will not only be confined to the cities but will also be conducted up to the village levels, the officer said, adding that the main aim is to assess and enhance the readiness of civil defence mechanisms, especially in vulnerable zones. The officer said that sirens will be activated to test public alert systems as part of the mock drills. These sirens serve as warnings in case of incoming aerial threats that allow people time to take cover. The officer added that crash blackouts will also be part of the exercise that enables cities to switch off visible lights to mimic blackout conditions used during wars.

Delhi High Court refuses to restrain IPL from using robo dog ‘Champak’ in comic book publisher’s plea



GNS News Agency, June 12

robo dog champak, delhi high court, IPL, indian express Rajasthan Royals’ Kumar Kartikeya plays with the robot dog named Champak ahead of the Indian Premier League cricket match between Rajasthan Royals and Gujarat Titans Savai Mansingh Stadium in Jaipur. The Delhi High Court on Wednesday refused to restrain the Indian Premier League (IPL) from using a robotic dog named ‘Champak’ in a trademark infringement suit filed by the fortnightly magazine Champak against the IPL and the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI), which organises the T20 tournament. Publishing house Delhi Press Patra Prakashan Private Limited has objected to the IPL using its registered trademark ‘Champak’, which has been in use since 1968. In the IPL, it is being used at match venues as the name of a robotic dog mounted with cameras, which the league has launched as an entertainment feature this season. The robotic dog’s name was finalised following a fan poll. Delhi Press, represented by advocates Amit Gupta and Mansi Kukreja, argued that the use of its trademark ‘Champak’, “in connection with an unrelated robotic dog”, dilutes its “distinctive character”. It also said ‘Champak’ is widely recognised in the field of “children’s literature and publishing across generations”. The publisher also argued that such infringement amounts to dilution of the trademark as it is being used in a commercial setting and without authorisation. Delhi Press, in its suit, to prove its long-standing reputation, also cited the example of cricketer Virat Kohli saying that he has been nicknamed ‘Cheeku’ from a character in the Champak magazine. Justice Amit Bansal, however, while refusing to grant any ex-parte (without hearing

the other side) interim injunction, issued notice on an application in the suit where the comicbook’s publisher is seeking interim injunction and Rs 2 crore in damages. Justice Bansal asked the publisher, “Where is the commercial element? They are using for whatever reason, it is very early for me to decide. please appreciate. The Instagram page emphatically shows that the name is not of their choice. It is a majority win. This is not their choice. What is the element for ad-interim ex parte injunction? There is no adoption per se by the entity naming,” Justice Banerjee said orally, addressing the publisher’s counsel.

Vakulabharanam Krishna Mohan Rao lauds Centre's decision on caste census

Hyderabad: Former chairman of the State Backward Classes Commission Vakulabharanam Krishna Mohan Rao has lauded the Centre’s recent decision to include caste enumeration in the forthcoming national census.

Recalling earlier efforts, Rao said the Socio-Economic and Caste Census (SECC) of 2011 was conducted by the Ministries of Rural and Urban Development but failed to make the data fully public. “This time, for the first time in independent India, caste data will be officially collected by the Census Department itself. It marks a transparent, scientific, and historic step in the country’s democratic evolution,” he said. He said caste enumeration was not merely a symbolic act but a vital tool for evidence-based policymaking. It would generate quantifiable and justifiable data to rationally support the enhancement of reservations for OBCs apart from guiding governments in designing targeted welfare schemes, allocating budgetary resources, and implementing inclusive programmes based on real demographic profiles. “This move is a step toward social justice with scientific backing. Caste data must become the foundation for sustained, equitable development, not just a political exercise,” he said, also urging Centre to establish a dedicated Ministry for OBC Affairs.

Democrats urge U.S. Justice Department probe of war plans discussion on Signal



GNS News Agency, June 12

Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer and top Senate Democrats on Wednesday (March 25, 2025) wrote a letter to Republican President Donald Trump and his top officials urging a Justice Department probe into how a journalist was inadvertently included in a secret group discussion of sensitive war plans. Trump administration officials have claimed no classified material was shared in the group chat on Signal, an encrypted commercial messaging app.

Democratic senators voiced skepticism, noting that the journalist, Atlantic Editor-in-Chief Jeffrey Goldberg, reported that Defence Secretary Pete Hegseth posted operational details about pending strikes against Yemen's Iran-

aligned Houthis, "including information about targets, weapons the U.S. would be deploying, and attack sequencing.""We write to you with extreme alarm about the astonishingly poor judgment shown by your Cabinet and national security advisors," the Democratic Senators wrote in Wednesday's letter.

"Moreover, given that willful or negligent disclosure of classified or sensitive national security information may constitute a criminal violation of the Espionage Act or other laws, we expect Attorney General Bondi to conduct a thorough and impartial investigation of the conduct of the government officials involved in improperly sharing or discussing such information," the letter added.Mr. Trump said his administration would look into the use of Signal but voiced support for his national security team when questioned about the incident at a White House event on Tuesday with Michael Waltz, his national security adviser.

Mr. Trump said he did not think Mr. Waltz should apologise, but said he did not think Mr. Waltz and the team would be using Signal again soon.Mr. Waltz, in an interview with 'The Ingraham Angle' on Fox News on Tuesday, said: "I take full responsibility" for the breach, as he had created the Signal group, but he emphasized there was no classified information shared.Mr. Waltz said the situation was "embarrassing" and that the administration would "get to the bottom" of what went wrong. He said Goldberg's number was not saved in his phone and he does not know how the journalist was mistakenly added to the chat group.

Columbia University's compliance with Trump's demands sets a precedent for other universities facing federal pressure

GNS News Agency, June 12

Days before Indian PhD scholar Ranjani Srinivasan studying at Columbia University chose to self-deport from the U.S. after learning her visa was revoked, three federal immigration agents showed up at the door of her university-affiliated housing. When she did not open, they showed up again the next day.Their visit came just hours before Mahmoud Khalil, a former Columbia student also residing in campus housing, was detained and informed that his green card had been revoked.

Days later, immigration officials announced the arrest of a second individual linked to the pro-Palestinian protests at Columbia and the revocation of another student's visa. Legaa Kordia, a Palestinian from the West Bank, was taken into custody by immigration officers for overstaying her student visa, according to the Department of Homeland Security."Ms. Kordia's visa was terminated in January 2022 due to 'lack of attendance,'" the department stated, adding that she had previously been arrested for participating in protests in April 2024.

Columbia also expelled Grant Miner, president of the Student Workers of Columbia-United Auto Workers (SWC-UAW). Mr. Miner was removed just one day before the union was set to begin bargaining negotiations with the university. On the same day, Columbia's University Judicial Board issued disciplinary rulings against students involved in the April 2024 occupation of Hamilton Hall. Columbia University Apartheid Divest, a student-led group, stated on Instagram that 22 students faced expulsions, suspensions, or degree revocations for their participation in pro-Palestinian demonstrations. These measures have not been taken in isolation — they followed an ultimatum issued by the Trump administration to Columbia University laying out nine demands it must commit to by the end of business hours on March 20 "as a precondition" to restore federal funding. It included banning masks, empowering campus cops, and putting the school's department of Middle East, South Asian and African Studies under "academic receivership," which means it would no longer be controlled by the faculty.Columbia has already begun complying with some of the administration's demands. Faculty members and student activists have accused the university of caving to federal pressure rather than standing up for free expression on campus.

The university caved in to most of the demands from the Trump administration, according to a new list of actions published on the Office of the President's website on Friday (March 21). The move comes as the university seeks to restore \$400 million in federal grants that was revoked by the the administration, accusing it of failing to protect Jewish students. The university said it will ban some masks on campus, hire 36 "special officers who will have the ability to remove individuals from campus and/or arrest them," and place the Middle East, South Asian, and African studies department and the Centre for Palestine Studies under the purview of a senior vice-provost, who will be appointed by the university and will supervise curriculum and non-tenured faculty hiring.

The administration has insisted that the university must also implement "long-term structural reforms", though it has not specified what those would entail. On Thursday (March 20), President Donald Trump also signed an executive order to dismantle the department of education.In a Friday post on X, the House Committee on Education and the Workforce wrote, "@Columbia FOLDS to the Trump admin's demands to protect Jewish students and faculty. School administrators failed to hold pro-terror mobs accountable for rampant antisemitism.""Now, masks are banned during protests and safety measures are increasing. Republicans and the Trump admin are stopping it," the post reads.Doubling down on protestorsThe Trump administration's targeting of visa-holding students at Columbia University — already at the centre of a cultural firestorm — has opened a new front in Mr. Trump's push to enforce immigration policies and address campus protests, which critics say is an effort to suppress pro-Palestinian activism.

Earlier this month, Mr. Trump hailed the arrest of Mr. Khalil, calling it "the first of many to come." In a post on social media, he vowed to deport students engaged in what he described as "pro-terrorist, anti-Semitic, anti-American activity." The arrests and attempted detentions of Columbia students have sparked an uproar among Democrats and civil rights groups.Mr. Khalil, a Palestinian activist and former Columbia University graduate student, was detained from his home earlier this month. His lawyers, in an updated lawsuit seeking his immediate release, described the transfer as a "de facto kidnapping," alleging that the agents escorting him never identified themselves.His treatment, they wrote, echoed the fear and uncertainty he experienced when he fled Syria in 2013, after several of his friends forcibly disappeared during a wave of arbitrary detentions.Over the course of the last year, the campus has remained under a lockdown as it found itself as the epicentre of protests since.The university's Morningside Capmus, housed in

Indian-American scientist Jay Bhattacharya confirmed as Director of National Institutes of Health

GNS News Agency, June 12

New York: Indian-American scientist Jay Bhattacharya has been confirmed by the US Senate as the Director of the National Institutes of Health (NIH), the country's top health research and funding institutions.Bhattacharya, a professor of Health Policy at Stanford University, was confirmed by a 53-47 vote on Tuesday, according to the official website of the US Senate. US President Donald Trump, then the President-elect, nominated Bhattacharya as the 18th NIH Director in November last year."Dr. Bhattacharya will work in cooperation with Robert F. Kennedy Jr. to direct the Nation's Medical Research and to make important discoveries that will improve Health, and save lives," Trump had said.During his hearing, Bhattacharya said he understands science and public health have become politicised, and many no longer trust health officials or experts, according to The Hill.The NIH should support science which is "replicable, reproducible, and generalisable," Bhattacharya said. "Unfortunately, much of modern biomedical science fails this basic test," the news portal quoted him as saying."If confirmed, I will carry out President Trump and (Health and Human Service) Secretary Kennedy's agenda of Making America Healthy Again and committing the NIH to address the dire chronic health needs of the country with gold-standard science and innovation," he said.

US defence major GE Aerospace starts delivery of F-404 engines for Tejas MK-1A jets



GNS News Agency, June 12

New Delhi: American defence major GE Aerospace on Wednesday said it delivered the first of 99 F-404 aircraft engines to Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) for the Tejas light combat jet programme.State-run HAL is procuring the engines to power the Mk-1A variant of the Tejas jets. In February 2021, the Defence Ministry sealed a Rs 48,000-crore deal with HAL for the procurement of 83 Tejas MK-1A jets for the IAF. The deliveries were to begin in March last year.

However, not a single aircraft has been delivered yet. The start of supply of the F404-IN20 engines by the American aircraft defence major is expected to help HAL start delivery of the jets to the IAF.Defence sources indicated that delay in the delivery of the engines by GE Aerospace was one of the reasons for HAL to miss the deadline for supply of Tejas jets to the IAF. It is learnt that the engine has been delivered to HAL by the American company at its manufacturing facility in Lynn near Massachusetts.The engine is expected to reach India by early next month.

GE Aerospace's F404 family is known to be one of the most effective aircraft engines and it powers thousands of combat jets worldwide."On Tuesday, we were excited to deliver the first of 99 F404-IN20 engines to our valued customer Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) for the Tejas Light Combat Aircraft Mk 1A fighter jet," GE Aerospace said in a statement."It is an important milestone in our 40-year relationship with HAL and in our efforts to ensure a strong future for India's military by developing next-generation fighters while enhancing the country's defence manufacturing capabilities," it said.The F404-IN20 engine is a tailored de-

sign for India's single-engine fighter programme with the highest thrust within the F404 family and a higher-flow fan, unique single-crystal turbine blades, and numerous special components, the company said.GE Aerospace and Tejas teams collaborated closely for several years to customise the engine for the needs of the Indian Air Force."The F404 demonstrated it was an excellent fit for the Tejas LCA. On its first test flight in 2008, the aircraft climbed to numerous mission altitudes and achieved Mach 1.1 speed," the engine maker said.

GE Aerospace said by 2016, it fulfilled its commitment to HAL and delivered 65 F404-IN20 engines for the Tejas LCA. "With no additional engine orders on the horizon, the production line for F404-IN20 was shut down.""However, when HAL ordered an additional 99 engines in 2021 for the Tejas Mk1A LCA, our team began the complex task of re-starting the F404-IN20 production line, which had been dormant for five years, and re-engaging the engine's global supply chain," it said.Indigenously developed Tejas jets are expected to be the mainstay of the IAF in coming years. In November last year, the Defence Ministry accorded an initial approval to procure an additional batch of 97 Tejas jets for the IAF.

The Tejas aircraft is a potent platform for air combat and offensive air support missions while reconnaissance and anti-ship operations are its secondary roles.GE Aerospace said restarting a jet engine production line is a challenging process. "Restarting the F404-IN20 engine line during the Covid pandemic was even more challenging. With a high focus on safety and quality, and a remarkable commitment from our supply chain teams and our suppliers and partners, we have managed to restart the line," the company said."Our proprietary lean operating model, flight deck, helped us alleviate bottlenecks and identify solutions to improve manufacturing processes and turnaround time," it said.The company said it is working closely with its suppliers to ramp up production on parts and materials for the F404-IN20. "We will continue to work together with our suppliers to keep the production line efficient, maintain the highest standards of safety and quality, and deliver to our customer," it said."This week's first engine delivery is a testament to what we have accomplished with HAL over the past 40 years, and a symbol of our combined potential to ensure a strong future for India's military," it added.

Intel report calls China potential threat to US national security



GNS News Agency, June 12

Washington: China presents the most comprehensive and robust military threat to the national security of the United States, a US intelligence report revealed on Tuesday.The report spotlighted that China poses an active and persistent cyber threat to the US government, private sector, and critical infrastructure networks with Beijing's nuclear weapons and advanced delivery systems — capable of delivering catastrophic damage — posing a direct threat to the US and threatening its military forces at home and abroad.

The Annual Threat Assessment done by the intelligence authority cites that a major portion of China's military modernisation efforts is focused on developing counter-intervention capabilities tailored against all aspects of US and allied military operations in the Pacific."President Xi Jinping and the People's Republic of China (PRC) want to achieve 'the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation' by 2049. The PRC will seek to increase its power and influence to shape world events to create an environment favorable to PRC interests, obtain greater US deference to China's interests, and fend off challenges to its reputation, legitimacy, and capabilities at home and abroad," the report highlights.It mentions that China has developed a range of ballistic and cruise missiles with conventional payloads that can be delivered from its mainland as well as by air and sea, including by nuclear-powered submarines."It may also be exploring the development of conventionally-armed intercontinent-

tal range missile systems, which, if developed and fielded, would allow China to threaten conventional strikes against targets in the continental United States," the report states.The annual report of worldwide threats to the national security of the United States reflects the collective insights of the Intelligence Community (IC), which is committed to providing the nuanced, independent, and unvarnished intelligence that policymakers, warfighters, and domestic law enforcement personnel need to protect American lives and America's interests anywhere in the world.

The assessment focuses on the most direct, serious threats to the United States primarily during the next year. All these threats require a robust intelligence response, including those where a near-term focus may help head off greater threats in the future.It warned that China is using complex, whole-of-government campaigns featuring coercive military, economic, and influence operations short of war to assert its positions and strength against others, reserving more destructive tools for full- scale conflict.The report mentions that if Beijing believed that a major conflict with Washington was imminent, it could consider aggressive cyber operations against US critical infrastructure and military assets. Such strikes, it said, would be designed to deter US military action by impeding decision-making, inducing societal panic, and interfering with the deployment of US forces.Emphasising that China almost certainly has a multifaceted, national-level strategy designed to displace the United States as the world's most influential AI power by 2030, the report further stated that China has stolen hundreds of gigabytes of intellectual property from companies in Asia, Europe, and North America. It was done to leapfrog over technological hurdles, with as much as 80 per cent of US economic espionage cases as of 2021 involving Chinese entities, the report reveals."Beijing is likely to feel emboldened to use malign influence more regularly in the coming years, particularly as it fields AI to improve its capabilities and avoid detection," the report mentions.Cautioning on Chinese expansion of nuclear posture, the report stated that China most likely possesses capabilities relevant to Chemical and Biological Warfare (CBW) that pose a threat to US, allied, and partner forces as well as the civilian population.

Yet another step towards unearthing the glorious past of Poompuhar, the capital of early Cholas

GNS News Agency, June 12

In an attempt to highlight the maritime trade prowess of the ancient Tamils, the Tamil Nadu State Department of Archaeology has chalked out a plan for a series of deep-sea archaeological excavations along the State's coast.To get today's top stories from the State in your inbox, subscribe to our Tamil Nadu Today newsletterWhile presenting the Tamil Nadu Budget for 2025-26, Minister for Finance Thangam Thennarasu, who also holds the portfolio of Archaeology, announced archaeological excavations, including the first phase of deep-sea excavations between Poompuhar, also known as Kaveripoompatinam — the ancient port city and capital of early Cholas — and Nagapattinam, another important port city nearly 50 kilometres south of Poompuhar.These deep-sea excavations are expected to unearth treasures and offer valuable insights into the glorious past of Poompuhar, where the Cauvery flows into the Bay of Bengal and which has elaborate mentions in the Sangam literature and Periplus of the Erythraean Sea. (A Periplus is a manuscript that lists the ports and coastal landmarks. In ancient times, it served as a combination of atlas and traveller's handbook). Both Poompuhar and Nagapattinam served as an important gateway for trade and cultural exchanges, particularly with Southeast Asia. It is believed the ancient city of Poompuhar existed around 2,500 years ago and submerged owing to tidal action. This is not the first time deep-sea archaeological excavations have been planned off the Poompuhar coast. The TNSDA, in collaboration with a team of the National Institute of Oceanography (NIO) led by renowned archaeologist S.R. Rao, had conducted a series of geophys-

cal surveys of the ocean floor off Poompuhar in the 1980s. Using side-scan sonar, echo sounders, and magnetometers, these surveys revealed the presence of several structures at a depth of 20-30 metres, offering remarkable clues to Poompuhar's ancient past.A report published in The Hindu on April 6, 1990, quoting Natan Kasinathan, then Director of the TNSDA, detailed the discovery of a shipwreck 4.5 kilometres offshore, at a depth of 19.5 meters, seaward of Vanagiri near Poompuhar. The vessel, which seems to be made of iron, was found broken into two and was heavily encrusted with marine organisms. While part of the wreck remains visible above the seabed, a major portion lies buried beneath the ocean floor. The report also highlighted another significant discovery — a megalithic structure found at a depth of seven metres, about half-a-kilometre offshore the Fort Museum at Tharangambadi (Tranquebar), which is nearly 20 kilometres south of Poompuhar. Excavations revealed the inner and outer stone circles along with a pebble cairn-like covering, forming a 10-metre-wide megalithic structure.According to another report published in The Hindu, underwater explorations between 1991 and 1993 uncovered several man-made structures and brick formations beneath the sea. Quoting Mr. Kasinathan, the report said these brick structures could be dated to between the Second Century BCE and the Fourth Century CE. Black and red ware ceramics were also discovered near the submerged structures. The report also noted that in 1997, divers found remnants of a structure built with laterite stones during the exploration.In 2004, the hydrographic survey ship INS Darshak, deployed by the Eastern Naval Command off the coast of Poompuhar, discovered a U-shaped structure at a depth of 23 metres.

'Exemplar' — U.N. lauds India's progress in child mortality reduction



India's efforts and progress in reducing preventable child deaths has been lauded as "exemplar" by the United Nations, which cited the example of health initiatives such as Ayushman Bharat, and said the country has saved millions of young lives through strategic investments in its health system.

The United Nations Inter-agency Group for Child Mortality Estimation report, released on Tuesday (March 25, 2025), cited the example of five "exemplar countries" in achieving child mortality reduction — India, Nepal, Senegal, Ghana and Burundi — highlighting diverse strategies that have accelerated progress in reducing preventable child deaths. The report said these countries illustrate that with "political will, evidence-based strategies and sustained investments, even resource-constrained settings facing unique challenges can achieve substantial reductions in mortality, bringing the world closer to an end to preventable child deaths". On India, the report said the country has made gains through health system investment. "Through strategic investments in its health system, India has already saved millions of young lives and paved the way to ensure healthy lives for millions more," it said. The report highlighted that since 2000, India achieved an under-five mortality reduction of 70% and a neonatal mortality reduction of 61%, "driven by overlapping measures to increase health coverage, enhance available interventions and develop health infrastructure and human resources." It cited the example of Ayushman Bharat, the world's largest health insurance scheme which provides annual coverage of nearly \$5,500 per family per year. It noted that every pregnant woman is entitled to free delivery (including caesarean section), and infant care provides free transport, medications, diagnostics and dietary support in public health institutions. To ensure comprehensive coverage and equitable access to health services, India has strengthened infrastructure via the establishment of maternity waiting homes, maternal and child health wings, newborn stabilisation units, sick newborn care units, mother care units and a dedicated programme for birth defect screening, the report said. Further, it said that interventions like antenatal corticosteroids for preterm labour, use of continuous positive

airway pressure and follow-up for vision and hearing help support newborn survival. "This ensures millions of healthy pregnancies and thriving live births each year. India has also prioritised the training and deployment of skilled birth attendants, such as midwives and community health workers, to provide appropriate maternal and child health services," it said. The report noted that additionally, data systems and digital surveillance of maternal, newborn and child health indicators are continuously improved to support evidence-based decision making. It said that despite differing geographies, economic conditions and health system structures, Nepal, Senegal, India, Ghana and Burundi have all "outpaced" the global and their respective regional declines in child mortality through "strong governance, strategic investments in health and scale-up of evidence-based health interventions". "Common throughout these success stories are strengthened health systems that prioritise universal access and community-based care, data-driven decision making that ensures targeted interventions and ongoing quality improvement, expanded immunisation and maternal and newborn health programmes that prevent childhood illness and provide a continuum of care from home to hospitals, and innovative health financing models that provide sustainability and accessibility," the report said. The U.N. agency also said that several low and lower-middle-income countries have surpassed the global decline in under-five mortality since 2000. Angola, Bhutan, Bolivia, Cabo Verde, India, Morocco, Senegal, Tanzania and Zambia have all cut their under-five mortality rate by more than two thirds since 2000. In 2000, the country with the highest burden of under-five measles mortality was India, with only 56% of infants vaccinated for measles and 189,000 deaths from measles. By 2023, the infant measles vaccination rate had increased to 93%, and under-five deaths due to the disease decreased by 97% to 5,200 measles-related deaths. The report noted that the number of children dying globally before their fifth birthday declined to 4.8 million in 2023, while stillbirths declined modestly, still remaining around 1.9 million. Since 2000, child deaths have dropped by more than half and stillbirths by over a third, fuelled by sustained investments in child survival worldwide. In 2022, the world reached a historic milestone when child deaths dropped slightly below 5 million for the first time. However, the progress has slowed and too many children are still being lost to preventable causes. "Millions of children are alive today because of the global commitment to proven interventions, such as vaccines, nutrition, and access to safe water and basic sanitation," UNICEF Executive Director Catherine Russell said. "Bringing preventable child deaths to a record low is a remarkable achievement. But without the right policy choices and adequate investment, we risk reversing these hard-earned gains, with millions more children dying from preventable causes. We cannot allow that to happen," Ms. Russell added.

Flu virus surge in cities: Can you get it twice in one season?

viral, multiple viral fever, health and wellness Understanding the causes of repeated viral infections and how to protect your immune system. If you have fallen sick multiple times from what seems like the same virus in a single season, you are not alone. Many people experience repeated bouts of illness even after recovering once. While it may seem like the virus never left your system, several biological and environmental factors contribute to this phenomenon. Here's why this happens and what you can do about it.

Variants and Mutations: Viruses, especially respiratory ones like the flu or COVID-19, evolve quickly. When you catch a virus, your immune system builds antibodies specific to that strain. However, if the virus mutates slightly, your body may not recognize it as the same infection. This means you can fall sick multiple times, even if you have developed immunity to an earlier version. For example, the influenza virus has multiple strains, and each season may bring slightly different versions. COVID-19, which has shown numerous mutations, led to reinfections in people who had been vaccinated or previously infected. Weak or Short-Lived Immunity: Not all immune responses provide long-term protection. Some viruses only trigger temporary immunity, which can wane within weeks or months. If your body doesn't build a strong enough defence, you might become vulnerable to reinfection sooner than expected. Additionally, stress, poor diet, lack of sleep and underlying health conditions can weaken your immune system.

Reactivation of Dormant Viruses: Certain viruses, such as Epstein-Barr virus (EBV) and herpesviruses, can remain dormant in the body and reactivate when immunity is weakened. While most respiratory viruses do not behave this way, lingering symptoms or secondary infections might make it look like you are getting sick repeatedly. For example, after COVID-19, your immune system remains suppressed for a while, increasing the risk of catching another illness or experiencing prolonged symptoms. Overlapping Illnesses: Sometimes, getting sick again does not mean you caught the same virus—it could be a different one altogether. Many viruses circulate simultaneously during peak



seasons, and you may get infected by another pathogen while your immune system is still recovering from the first one. For instance, a person recovering from a cold (caused by rhinoviruses) may soon get the flu (caused by influenza), leading to the perception of repeated sickness from the same virus. Environmental Exposure: If you are frequently exposed to sick people — whether at work, school or public places — you increase your chances of reinfection. Viruses can linger on surfaces, in the air and in crowded spaces. Moreover, some viruses, such as norovirus and adenoviruses, can remain on surfaces for days, making reinfection more likely if proper sanitization isn't practised. Post-Viral Syndrome: Another possibility is that you are not experiencing new infections but rather lingering symptoms from the initial illness. Some people develop post-viral syndromes where fatigue, cough, congestion and weakness persist for weeks. This can give the impression of multiple infections when, in reality, the body is still recovering from the original virus, long Covid being an example. While complete protection against viruses is difficult, you can take several steps to minimise your risk: Eat a balanced diet, stay hydrated, get enough sleep and manage stress. Practise hygiene and mask up in crowded areas. Finally, do not rush back to activities before fully recovering, it can weaken your immune system further.

Folic acid supplements during pregnancy: Do you really need them? Here's busting an online myth

Pregnancy is a time when nutritional needs increase and expectant mothers are often advised to take supplements to support their baby's development. One of the most commonly recommended supplements is folic acid. However, there is often confusion about whether folic acid is truly necessary and how it differs from naturally occurring folate. Fact: Although often used interchangeably, both are different. Folate is the naturally occurring form of vitamin B9, found in leafy greens, beans, lentils and citrus fruits. Folic acid, on the other hand, is the synthetic form of vitamin B9, used in fortified foods and supplements. While both help in DNA synthesis and red blood cell production, folic acid is more stable and better absorbed by the body when taken as a supplement. Fact: While it is possible to get folate from food sources, many women do not consume enough through diet alone. Moreover, natural folate is less stable and can be lost during cooking. Since folic acid is more bioavailable than food-derived folate, supplementation ensures that pregnant women get adequate amounts to support the baby's growth and development.

Fact: While folic acid is critical when the baby's neural tube (it is needed for brain and spinal cord) is forming in the first few weeks, it remains important throughout pregnancy. It supports the rapid growth of the placenta and fetus, prevents anaemia in the mother and aids in the production of DNA and new cells. Doctors often recommend taking folic



acid supplements even before conception and continuing them throughout pregnancy. Every woman must take it regardless of family history. Daily supplementation of at least 400-800 micrograms (mcg) is recommended for all women of childbearing age. Fact: Folic acid is a water-soluble vitamin, meaning the body excretes excess amounts through urine. While extremely high doses (above 1,000 mcg) should only be taken under medical supervision, the recommended daily intake of 400-800 mcg is safe and beneficial. In cases where women have a history of NTDs or specific genetic conditions, higher doses may be prescribed by a doctor. Fact: Most prenatal vitamins include the necessary dose of folic acid but not all are created equal.

28-year-old dies of heart attack, mother blames caffeine in energy drinks and coffee: How much caffeine is a risk factor?



Energy drinks came under the lens for their impact on heart health after Katie Donnell, a 28-year-old teacher from Florida, US, died of a heart attack. According to reports, her mother said that she would drink up to three energy drinks a day along with coffee to fuel up for her gym workouts and blamed that habit for her daughter's death. While a heart attack is multifactorial and depends a lot on underlying conditions, can caffeine shots be a trigger and risk factor? "Caffeine, if taken in frequent intervals, can pace your heart up and that can be a trigger, particularly among people with existing co-morbidities like hypertension and diabetes," says Dr Ranjan Shetty, lead cardiologist at Sparsh Hospitals, Bengaluru.

Why excessive caffeine shots are bad for your heart Caffeine is a stimulant that promotes the release of stress hormones like noradrenaline. These increase heart rate and blood pressure, stress out your heart by making it work harder. This often leads to arrhythmia or irregular heartbeats, which interfere with the normal functioning of the

heart's electrical signals, causing them to slow down, pace up or simply move in an uncoordinated manner. This may result in stoppage of the heart or what is called as sudden cardiac arrest. Some arrhythmias, like atrial fibrillation (AFib), can lead to blood pooling in the heart's chambers, increasing the risk of blood clots. If this clot goes to a heart artery, it can cause a heart attack. Prolonged or severe arrhythmias can weaken the heart muscle, making it less efficient at pumping blood. This can lead to heart failure and increase the risk of heart attack.

Does scientific literature bear out the extra caffeine link?

A study presented at the American College of Cardiology's ACC Asia 2024 conference found that chronic high caffeine consumption (400 mg or more daily) may increase the risk of cardiovascular disease in otherwise healthy individuals. A 1999 study reported that ingesting more than 10 cups of coffee per day was associated with an increased risk of sudden cardiac death in a population with coronary artery disease. A Japanese study in 2022 found that drinking two or more cups of coffee a day was associated with twice the risk of death from cardiovascular disease among people with severe hypertension compared to non-coffee drinkers.

How much caffeine is safe for the heart?

Up to 400 milligrams (mg) of caffeine per day is generally considered safe for most healthy adults. But studies have shown that having half to one cup of coffee a day is safer because of its antioxidant properties that help in lowering blood sugar and cholesterol. Consuming more than 400 mg of caffeine daily can elevate heart rate and blood pressure. Trouble is not so much about drinking coffee per se but energy drinks and sodas which pack higher concentrations of caffeine, sometimes caffeine equivalent to four cups of coffee. Regular consumption makes you tolerant and addicted to these drinks. So over time, your caffeine intake surpasses normal limits.

Economics, EdTech, and the illusion of learning

In the late 1970s, when I was hesitantly moving to be a so-called "research student", I had all kinds of doubts and apprehensions, as the decision on the "trade-off" was too difficult, given the state of job opportunities those days. India today is a different India, where income opportunities are aplenty, though the so-called "jobs" may be fewer. Seeing my hesitation and doubts, my research supervisor advised me, "... do try to get a good Ph.D. in Economics, and try to fool others". More recently, as I sit on several interview boards, the Economics guys, who come before me, prove it the other way! It so happened that, last week, I had such an occasion, when I found a post-graduate from a premier institution (of great legacy), who has not even heard of the classical and neoclassical theories in Economics! But, surprisingly, he claimed to be adept in a few data processing software such as SAS and MATLAB, as well as open-source options like R and Python!

The NEP 2020 aims to reform the education system by promoting holistic learning, critical thinking, and a focus on experiential learning. A theory, in a general sense, is a well-supported explanation of why or how things happen, based on observations and evidence, often developed through ongoing inquiry. While theory arises from enquiries on existing or perceived phenomena, how can one manage even without the framework within which the past generation approached the sciences? The simple answer often pointed out is that such deep learning is not of practical use. Education as information refilling The idea that educational institutions in India are primarily "information refilling stations" is a common critique, suggesting they focus on rote memorization and standardized testing rather than fostering critical thinking and problem-solving skills. The "information refilling model" in education refers to the process of regularly updating and enriching students' knowledge and skills, often through diverse learning experiences and engaging with new information.

It's a shift away from static, rote learning towards a dynamic, active learning environment where students are constantly acquiring and applying new knowledge. While traditional curricula may emphasize knowledge acquisition, many institutions are also actively working to promote a more holistic approach to learning, encouraging creativity, innovation, and research; but they are a rare species! To-



day, all-India recruitments, such as civil services and scientist recruitment, are running on these lines. While the "information refilling" model may reflect some aspects of the Indian education system, it is an oversimplification. Many institutions are working towards a more holistic and innovative approach, but challenges remain in addressing the pressure of standardized testing and fostering critical thinking skills. The statement, "people who have money can afford the educational refilling stations" highlights a disparity in access to education based on financial resources. Educational refilling stations, which could refer to supplementary educational services like tutoring, enrichment programs, or private schools, are often more costly than basic public education. What is the motive for such refilling? Of course, the spot price and futures price are displayed by the so-called "edushops" through their advertisements. And surprisingly, people invest in advanced courses in Economics, Management, and hybrids like Public Policy, without understanding their basic economics! "Water, water everywhere, but not a drop to drink", goes the saying. To state that "information illiteracy is the lack of knowledge as to how information can be used in productive activities" is a good starting point, but it's not quite complete. Information illiteracy is more than just lack of knowledge; it encompasses the inability to effectively find, evaluate, and use information to achieve personal, educational, or professional goals. If so, why should one spend his/her hard-earned money on education? It is high time legacy institutions in Economics and Management come forward, address the reality, and come out with innovative solutions.

Judge, jury and torturer: A flagrant case of police highhandedness in A.P.'s Tenali

Guntur district's Tenali is often called the 'Andhra Paris', perhaps because of the presence of three canals of the Krishna river flowing through it, much like how three canals pass through Paris. Recently, however, this fabled Andhra heartland hit the headlines for a different reason altogether: a flagrant case of police highhandedness. On May 26, Andhra Pradesh woke up to a viral video of two police personnel caning three youth in full public view. The disturbing video shows the youth — Doma Rakesh, Chebrolu John Victor (both 25 years old) and 22-year-old Shaik Karimulla — being made to sit on the road with their legs extended, while the officers caned them hard on their soles. One of them pinned Rakesh's legs to the ground to ensure that he cannot move or shield himself while lashes rained on his soles. According to Rakesh's family, he had a steel rod implanted in his leg after a fracture a few years ago.

The three men were arrested on April 24 following a complaint lodged by constable Kanna Chiranjeevi of One Town police station, who accused the three and one of their friends, Vemu Naveen alias Killer, of assaulting him under the influence of ganja while he was on duty and attempting to murder him with a knife. Of the four accused, Naveen is reportedly on the run, and the remaining three were subjected to public humiliation and beating. The police action of resorting to physical violence in public reportedly to "teach them a lesson", instead of following established legal procedures, has drawn widespread criticism. Rights activists have condemned the incident, with bar associations and a few other organisations staging protests, demanding stringent action against the police personnel involved. "What happened in Tenali is totally unwarranted and illegal. The police should act in accordance with the rule of law," said Justice B. Chandra Kumar, retired Judge of the High Court

of the undivided Andhra Pradesh. Rakesh's parents Doma Vasu and Madhavi and his grandmother at their house at Ithanagar in Tenali of Guntur district.

Citing the Code of Criminal Procedure (CrPC), which provides the guidelines for the investigation of crime, apprehension of the accused, collection of evidence, determination of guilt and punishment of the guilty, he said nobody should take the law into their hands. "Even under the British and the Nizam, there was a procedure to be followed. If the police are allowed to take law into their hands, then there will be no limit to it. The law should also apply to them, and those resorting to such acts are liable for punishment," he said. Leaders of marginalised communities and the Opposition YSRCP also condemned what they termed as the "law of jungle", saying that Dalits have perennially been at the receiving end of torture and public humiliation. To counter the allegations, the Police Department released a poster, stating that it was not an attack on Dalits. The poster says that on the night of April 24, the accused Naveen (Dalit) from Tenali, Rakesh (Dalit) from Tenali, John Victor from Mangalagiri and Karimulla from Mangalagiri attacked constable Kanna Chiranjeevi with a knife under the influence of ganja. They were booked on April 25 based on a complaint lodged by the constable. Departmental action would be taken against the police personnel who beat up the accused in public, the poster reads. Members of Andhra Pradesh Human Rights Forum (HRF), however, find this poster most troubling. "We are aware of the police claims... But none of those justify extrajudicial violence," said G. Nageswara Rao, vice-president of AP HRF. Irrespective of the severity of the accusations, every individual is entitled to due process and protection from cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment, argues State secretary of the forum G. Rohith.

The rising challenge of university and college closures



Global higher education is undergoing a paradoxical shift. On the one hand, student enrolment is booming, with over 254 million currently enrolled in higher education institutions. This figure has more than doubled over the past two decades and is projected to rise. On the other hand, despite this growing demand, university closures and mergers loom large in many countries. Much more attention needs to be focused on these failures, which affect students, staff, and society. There are many reasons for this unhappy situation — population declines, a growing scepticism about the return on investment from a university degree, populist opposition to science and higher education, shifts in government funding to higher education institutions, predatory private providers, technological disruption, rise of online learning, and others. The consequences are already visible: a wave of campus closures and mergers that is reshaping the higher education map in many countries. In many cases, closures and mergers are not signs of strategic innovation, but rather responses to institutional distress. While exact figures are difficult to determine, it is estimated that hundreds of universities and colleges worldwide have shut down or merged in recent years.

India is not immune to these trends — but at the same time is an unusual case since its population continues to grow and the number of young people seeking post-secondary education is expanding as well. While the number of universities and colleges in India continue to expand, smaller institutions, especially private engineering and management colleges, are facing closure. The National Education Policy (NEP), 2020 sets an ambitious road map for improving access in the sector. One of the most significant targets set by the NEP is to raise the Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) in higher education to 50% by 2035. Another key recommendation is the expansion of higher education institutions into underserved regions. However, recent developments reveal a contrasting reality on the ground.

The All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) imposed a two-year moratorium on the establishment of new engineering colleges in traditional areas of engineering in 2020-21. This was lifted only in 2023-24. In the current academic year, the AICTE approved the closure of 27 private colleges nationally. These institutions have stopped accepting new students — current students can complete their programmes. Furthermore, many affiliated colleges under the supervision of State universities are quietly being phased out. For example, in 2024 alone, 14 colleges affiliated with Mahatma Gandhi University in Kerala shut down due to declining enrolment and financial difficulties. The Karnataka government is currently reviewing the continuation of nine newly established public universities in the State. Similarly, in 2024, Anna University in Tamil Nadu decided to close down 12 of its affiliated engineering colleges due to very low enrolment rate. Unfortunately, national agencies such as the University Grants Commission or State government data do not provide an accurate picture of college closures nationally. Only the AICTE provides detailed data

on closures.Global phenomenon

Universities and colleges in many countries are struggling to stay viable amid shifting demographics, rising operational costs, and evolving societal perceptions of higher education's value. Countries facing significant demographic declines, such as Japan, South Korea, and Taiwan, face especially serious problems — and in these countries the large majority of students are in private universities. And in all three countries, the government has considerable power over private institutions. In Japan, 33 universities have closed in the past few years and another 29 have merged with other institutions — and these numbers will significantly grow. A similar number have closed in South Korea, and others, called “zombie” universities, are kept alive through government funding. In both South Korea and Japan, most failed institutions are in provincial areas where population decline is especially evident.In the U.S., 79 universities have closed in the past five years and at least another 80 are in imminent danger. Most of these schools are private and in rural areas with declining populations, and enrolments have declined precipitously. Mergers are also increasingly common though accurate statistics are unavailable. But a few are public — for example, in the state of Pennsylvania, which has a large number of small public colleges, the State government is merging these institutions to reduce costs.In the U.K., a majority of the non-elite universities have fiscal deficits and have been firing large number of academic and other staff. A decline in the number of overseas students, stimulated by more restrictive government policies, will exacerbate financial problems. Similar issues are evident in Canada and to a less extent in Australia. In the Canadian case, many vocationally oriented colleges, some of which have engaged in shady academic policies, have deep financial problems —estimates are that more than 80 public or non-profit colleges have already closed.

Globally, closures and mergers do not affect research intensive universities but rather institutions at the lower end of the academic hierarchy. Top institutions, such as those in the U.K. and those targeted in the U.S. under the Trump administration, may face crises, but not existential threats.

Early warningCompetition and institutional closures are natural in any sector, including higher education. However, ignoring warning signs make the situation worse. India currently benefits from a large youth population, but changing birth rates will lead to a demographic decline in the future, similar to the East Asian and U.S. experience. This potential shift emphasises the need for sustainable strategies to ensure the stability and quality of higher education institutions.A college or university in crisis typically shows many early warning signs. In India, common indicators include a consistent drop in student admissions over time, which affect both public and private institutions. Over-reliance on tuition fees can also be considered a sign of crisis.Academically, signs of trouble include the reduction or closure of programmes, non-renewal of faculty contracts, and the resignation of prominent faculty members without proper replacements. Governance issues, such as frequent leadership changes, and reputational challenges such as poor campus infrastructure, unpaid electricity bills and inadequate student support services, further signal decline. The public, including students, parents, and faculty, should observe early warning signs of a college or university in crisis to avoid long-term harm to them. Practical steps to identify these signs include reviewing publicly available data, such as enrolment figures over the past few years. To enhance transparency, displaying this data on the institution's website should be made mandatory. Government authorities have a responsibility for tracking institutional performance and financial stability as well.

All you need to know about: Foetal abnormalities

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), congenital disorders affect approximately 6% of newborns worldwide, leading to hundreds of thousands of deaths each year. However, the true prevalence may be even higher, as many cases, including stillbirths and terminated pregnancies, often go unreported.

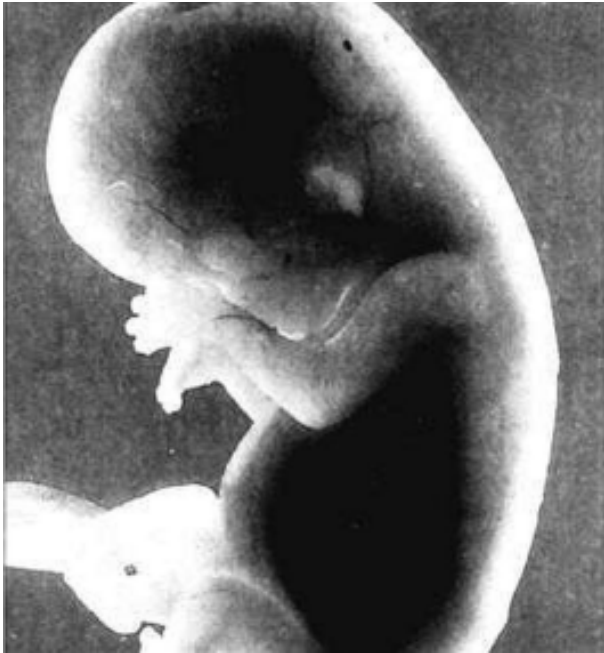
What are foetal abnormalities?

Foetal abnormalities, also known as congenital disorders, congenital anomalies, or birth defects, are structural or functional anomalies that develop during pregnancy. These conditions, which pose health risks during foetal development, can impact the foetus' bodily functions. They can affect various parts of the body, including the heart, brain, limbs, and internal organs.While some abnormalities are mild and manageable, others can cause severe complications, impacting a child's quality of life or even leading to stillbirth.

How do foetal abnormalities occur?

These can result from genetic, environmental, or unknown factors. Some conditions arise due to inherited genetic mutations or chromosomal abnormalities, such as Down Syndrome. Environmental factors, including exposure to alcohol, drugs, radiation, or infections like rubella and Zika virus during pregnancy, can also increase the risk.Maternal health conditions, such as uncontrolled diabetes or nutritional deficiencies (particularly folic acid deficiency), may contribute to the development of neural tube defects-- birth defects of the brain, spine, or spinal cord that occur when the neural tube(the precursor to the brain and spinal cord) doesn't close properly during early pregnancy and other abnormalities.In many cases, the exact cause remains unclear, but a combination of genetic and environmental influences is often responsible.

What are the signs and symptoms ?The signs and symptoms of foetal abnormalities vary depending on the condition. Some physical deformities, like cleft lip, clubfoot, or missing limbs, are visible at birth. Internal organ malformations, such as congenital heart defects or kidney abnormalities, may require medical imaging for diagnosis. Neurological disorders, including spina bifida and microcephaly, can affect brain development and lead to intellectual or motor impairments. Some congenital disorders cause developmental delays, speech difficulties, or growth restrictions, making early intervention crucial for improving outcomes. Who are at risk?According to the WHO and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention(CDC), a family history of congenital anomalies and consanguineous marriages significantly increase the likelihood of these conditions. Also ,advanced maternal age (35 years and older), environmental and behavioural factors, including maternal infections (such as syphilis, rubella, and Zika virus), poor nutrition (iodine or folate deficiency), and uncontrolled medical conditions (like diabetes), can heighten risks during pregnancy. Additionally, substance use, such as smoking, alcohol consumption, or drug use, has been linked to birth



defects, preterm birth, and infant mortality. As recorded by WHO, nine out of 10 children born with serious congenital disorders are in low- and middle-income countries, where access to medical care is often limitedWhat are the treatment options ?

CDC reports treatment depends on the type and severity of the condition. Some abnormalities, such as cleft lip-- a split in the upper lip that occurs when the tissues of the lip don't join completely during pregnancy, congenital heart defects -- structural problems with the heart that are present at birth, affecting how blood flows through the heart and body, and spina bifida -- a birth defect where the spine and spinal cord don't close completely during pregnancy, leading to a gap in the spine and potentially exposing the spinal cord and nerves, can be corrected through surgery.Medical management, including medications and supportive therapies, helps control symptoms in conditions like Down Syndrome or metabolic disorders. Physical therapy and assistive devices are often used to improve mobility for children with limb deformities or neurological issues. Nutritional and hormonal support may be necessary for conditions affecting growth and metabolism. In severe cases where treatment options are limited, palliative care focuses on improving comfort and quality of life.Early detection through screening and regular check-ups plays a vital role in managing congenital disorders. Ultrasound scans, genetic testing, and maternal blood tests can help identify abnormalities before birth, allowing for timely medical interventionPreconception screening identifies individuals at risk of specific disorders or passing them to their children. Peri-conception screening assesses maternal characteristics

What Google plans to do about online search antitrust decision: Explained



The story so far: On May 31, Google said it will appeal an antitrust decision aimed at making competition in the online search market fair. Google's reaction to the decision comes a day after U.S. Judge Amit Mehta heard closing arguments in a trial that sought to curtail the tech giant's illegal monopoly in online search. While the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) proposed stringent remedies to bring about fair competition, Google is opposed to these measures and proposed its own tentative remedies.After considering the proposed remedies from both sides, Judge Mehta is expected to deliver his decision. These court remedies could potentially unravel Google's position as a dominant player in the online search business.

What is the DOJ vs Google antitrust case?

The DOJ hit Google with multiple legal challenges in recent years, alleging violations of antitrust laws, and the monopolisation of multiple markets the search giant operates in.In particular, the regulator scrutinised Google's revenue sharing agreements with partners like Apple over worries that the search giant's rivals' services are being locked out of the market and that customers are seeing reduced choices for search engines on their devices.In August 2024, however, Judge Mehta handed the DOJ a victory when he ruled that Google was an illegal monopolist with monopoly power in the general search services and general search text advertising markets. The Google Search Remedies trial that followed this year saw the DOJ presenting a series of far-reaching proposals to cut down Google's monopoly power, while Google presented its own list of far milder proposals.

What is the DOJ's case against Google?

The DOJ and the U.S. Federal Trade Commission (FTC) are regulators that both work to ensure that companies, including Big Tech firms, are complying with American antitrust laws to enable fair competition. While the two regulators coordinate their efforts, the U.S. DOJ has the power to obtain criminal sanctions and has sole antitrust jurisdiction across industries including telecommunications, banks, railroads, and airlines.One of the key topics in Google's Search Remedies trial is the Big Tech company's multi-billion dollar deals with telecom device manufacturers to offer Google services via their products. To bring about fairer competition, the U.S. DOJ suggested the forced sale of the Chrome browser, possible divestment of the Android platform, temporary restrictions on some of Google's market activities, and the creation of a 'Technical Committee' to oversee Google's compliance measures.

What is Google's defence?

Should India amend its nuclear energy laws?

Discussions are ongoing in India to amend the nuclear liability framework, regulated by the Civil Liability for Nuclear Damages Act (CLNDA), 2010, and the Atomic Energy Act (AEA), 1962, to allow private companies to build and operate nuclear energy-generation facilities. This move is part of a broader strategy to expand India's nuclear energy capacity from the current 8 GW to 100 GW by 2047, aligning with the country's clean energy goals. Should India amend its nuclear energy laws? Ashley Tellis and D. Raghunandan discuss the question in a conversation moderated by Kunal Shankar.

Do you support the proposed amendments to India's nuclear energy laws?

Ashley Tellis: If India has set for itself a goal of expanding nuclear energy, it cannot reach that goal without expanding its domestic capacity. If we are talking of a timeline that is, say, 20 years, we must supplement those indigenous capabilities with foreign participation. This is where there is a roadblock. Current Indian law prevents foreign participation. The imagined future when we negotiated the U.S.-India civil nuclear deal in 2008 was that foreign companies would participate in India's nuclear renaissance. That dream has been frustrated by the legal evolution in the liability regime in India since 2000. So I would cheer the Prime Minister on, with respect to getting these amendments done.D. Raghunandan: The idea of amending the law to attract foreign investment to expand nuclear power generation capacity in India is based on two flawed arguments or assumptions. The first is that the roadblock to expansion of nuclear power is one of investment. The second is that no major nuclear supplier country has shown domestic capacity expansion at the rate at which we assume India will expand. We have not seen that happen in the U.S. or France. Britain does not have much capacity anyway; Japan is on a slow track. Only China, perhaps, has the capacity to expand at scale and I don't see major Chinese investment coming into India.

Ashley Tellis: The Indian nuclear liability law is a genuine impediment to foreign participation in the sector. Companies from France, Japan, and the U.S. have said they cannot enter the market if the current law stands. Russia is an interesting case because Rosatom is a parastatal. Even Rosatom refused to accept India's liability law. India indemnified Rosatom through a contractual agreement reached in 2008 before the liability law was passed. After 2010, that is not an option available to the government because to indemnify through a private contract would violate parliamentary intention. This law affects Indian industry as well. The Department of Atomic Energy (DEA) had NPCIL (Nuclear Power Corporation of India Ltd) indemnify Indian private suppliers through contractual agreements. The problem started at Kovvada; after the civil liability legislation was passed, domestic suppliers refused to supply components. So NPCIL, through contractual agreements, waived liability using a rationale that if there is a failure in components made to their specifications, it is NPCIL's fault, a logic that is suspect and never tested in court. Raghu is right: the U.S. is driving this pressure, partly for political and economic reasons. If we want foreign participation, we have to amend the law.Regarding supply-side capacity, whether we have it now is suspect. But this investment in India is over a long horizon. Western nuclear suppliers are responsive to market signals and will build up capacity if demand pre-

Google has consistently defended the quality and innovation of its products, while denying that it stifled competition. The tech giant vocally criticised the DOJ's remedies to reduce its dominance, claiming that data-sharing with rivals would put customers at risk and that giving up Chrome and Android would lead to cybersecurity risks as well as increased device costs.Google strongly opposed the idea of a DOJ-controlled Technical Committee, complaining that it would reserve the right for the U.S. government to decide who can access Google users' data. This is not a favourable outcome for the company, since U.S. President Donald Trump has systematically worked to reduce the independence of even federal agencies and regulators such as the FTC. Trump also suggested in the past that Google could shut down. However, the DOJ suggested a court-appointed Technical Committee made up of independent experts. Google's own proposed remedies include more flexible browser agreements and Android contracts, as well as oversight to ensure that Google complies with the court's order rather than coming under government control.“While we heard a lot about how the remedies would help various well-funded competitors (w/ repeated references to Bing), we heard very little about how all this helps consumers,” posted Google on X on May 31.However, a new issue in Google's antitrust quandary is Generative AI, and whether or not Google's monopoly in multiple markets also hurts competition in markets related to large language models (LLMs) and AI integrations across devices and the web.

For example: Google's 'AI overviews' that now greet users at the top of their searches could reshape the way customers worldwide search for information online. Google, meanwhile, claimed that the AI space was highly competitive and that rivals were thriving even without government intervention.“The US Department of Justice's 2020 search distribution lawsuit is a backwards-looking case at a time of intense competition and unprecedented innovation. With new services like ChatGPT (and foreign competitors like DeepSeek) thriving, DOJ's sweeping remedy proposals are both unnecessary and harmful,” wrote Lee-Anne Mulholland, Vice President, Regulatory Affairs, Google, in a company blog post.

What happens to Google next?

U.S. Judge Amit Mehta will take time over the summer months to consider the facts of the case. A decision regarding the Google Search Remedies trial is expected from him before Labour Day (the first Monday in September), per AP.Google is waiting for the court's remedies but said it still disagrees with the original decision and believes it is “wrong.” The tech giant also plans to present its side during the appeal, which will happen after the court remedy is revealed. In other words, the legal process could stretch on for even years. This is just one of several antitrust challenges that Google is facing in the U.S. and overseas, with cases covering different areas of its lucrative business such as its advertising technology, rights to its Android platform, and the treatment of developers using the Google Play Store.The U.S. DOJ in April announced that it “prevailed” against Google in a second monopolisation case, where the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Virginia held that Google “violated antitrust law by monopolizing open-web digital advertising markets.”

sents itself.

One of the reservations with private companies' participation has been about technology transfer, particularly as this is considered a strategic space with attendant security risks. Even if India were to amend the AEA, would the level of technology transfer that took place under agreements in the past between Russia and India take place in future? Particularly in the case of the Small Modular Reactors (SMRs) that appear to be gaining ground as a safer alternative to large nuclear reactors?Ashley Tellis: This is a commercial question. If your suppliers are private entities, their technology transfer decisions will be based on profitability. Governments don't have powers to force a private entity to transfer technology. The U.S. will have a role through its licensing process for what technology transfer is permitted. For example, the U.S. permitted Westinghouse to transfer certain reactor design technologies to China, a decision Westinghouse probably rues because the AP1000 technology was cloned by the Chinese. My expectation is that India will seek technology transfer and will probably get some, consistent with company profitability and what the U.S. government will want to protect for national security or proliferation reasons. Even Rosatom has not done a complete transfer of VVER-1000 technology to India; they have allowed India to build sub-components but maintain proprietary control over many elements, especially in the hot section, related to advanced materials and chemistry. This will not be a showstopper. Newer companies involved in SMRs are actually more enthusiastic about technology transfer than old majors because it is an economic decision to access the market, get economies of scale, and increase profit. This will not be a serious problem. The bigger problems are high capital costs and how much money will India be able to invest.D. Raghunandan: A lot of this debate is based on hypotheticals and we cannot frame policies based on those. For 15 years, India has been chasing technology transfer and investment in defence, increasing FDI from 25% to 100%, yet no major foreign company invested or transferred technology because it's not in their interest. So I am not convinced that new futuristic technologies such as SMRs, which India does not possess, will transform the nuclear energy landscape if they come to India. The argument often comes down to making smaller 200 MW or even 60-70 MW reactors instead of 500 MW ones. In its last Budget, India earmarked money for five small reactors based on the pressurised heavy water cycle that it is familiar with. The question is attracting investment to scale this up.Dr. Tellis, considering India is a developing country with other commitments, for these newer SMR suppliers, would it not be fair to seek compensation [if things go wrong] because it's an untested technology?Ashley Tellis: No, I don't think so. The Convention on Supplementary Compensation (CSC) is an international effort to create an environment conducive for expanding nuclear power production and understanding its inherent risks. The CSC's purpose in a nuclear accident is not to litigate who is responsible, but to rush compensation to those affected. It has three key principles: first, all liability is channelled to the operator. Second, a pre-accident fund is created (the Convention has a three-tiered fund). Third, supplier liability is permitted if it's through contract or if there are issues of wilful misconduct; there isn't an overarching principle of supplier liability because of the fear of litigation delays.

What are the key objectives of caste count?



The story so far: The Union Cabinet has decided that the next Census will include questions on caste to its enumeration of India's population, for the first time in almost a century. The decision, a reversal of the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party's (BJP) stance so far, comes ahead of the crucial Bihar elections, and throws up myriad challenges.

Have Indians been counted by caste before?

When the British first started counting India's population in 1881, caste data was included in the information gathered. For the next half-century, the decennial censuses collected caste information. The last time that data was published was from the 1931 census, which counted 4,147 castes and sub-castes across the country. Though the war-time 1941 census also collected data on individual castes, it was never released. After India gained Independence, the government decided to avoid the question of caste in the census, only counting Scheduled Castes and Tribes (SCs/STs).In his report on the 1931 census, then-Census Commissioner J.H. Hutton dismissed the arguments of those who did not wish to collect caste and religion data on the grounds that they would perpetuate divisions, noting that "the census cannot, however, hide its head in the sand like the proverbial ostrich, but must record as accurately as possible facts as they exist." He struck down previous British attempts to list a hierarchy of castes, in accordance with their perceived ranks in society, instead choosing to use occupations as the basis of classification, though this did not account for the fluidity of caste identities and the variations in caste names across time and geographies. The 1931 census data was also the basis for reservation efforts half a century later; its finding that 52% of the country's population belonged to castes later grouped under the Other Backward Class (OBC) category became the basis of the Mandal Commission's recommendation for a 27% quota for OBCs in education and government jobs.

In 2011, the Union Ministry of Rural Development kicked off a different kind of caste-counting exercise as part of its Socio-Economic and Caste Census (SECC). The data collected was meant to be used for research and policy making and to effectively design and implement development and welfare schemes. Though parts of the data were published in 2016, the raw data on specific caste populations was not included. As the SECC left its questions on caste open-ended rather than making them choose their caste from a set list, respondents often entered their surnames, meaning that the SECC enumerators counted more than 46 lakh different castes.

Have individual States counted castes?

At least three States have conducted caste censuses. Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar led the effort to survey the State's caste break-up in 2023, finding that OBCs and Extremely Backward Classes (EBCs) accounted for more than 63% of the State's population, stirring the political pot with demands for higher representation for these castes in politics, education, and employment. The Congress rode to power in Telangana in 2023, partly on the basis of its

promise to conduct a caste survey, which was published in 2024 and showed that backward classes make up more than 56% of the State's population. Karnataka's caste survey was also commissioned by a Congress government, in Chief Minister Siddaramaiah's first term in 2015. The results, however, were published only a decade later, and showed that the State's OBC population stood at almost 70%.

What will this data be used for?

Apart from its use in academic research and policy making, the key import of caste data from a public and political viewpoint is what changes it will drive in affirmative action or reservation policies. The 27% OBC quota for education and government jobs was set on the basis of a projection from the 1931 census; a new caste count could well upend those estimates.In Karnataka, for instance, where the caste survey found that the OBC population is significantly higher than estimated, there have been demands to increase their quota in the State from 32% to 51%. The clamour for more reservation, backed by caste population data, is also likely to lead to a challenge of the Supreme Court-mandated 50% cap on reservation.

What is the context for this decision?

The BJP-led government's decision came as a surprise given that the demand for a caste census has been a major plank of the Opposition's poll campaigns. The BJP has long resisted the demand, accusing the Congress of using caste to divide Indians. Minister of State for Home Nityanand Rai even responded to questions in Parliament insisting that there were no plans to include caste in the next Census, terming it a "matter of policy".The Bihar caste survey, however, set off a political tinderbox that carried over into the 2024 general election campaign. The Opposition, in its campaign for social justice also stoked fears among sections of voters that the BJP was seeking a large majority in order to be able to remove reservations and amend the Constitution, which led to lower vote counts for the BJP in many constituencies.The decision to conduct a caste count "steals the thunder" from the Opposition's campaign just ahead of the Bihar Assembly elections, where it is sure to become a poll issue. The BJP is seeking to reframe the narrative, claiming that the Congress is all talk and no action, as it had never conducted a caste census at the national level while in power at the Centre. Though the Opposition is seeking to claim credit for pressuring the government into taking this decision, it is also pivoting to the logical next step, of demanding that reservations be hiked in response to the caste census findings, seeking to breach the Supreme Court's 50% cap.

What is the timeline for implementation?

The catch in the Centre's announcement is that no dates have yet been notified for the next Census. The last Census was held in 2011, with the 2021 Census being delayed indefinitely, initially due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The addition of a caste component involves more work for Census officials.The next step will be to draft a code directory of castes to be used in the Census. Unlike the SECC, which had an open-ended query on the respondent's caste, the Census is likely to provide a drop-down list of castes for respondents to choose from. How castes will be listed is a thorny political question, given that the Centre and States have differing, and often contentious OBC lists. Linguistic and regional diversity in caste names, splitting of castes into sub-castes over time, and disagreements on whether specific castes fit into SC, OBC, or general categories, are likely to complicate the process. Religion adds another factor into the mix, with questions about how non-Hindu groups will be recognised and whether they will get benefits on the basis of the caste census.

How coffee agroforests can play a role in ecological restoration

In 2019, when the Narmada Estate, a coffee plantation in Karnataka's Chikkamagaluru district, decided to go organic, it began diversifying the coffee-cropping system to reduce pests. "The reason something becomes a pest is because you have too much of the same thing," explains Sohan Shetty, the estate's general manager. "So, we needed to plant as many trees as possible."Shade coffee agroforests and pockets of remnant natural forest form a dense and continuous tree canopy in the Chikmagalur region of the Western Ghats, India.

To find suitable plants to grow alongside organic coffee, he began scouting for the best-priced plant sources, including the Karnataka Forest Department's nurseries and seed suppliers in Chikkaballapur. During his search, Shetty discovered that the Nature Conservation Foundation (NCF) had been actively restoring rainforests in Valparai, Tamil Nadu, for years, and so he reached out to them. "They were amazed at the scale with which I was thinking of starting nurseries and asked me what species I was working on." So he shared with them the list of trees and seeds available with both the Forest Department and the seed supplier. "The botanist looked at it and said, a week later, that only three of these species are native to the Western Ghats," he says. "That shook me. I realised that we are just planting trees for the sake of planting trees, but we are completely messing up the ecosystem."

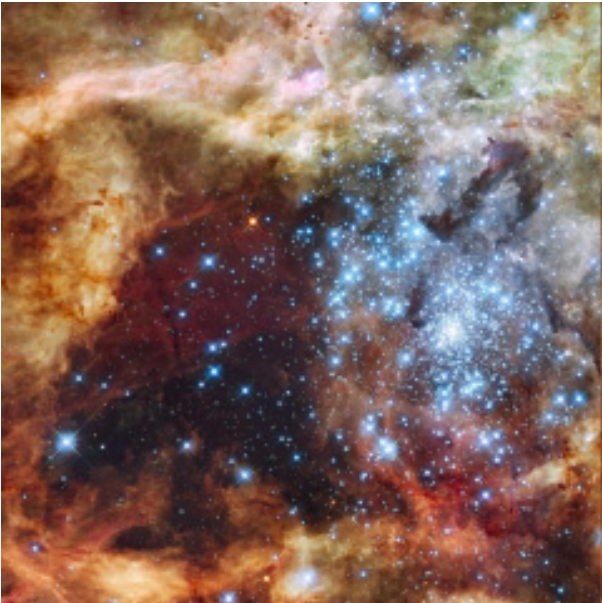
Shade trees in coffee agroforests can comprise a variety of species that are native to forests of the region. The species with fresh red leaves at the center of the image is *Canarium strictum*, which produces fleshy fruits that attract birds and a resin that is culturally and economically important.Shade trees in coffee agroforests can comprise a variety of species that are native to forests of the region. The species with fresh red leaves at the center of the image is *Canarium strictum*, which produces fleshy fruits that attract birds and a resin that is culturally and economically important. | Photo Credit: Vijay KarthickIn search of a better solution, he soon found himself visiting a nursery run by NCF on land allocated by the Kadamane Estates Company in Sakleshpur taluk, Hassan district, which had been set up in 2022. "It was quite impressive, 5000-odd plants of different varieties," remembers Shetty, who, on seeing this, thought it would be a good idea to further collaborate with NCF. "By that time, I had set up a nursery with 1.2 lakh bags, which could accommodate that many saplings," he says. "So, I told them that I was happy to grow plants for you. That is how the whole partnership began," recalls Shetty, who, along with other owners and managers of agroforests in Hassan and Chikkamagaluru districts, was part of a study spearheaded by conservation scientists from the NCF titled Shade coffee agroforests as native plant sources for restoration.According to Anand Osuri, a scientist with NCF and the paper's lead author, the study, which has just been published in the *Journal of Applied Ecology*, really took off in 2023. A year earlier, Vedika Dutta, also a

co-author, had come to Osuri as a master's student, wanting to study birds in coffee agroforests, with a focus on frugivorous or fruit-eating birds. "In the course of her work, we spent time in coffee estates, watching birds and the trees in which they foraged in these coffee plantations," he says, adding that they were struck by the large numbers and wide variety of native tree seeds and seedlings on the coffee estate floor. "These seeds and seedlings were not just of the trees fruiting overhead, but also other species carried in from further afar by seed-dispersing birds and mammals."Around the same time, NCF was also thinking about a forest restoration project in the coffee-growing landscape of the hilly Malnad region by partnering with local residents and landowners. According to him, these landowners had different motivations to restore forests, ranging from an interest in conservation to entering carbon and biodiversity markets or attracting birds to their homesteads. "There are a number of opportunities where interested landowners are keen to restore forests in areas where coffee is not being cultivated," says Osuri, who has been participating in efforts to restore forests for nearly a decade and believes that the availability of diverse native plants, sourced locally and ethically, is critical to do so. "

So, there was this restoration project that we were trying to develop, for which we needed to develop native plant nurseries, and the bird work was also going on."As part of the restoration project, researchers from NCF needed to collect seeds and seedlings that could be raised in nurseries. But "we?didn't want to be collecting lots of seeds from the forests themselves because that reduces the seed availability there, impacting the resources of animals, birds and insects," says Osuri. "And so, we put both these pieces together to see if we could do more to harness the potential of coffee farms as a source of seeds for restoration."Coffee in India is largely shade-grown, making coffee plantations a potential "refuge for biodiversity," says Osuri. "For a substantial set of native species important for restoration, we often find adults of those trees in the coffee estates." However, most seeds that fall and germinate in coffee estates are weeded out because of the possibility of them competing with the coffee bushes for light and other resources, representing a loss for biodiversity conservation. "

So, we thought we should make a more systematic effort to rescue their seeds and seedlings before they get weeded outAs part of the study, the team documented the diversity of native tree species found within the coffee estates, recording over 90 native tree species relevant for forest restoration in the region. Clarifying that the word "native", in this instance, refers to "that particular eco-region of the Western Ghats, the wet evergreen rainforests" and not just plants "native to India," he says that they were particularly interested in documenting species not only those native to the Western Ghats but also endemic to the region, those "found nowhere else on earth and some of which are classified by the IUCN as being threatened."

Hubble's 35-year journey is a blueprint to understand the cosmos



From breathtaking snapshots of distant galaxies to game-changing discoveries about the universe's expansion, the Hubble Space Telescope (HST) has dazzled humankind for 35 years.After launching on April 24, 1990, Hubble overcame early flaws to become one of NASA's greatest triumphs. Its vivid images and countless scientific breakthroughs have reshaped our understanding of the cosmos, inspiring new generations of telescopes and astronomers. To celebrate Hubble's majestic journey for more than three decades, NASA recently released a collection of striking images captured by the HST.The US astronomer Lyman Spitzer proposed the idea of the Large Space Telescope in the 1940s. NASA and the US Congress approved the project in 1969 but faced budget pressures. Then the European Space Agency chipped in with 15% of the LST's cost in exchange for 15% of its observation time.

The HST, named for astronomer Edwin Hubble, was planned in 1979 and built by 20 companies, universities, and the European Space Agency. It was initially scheduled to be launched in 1986 but that was delayed until 1990 due to technical difficulties and the Space Shuttle Challenger disaster.This Hubble Space Telescope image captures two clusters full of massive stars that may be in the early stages of merging. The 30 Doradus nebula, also widely known as the Tarantula Nebula, is approximately 170,000 light-years from Earth. It is part of the Large Magellanic Cloud, a galactic satellite of the Milky Way. | Photo Credit: NASA, ESAThe HST first had two cameras: the Wide-Field and Planetary Camera (WFPC) and the Faint Object Camera. It also had two spectrographs: the Goddard High-Resolution Spectrograph (GHRS) and the Faint Object Spectrograph (FOS). A high-speed photometer onboard detected light from high-energy sources. Three fine-guidance sensors installed in 1990 made high-precision measurements of the positions of celestial objects. This view of the Butterfly Nebula from near-ultraviolet to near-infrared helped researchers better understand the mechanics at work in its technicolor "wings" of gas. The star or stars at the nebula's center are responsible for its appearance. | Photo Credit: NASA, ESA, and J. Kastner (RIT)The WFPC was the most popular. It consists of two cameras. The Wide-Field camera covered large sky areas while the Planetary Camera magnified and improved image resolution. The Faint Object Camera captured light from distant celestial objects with help from an image intensifier.

This Hubble Space Telescope image captures two clusters full of massive stars that may be in the early stages of merging. The 30 Doradus nebula, also widely known as the Tarantula Nebula, is approximately 170,000 light-years from Earth. It is part of the Large Magellanic Cloud, a galactic satellite of the Milky Way. | Photo Credit: NASA, ESAThe HST first had two cameras: the Wide-Field and Planetary Camera (WFPC) and the Faint Object Camera. It also had two spectrographs: the Goddard High-Resolution Spectrograph (GHRS) and the Faint Object Spectrograph (FOS). A high-speed photometer onboard detected light from high-energy sources. Three fine-guidance sensors installed in 1990 made high-precision measurements of the positions of celestial objects. This view of the Butterfly Nebula from near-ultraviolet to near-infrared helped researchers better understand the mechanics at work in its technicolor "wings" of gas. The star or stars at the nebula's center are responsible for its appearance. | Photo Credit: NASA, ESA, and J. Kastner (RIT)The WFPC was the most popular. It consists of two cameras. The Wide-Field camera covered large sky areas while the Planetary Camera magnified and improved image resolution. The Faint Object Camera captured light from distant celestial objects with help from an image intensifier.

The scattered stars of the globular cluster NGC 6355

are strewn across this image from the Hubble Space Telescope. NGC 6355 is a galactic globular cluster that resides in our Milky Way galaxy's inner regions. It is less than 50,000 light-years from the earth. Globular clusters are stable, tightly bound groups of thousands to millions of stars associated with all types of galaxies. Their dense populations of stars and mutual gravitational attraction give these clusters a roughly spherical shape.The scattered stars of the globular cluster NGC 6355 are strewn across this image from the Hubble Space Telescope. NGC 6355 is a galactic globular cluster that resides in our Milky Way galaxy's inner regions. It is less than 50,000 light-years from the earth. Globular clusters are stable, tightly bound groups of thousands to millions of stars associated with all types of galaxies. Their dense populations of stars and mutual gravitational attraction give these clusters a roughly spherical shape.

Astronauts launched in 1993 implemented this fix on the HST, by that time in earth orbit. They removed the high-speed photometer to make way for COSTAR, as well as replaced the WFPC with the WFPC 2, among other upgrades.The telescope experienced a similar problem in 1997. The analysis of light is of great importance in space research. Blue light has a shorter wavelength and red light has a longer wavelength. If the frequency of incoming light bluer, it means the light source is moving towards the observer. If the frequency is becoming redder, the object is moving away. The HST's GHRS and FOS devices, which perform this analysis, worked well until 1997. NASA subsequently replaced them with the Space Telescope Imaging Spectrograph that year. This device can analyse frequencies of light from the ultraviolet to the infrared.The telescope's antenna transmits approximately 150 Gb of data a week. According to NASA, the HST has observed almost 52,000 stellar objects in 1.6 million observations since launch.One of the HST's most significant achievements was to get scientists the data with which they estimated the universe's age. Before the telescope came along, astronomers didn't know if the universe was 10 billion years old or 20 billion. To get the answer, astronomers looked at the Cepheid variable stars — a type of star that pulsed in a steady way, its brightness varying over periods of days or months.Astronomers could determine the distance to such a star using its luminosity and pulsation rate. Based on that measurement, they could then estimate the distances to various other, more distant celestial objects. Finally, based on all the data, astronomers could estimate how fast the universe was expanding, and work back from there to the universe's age.With the HST's keen observations, they identified more than 800 Cepheid stars in 24 galaxies and thereon that the universe was around 13.8 billion years old.Astronomers have also created a 3D map of dark matter using data from the HST and other telescopes. The telescope has also found that gamma-ray bursts, the universe's most energetic explosions, occur in galaxies with rapid star formation and a low proportion of elements heavier than helium.

Numerous galaxies had supermassive black holes at their centres — or so astronomers believed by the early 1990s, and the HST the belief's underlying assumptions. Closer home, the HST helped find two additional moons of Pluto (Nix and Hydra) and observed seasonal alterations on Pluto's surface. Its data helped estimate the mass of Eris, the solar system's heaviest dwarf planet, and based on that indicated the existence of more such objects in the Kuiper Belt and beyond

The HST also first studied the atmosphere of an exoplanet: HD 209458-b, a.k.a. Osiris, a hot world located 150 lightyears away. Osiris was found to be within 6.4 million km of its host star and thus a surface temperature of around 1,100° C.The HST was initially expected to operate for 15 years but it has consistently delivered over the last 35 years and continues to do so. Astronomers commemorated the anniversary of its launch with a stunning image of NGC 1333, a star-forming area located 967 light-years away in the Perseus molecular cloud.It is impossible to overstate the HST's pride of place in our understanding of the cosmos. Every pixel of its images has revealed whole new worlds in the great beyond, helping us understand our own place in the cosmos.

Not revenge or retaliation, but a paradigm shift

The Pahalgam terror attack (April 22) has put Delhi and Islamabad into a different trajectory from the past, and is one that should alert the entire strategic community. This was the first such incident on this scale targeting civilians since the Mumbai 2008 attacks. The barbarity in Pahalgam, segregating men from women, identifying them by religion and then executing them is aimed not just at terrorising Indians, and crushing a slowly reviving Kashmiri economy but also of instigating a communal rift in the rest of the country. Unlike the "fidayeen" attacks of the past, where terrorists were sent in as cannon fodder, to continue to kill until eliminated by security forces, this attack seemed more precise, with an exfiltration plan in place. While a deeper inquiry into the lapses that allowed the attack to take place and for the terrorists to leave unchallenged is awaited, the government has announced diplomatic measures, which include the suspension of the Indus Waters Treaty (IWT). It has also given the defence forces the green light to plan a military operation.How does one craft a more long-term response, that does not just seek revenge or retaliation, but works as a deterrent in the short term and seeks to change patterns of cross-border behaviour in the long term?To begin with, it is necessary to analyse India's varied responses to attacks of a similar magnitude over the past few years for what was, relatively speaking, more effective in securing India's security interests. While most analyses look at the responses to the Uri (2016) and Pulwama (2019) attacks, at least five different responses should be studied: this includes 2001, after the Parliament attack, when the Indian Army was mobilised during Operation Parakram. After the Mumbai attacks, the government launched an international campaign that pushed Pakistan to admit that terrorists had been raised and trained on its territory, and Pakistan was first put on the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) grey-list for terror financing and money laundering. In 2007 after the Samjhauta Express train attack and in January 2016 after the Pathankot attack, India asked Pakistan to join the investigation, and a Pakistani team was even invited to visit the Pathankot air force base in March 2016. After the Uri attack, the government okayed cross-Line of Control (LoC) surgical strikes to attack terror camps in Pakistan Occupied Kashmir (PoK). And in 2019, the Indian Air Force bombed a terror camp in Balakot, outside PoK, which then saw a counter-mobilisation by the Pakistan Air Force, the capture of an Indian pilot, and a helicopter accidentally shot down on the Indian side.Given that the

Pahalgam attack appears to have been a deliberately planned provocation, another similar response from India will be expected, and would have been war-gamed already. This narrows strategic options for a strike that catches the other side unawares. Planners will not only need to eliminate the responses already tried in the past but they also must produce three separate strategies: a counter-terror strategy, a strategy for retaliation, and a strategy to manage Pakistan's counter-retaliation as well.Three other areas of misadventure and miscalculation must also be factored in, beginning with Pakistan Army Chief General Asim Munir's apparent desire to escalate matters with India. A clear indicator of this were two recent speeches: calling for Pakistan to become a "hard state", underlining religious differences between Hindus and Muslims that fomented the "Two-nation theory", and the reference to Kashmir as a "jugalur vein". It must be kept in mind that Gen. Munir was commissioned in the Pakistani Army in 1986 during Gen. Zia-ul-Haq's tenure as the President of Pakistan when the ideological purpose of the Pakistan Army was changed from "Ittehad, Yaqeen, Tazameen (unity, faith and discipline)" to the more radicalised "Iman, Taqwa, Jihad fi Sabeelillah (faith, obedience of god and struggle for the path of Allah)", and this is likely to have left a lasting imprint. Gen. Munir has been under pressure not only to avenge the Jaffar Express attack in Pakistan in March this year in which, coincidentally or otherwise, 26 hostages, all men, were killed.

Another pressure point is the continued popularity of Imran Khan, his biggest critic, who has been in jail for nearly two years. Even so, Gen. Munir, who will remain in the saddle until at least 2027 due to a change in Pakistani law last year, has few challenges to his will at present, and New Delhi must factor this in as well. The role of China is another wild card, particularly if India's response to Pahalgam hurts well-entrenched China-Pakistan Economic Corridor interests in any way. The third room for error could come from any hastily-prepared Indian response to the attacks, led by calls by some in New Delhi that it is time for a "definitive war", and that the time for "map-making" or "cartological changes" by capturing and holding parts of PoK is nigh.At the same time, India's diplomacy has to double efforts to keep those counselling restraint, internationally, at bay, with the United States, the United Kingdom, the European Union, the United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia joining the chorus and attempting to mediate by calling on Delhi and Islamabad to "de-escalate".

Grok, unhinged! Who is responsible for its sensational responses on X?



GNS News Agency, June 12

With the Indian government in touch with Elon Musk’s X over stirring responses generated by its artificial intelligence (AI) chatbot Grok, the question that many in the government are grappling with is: who is actually responsible for the retorts that the AI has been producing on the social media platform? Laden with profanities, sweeping takes, colouring some conservative users, including founder Musk, as the biggest spreaders of misinformation – Grok’s responses to questions posed by Indian users have so far turned out to be an amalgamation of the attitudes and demeanour familiar to those who frequently use the social network.

Here are some facts: Grok is not a person, at best, it is computer code running on high-end compute at the backend, and at its worst, that code periodically churns out the underbelly of the data that has been fed to it. Grok is artificial, its intelligence debatable. So, when Grok uses a misogynist Hindi expletive when responding to a user about their most prominent mutuals, or calls Musk one of the biggest sources of misinformation on the social media platform – it led to people asking Grok a flurry of questions, directly through their posts, or as comments to other posts. This piece aims to demystify three main concerns around what’s happening with Grok: who is responsible for its responses, are the people asking it questions somehow liable, and if Grok is a source of truth.

Who is liable, can people be penalised?

Internet platforms like X, Meta, and YouTube have legal protection from the content that their users post. This, in law, is called safe harbour – the argument being platforms have no control over what users are posting. They are mere conduits, so they can not be held liable for hosting third-party content. While that convention itself is currently being debated given virality and the potential of speech on such

platforms to cause real world harms, the million dollar question is if Grok, an artificial output generator, can have safe harbour protections. That is a complex question to deal with for lawmakers. X has told the Indian government that it has been trained on the open-Internet, which presumably also includes content users post on X. So, in a way, everything that Grok generates is based on what people spending years on the Internet have produced. But can then they be held responsible? That is like asking if the ocean can be sued for being wet. Besides, speech is a highly protected category in India, with the Indian Constitution affording the freedom of expression as a fundamental right, with some reasonable restrictions. But, those rights are available to human beings. Humans’ speech should be censored only under select circumstances when they obviously violate restrictions laid down in the Constitution. Does Grok have the right to unfettered free speech? And what is Grok’s free speech even – its code essentially determines what the next word in a sentence should be, which is a factor of the underlying dataset it has been trained on, which in turn is generated by actual humans. Both the code, and the content in the language model. So, many would argue that the liability of Grok’s responses primarily lies with xAI, its creators, and X for allowing Grok to produce responses without any filters. But that too raises some pertinent questions. How does one hold creators of an algorithm responsible? Is it the highly-paid people who have written the code, or the low-wage data annotators? These are questions that regulators around the world are unlikely to have a quick, and accurate answer to. “Grok is certainly not a real person, it’s an artificial entity. But some of its responses are definitely problematic. It’s an interesting, and difficult problem, that us in government will have to figure out,” a senior government official said. Should one trust Grok? The short answer to that question is, AI responses should not be treated as accurate pieces of information, no matter how much they satiate one’s socio-political beliefs. Already, platforms are applying filters on their AI models to restrict their political speech in order to stay safe from government scrutiny. As India headed to Lok Sabha elections last year, Google said it will restrict the types of election-related questions users can ask its artificial intelligence (AI) chatbot Gemini in the country. Earlier, Krutrim, the chatbot developed by an Indian AI startup founded by Bhavish Aggarwal of Ola, had been found to self-censor on certain keywords. AI platforms are built to predict the next word in a phrase, and to try and satisfy the query a user has asked – and models like Grok have so far shown they will do anything to achieve that, beg, borrow or steal.

India’s oil import dependency on course to hit fresh full-year high in FY25 amid growing demand, stagnant domestic production

Growing demand for fuel and other petroleum products amid stagnant domestic crude oil output led India’s reliance on imported crude oil to increase to over 88 per cent in the first 11 months of the current financial year ending March (FY25), indicating that the import dependency for the full financial year could breach the all-time-high level of the last financial year. The latest data released by the oil ministry’s Petroleum Planning & Analysis 1Cell (PPAC) shows that India’s oil import dependency was 88.2 per cent in April-February, up from 87.7 per cent in the corresponding period of the last financial year (FY24). For the full FY24, reliance on imported oil was 87.8 per cent. Industry watchers believe that the import dependency level for the entire FY25 could be a tad higher than the April-February level, as was the case in the previous financial year.

India’s energy needs are consistently growing, leading to higher oil imports. This is fuelled by factors like growing energy-intensive industries, increased vehicle sales, a rapidly expanding aviation sector, growing consumption of petrochemicals, and a rising population. India’s reliance on imported oil has generally increased over the years, with the exception of FY21 when demand was suppressed due to the COVID-19 pandemic. India’s oil import dependency was 87.8 per cent in FY24, 87.4 per cent in FY23, 85.5 per cent in FY22, 84.4 per cent in FY21, 85 per cent in FY20, and 83.8 per cent in FY19.

India’s heavy reliance on imported crude oil makes its economy vulnerable to global oil price fluctuations. This also impacts the country’s trade deficit, foreign exchange reserves, the rupee’s exchange rate, and inflation rate, among others. The Indian government aims to reduce the country’s reliance on imported crude oil but faces challenges due to sluggish domestic oil output amidst rising demand. In 2015, the government aimed to reduce reliance on oil imports to 67 per cent by 2022. However, import dependency has only increased. The government has implemented several policy reforms to encourage investments in India’s oil and gas exploration and production sector, the latest being the Oilfield (Regulatory and Development) Amendment Bill, which was recently passed by the Parliament. The government is also



promoting electric mobility, biofuels, and other alternative fuels to reduce oil imports. While there has been an increase in electric mobility adoption and the blending of biofuels with conventional fuels, it is not sufficient to offset petroleum demand growth. India’s crude oil imports rose to 219.9 million tonnes in the 11 months to February from 213.4 million tonnes in the year-ago period. Meanwhile, domestic oil production declined slightly to 26.2 million tonnes from 26.9 million tonnes. Total domestic consumption of petroleum products in April-February rose 2.6 per cent year-on-year to 218.3 million tonnes, of which only 25.8 million tonnes of products estimated to have been produced from domestic crude oil, resulting in a self-sufficiency level of just 11.8 per cent, per the PPAC data.

The calculation of the extent of import reliance is based on the domestic consumption of petroleum products and excludes petroleum product exports as those volumes do not represent India’s demand. India—the world’s third-largest consumer of crude oil and also one of its top importers—is a net exporter of petroleum products. The country’s gross oil import bill for April-February was \$124.7 billion, an increase of almost 3 per cent year-on-year. Crude oil imports top the list of India’s merchandise imports. India’s crude oil consumption and imports are projected to rise further due to growing domestic demand. Consumption of petroleum products is projected to increase by 4.7 per cent in FY26, reaching 252.93 million tonnes, per PPAC projections.

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

A mere 7 per cent of the next generation of India’s family business owners feel a sense of obligation to take the reins, indicating a significant lack of interest in succeeding their parents, says an HSBC report. This raises questions about the future leadership and succession planning for these family businesses.

While 88 per cent of Indian entrepreneurs surveyed by HSBC trust the next generation’s ability to manage family wealth, 45 per cent of surveyed entrepreneurs (55 per cent of first-generation and 35 per cent of multi-generation) do not expect their children taking over the family business, according to HSBC Global Private Banking’s report titled ‘Family-owned businesses in Asia: Harmony through succession planning’ The HSBC report has highlighted the preparedness of family-owned businesses in India and across Asia for the future of their enterprise and their wealth, offering key insights into succession planning and intergenerational dynamics.

Shift in approach to succession planning HSBC said this trend highlights a shift in the traditional approach to succession planning, even as family-owned businesses continue to play a pivotal role in India’s economy, contributing approximately 79 per cent of the country’s gross domestic product (GDP) — one of the highest ratios globally. Interestingly, only 7 per cent of Indian respondents felt obligated to take on the family business when the business was passed on, reflecting a growing openness to exploring opportunities outside the family enterprise, it

said. Kotak Mahindra Bank founder Uday Kotak had recently advised the next generation of business heirs to step into building real-world businesses and flagged concerns regarding the increasing inclination of young business heirs to run family offices and investments instead of starting businesses of their own. According to the HSBC report, this sentiment is supported by strong feelings of encouragement within multi-generational families, with 83 per cent of respondents stating they felt empowered to pursue other interests when they first took over the business. Despite this shift, the report said that 79 per cent of Indian entrepreneurs still plan to pass their businesses to family members, aligning closely with global trends (77 per cent in the UK and 76 per cent in Switzerland). Notably, Indian second- and third-generation entrepreneurs feel a strong sense of trust from their predecessors, with 95 per cent reporting they felt trusted when taking over the business — significantly higher than the global average of 81 per cent. India is on the brink of a significant intergenerational wealth transfer, it said. According to Hurun data, in 2024 India had 334 billionaires in US dollar terms with the number rising 29 per cent year-on-year. Nearly 70 per cent of the list are on the cusp of a \$1.5 trillion intergenerational wealth transfer that equates to more than one-third of India’s GDP. This underscores the importance of robust succession planning to ensure the seamless transition of wealth and business leadership. Sandeep Batra, head, international wealth and premier banking, HSBC India, said: “India’s family-owned businesses are balancing legacy preservation with modernity.

UK’s Prudential to float venture with HCL group for health insurance



Prudential plc, Prudential plc joint venture with Vama Sundari Investments, Vama Sundari Investments (Delhi) Private Ltd, HCL Group, Indian express business, business news, current affairs Apart from 27 non-life insurance companies, seven standalone health insurance firms are already operating in India. UK-based insurance giant Prudential plc has announced its plan to establish a joint venture with Vama Sundari Investments (Delhi) Private Ltd, an HCL Group’s promoter company founded by Shiv Nadar, to operate a standalone health insurance business in India.

Subject to obtaining regulatory approvals, Prudential Group Holdings, a UK subsidiary of Prudential plc, will hold a 70% stake in the joint venture, while Vama will hold the remaining 30% stake. Prudential plc is a member of the UK FTSE100 Index. Prudential’s announcement comes three days after the exit of German insurance giant Allianz from joint ventures with the Bajaj group. In India, Prudential’s business primarily consists of a 21.97 per cent holding in the Indian Stock Exchange listed life insurance business, ICICI Prudential Life, and 49 per cent of the asset manager, ICICI Prudential Asset Management Company Limited, through its asset management business Eastspring Investments.

Anil Wadhvani, CEO, Prudential plc, said: “India is a key strategic market for Prudential and we have a deep connection with the country having opened our first branch in Kolkata in 1923. Today, we have a significant presence with life insurance and asset management businesses provid-

World’s first human bladder transplant: Why this can help manage kidney issues

world’s first human bladder transplant The surgery was performed on a 41-year-old patient who had previously lost most of his bladder during a tumour removal process, leaving the remainder too small and compromised to work. In a first, doctors at University of California, Los Angeles Health and Keck Medicine University of Southern California have performed a human bladder transplant, which can be a game changer for people suffering from bladder dysfunction because of long-time dialysis. The surgery was conducted on May 4 by UCLA urologic transplant surgeon Dr Nima Nassiri and founding executive director of the USC Institute of Urology, who had been working for years to develop and refine the surgery technique. The surgery was performed on a 41-year-old patient who had previously lost most of his bladder during a tumour removal process, leaving the remainder too small and compromised to work. Both of his kidneys were also subsequently removed due to cancer and end-stage kidney disease, and he had been on dialysis for seven years.

The complex procedure involved the transplantation of both a new bladder and a new kidney, recovered from a donor. The doctors first transplanted the kidney, followed by the bladder; they then connected the kidney to the new bladder using the technique they had pioneered. The entire procedure lasted approximately eight hours. According to Dr Nassiri, the results were quickly evident. “The kidney immediately made a large volume of urine and the patient’s kidney function improved immediately. There was no need for any dialysis after surgery, and the urine drained properly into the new bladder.”

Why is this surgical technique significant?

According to Dr Nikhil Khattar, associate director, urology, PSRI Hospital, Delhi, the goal of the transplant was to restore urinary function using a donor organ. Unlike previous reconstructions using intestinal tissue, which has limitations, this approach involved replacing the bladder with a real human organ to improve quality of life and bodily function. There are often situations where the bladder gets severely damaged, particularly in conditions like tuberculo-

ing a comprehensive offering of insurance and wealth products. Prudential plc (UK) provides life and health insurance and asset management in 24 markets across Asia and Africa. Apart from 27 non-life insurance companies, seven standalone health insurance firms are already operating in India. “India’s growing economy, population and middle class create significant opportunities for growth in its insurance market, especially in the health, savings, protection, and retirement sectors,” he said. “Transforming access to healthcare and increasing insurance penetration are strategic priorities for Prudential and through our comprehensive health solutions we aim to offer help to millions of Indian consumers when they need it most,” Wadhvani said. “Through this collaboration, we aim to advance our common mission to enhance access to quality health insurance and drive greater penetration across the country. It reflects our commitment to improving the well-being of millions of Indians and contributing to a stronger, more inclusive healthcare ecosystem,” said Shikhar Malhotra, Executive Director, Vama Sundari Investments.

The joint venture health insurance company will be led by industry veteran Amar Joshi (CEO designate), subject to regulatory approval. “The joint venture aims to address the growing healthcare needs of the Indian consumer and contribute to the Indian Government’s vision – ‘Insurance for All by 2047,’” Prudential said, adding that Prudential has over 100 years of history in Asia. HCL Group, founded in 1976 as one of India’s pioneering IT garage start-ups, has been at the forefront of modern computing, achieving several industry firsts, including the introduction of the 8-bit microprocessor-based computer in 1978, ahead of its global peers. Over the decades, the group has expanded its presence across diverse sectors, including technology, healthcare, and talent management solutions and comprises various companies including HCL Tech and HCL Healthcare. The HCL group generates annual revenues of over US\$ 13.8 billion with 220,000 employees operating across 60 countries. HCL Healthcare is one of India’s largest corporate health solutions firms and delivers full circle wellness through a tech-driven ‘phygital’ model of care.



sis, where it may shrink significantly after radiation therapy; or in cases of neurogenic bladder where the bladder loses its function. In such scenarios, we often need to reconstruct the bladder completely or at least enlarge it,” he says. The biggest problem with intestinal tissue is that it has the natural tendency to absorb whatever comes in contact with it unlike the bladder which stores and expels urine without absorbing anything. “If the patient has already lost one kidney, this reabsorption of waste adds additional pressure on the remaining kidney, which could be dangerous especially in patients with already compromised kidney function. In such cases, bladder transplantation becomes a significant and promising step,” explains Dr Khattar.

Can a transplanted bladder fully replicate the function of a natural bladder?

In this kind of transplant, muscular function may be limited and vascular coordination is more crucial. “Connecting the appropriate nerves and vessels is essential,” says Dr Khattar.

How will it help patients in India?

Although kidney transplants are common now, transplant surgeons don’t take up cases of patients who have weak bladder and kidneys. That’s because a new kidney will not help if the bladder is compromised. In that sense, this offers hope.

Govt looks for integration of unconventional datasets in census, other surveys

census, Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation, MoSPI, unconventional datasets in census, Indian express business, business news, current affairs The linking statistical data to geospatial locations and making it easily accessible to various data users was discussed in the session.

The government is looking to tap unconventional datasets and share alternative, administrative datasets with various stakeholders to enable integration with census and other surveys. In a brainstorming session on ‘Leveraging Non-Conventional Data Sources for Official Statistics’ held by the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI) on Thursday, discussions were held that there should be efforts to create an enabling environment to use all possible data sources — conventional and non-conventional — to use for decision making. “It was discussed that the ministries / departments may use the alternative datasets for the real time monitoring and tracking the decision variables. In addition, it also emerged that the ministries / departments may make available alternative / administrative datasets to various stakeholders so that their integration with census / survey data may become possible,” an official statement said. MoSPI Secretary Saurabh Garg urged representatives of the central ministries and departments including statistical advisors to explore the possibility of reusing datasets generated by the other agencies. “The culture of data sharing, however, maintaining the sanctity of Personally Identifiable Information (PII) must be fostered in the working of all the stakeholders,” the statement quoted him as saying. The session was attended by Kris Gopalakrishnan, Chairman, Axilor Ventures and co-founder of Infosys; Rana Hasan, Regional Lead Economist, South Asia, Asian Development Bank (ADB); and Shombi Sharp, UN Resident Coordinator (UNRC) among others. In total, 150 delegates attended the session. Gopalakrishnan stressed on the importance of non-conventional data by citing use of Aadhaar. He said there is a need for standardisation of various datasets, strengthening data processing capabilities, and developing data governance framework, adding that there should be a system to allow access

to private data, legally backed and for rightful usages. The linking statistical data to geospatial locations and making it easily accessible to various data users was discussed in the session. Ayago Wambile, Senior Economist, World Bank, spoke about different non-traditional data sources such as scanner data, mobile phone data etc. Tags:

Niloufer launches first AI-based diagnostic tool

Hyderabad: Niloufer Hospital has launched ‘Amruth Swasth Bharath,’ the first AI-based diagnostic tool in India designed for non-invasive blood testing that delivers results in under a minute.

Amruth Swasth Bharath, powered by Quick Vitals, signifies a step forward in healthcare technology, particularly within government hospitals. This innovative tool incorporates advanced AI and deep learning technologies through Photoplethysmography (PPG) to provide rapid health assessments tailored to the specific needs of the Indian population.

Prof Dr Ravi Kumar, Superintendent of Niloufer Hospital, said Amruth Swasth Bharath is particularly beneficial for children and pregnant women, facilitating regular and accessible health assessments.

Harish Bisam, Founder of Quick Vitals, added, “our mobile face scanning technology offers rapid access to crucial health information, effectively addressing existing barriers to healthcare access.” The Amruth Swasth Bharath tool employs Remote Photoplethysmography (PPG) and allows users to retrieve critical health parameters using their smartphones or tablets, including Blood Pressure, Oxygen Saturation (SpO2), Heart Rate, Respiration Rate, Heart Rate Variability (HRV), Stress Levels, Hemoglobin A1c, Pulse Respiratory Quotient (PRQ), Sympathetic and Parasympathetic Activity.

Bengaluru stampede: India coach Gautam Gambhir says there should not be roadshows ‘if we are not prepared’ to handle crowds



GNS News Agency, June 12

Gautam Gambhir on road shows: Saying that human lives are more important than celebrations, India coach Gautam Gambhir said there should not be any roadshows going forward ‘if we are not prepared to handle that kind of crowds’. Gambhir was speaking a day after 11 people died and 47 were injured in a stampede outside the M Chinnaswamy Stadium, where Royal Challengers Bengaluru IPL title celebrations took place. “I was never a believer that we need to have roadshows. Never. When I was playing, I had the same statement even after winning the 2007 (T20 World Cup)... The lives of people are far more important and I will continue to say that,” Gambhir said on Thursday ahead of the team’s departure for England, where they will play a five-Test series starting June 20.

Gambhir suggested conducting celebrations in a closed-door environment or a stadium in the future. “What has happened is very tragic. My heart goes out to the families who have lost their loved ones,” he said. “I hope in the future nothing like this happens because I think we all are responsible citizens. We should take care of all this.” The win triggered scenes of pandemonium in the streets of Bengaluru, and on Wednesday afternoon, approximately 3 lakh people turned up to enter the stadium, which has a seating capacity of 35,000. Tens of thousands also packed the roads to watch the open bus parade from Vidhana Soudha to the stadium, less than 2 km away. On Thursday, the Cubbon Park police registered a case against RCB, DNA Entertainment Private Limited, and the Karnataka State Cricket Association (KSCA) administration under various sections of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita.

The Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) had distanced themselves from the incident, saying they had ‘no control’ over the private celebration of a franchise. However, the board’s secretary Devajit Saikia called the stampede an ‘eye-opener’ and added that ‘we have to learn, so in future, no identical incident takes place.’ Gambhir, however, was unequivocal in his criticism of the idea of holding a road show. “Winning and celebrations are important but what is more important is someone’s life. If we are not prepared to handle that kind of crowd then (we) might as well not have these road shows. We are responsible citizens of this country and we need to show that in all of our actions,” he said.

Aryna Sabalenka ends Iga Swiatek’s winning run to reach final with composed, power-packed performance

GNS News Agency, June 12

As Aryna Sabalenka came out to serve in the deciding set of her French Open semifinal on Thursday, her head may have been clouded by doubt. She had been in control for much of the opening part of this match, only to see her opponent find a way back and have the momentum go her way. Iga Swiatek, a four-time champion in Paris, had performed plenty of miracles and comebacks in her 26-match winning streak at Roland Garros. However, the most telling aspect of Sabalenka’s rise up the rankings, as she established herself as the No. 1 player in the world and a multiple Major champion, has been her composure under pressure. No longer susceptible to the mental lapses of her youth, she now knows how to raise her game and go through the gears to win on the biggest stages.

That’s exactly what she would do. In an enthralling, two-hour-19-minute battle under the roof at Court Philippe Chatrier, the Belarusian would dethrone the best claycourter of the modern era, and decisively so, inflicting on Swiatek her first defeat in four years at Roland Garros. With the 7-6 (1), 4-6, 6-0 win, Sabalenka entered her first French Open title clash and her fifth Major final overall. “She’s the toughest opponent, especially on clay, especially at Roland Garros. It was a tough match, a tricky match, but I managed,” the 27-year-old winner said after the contest. Sabalenka’s pure hitting, power from the baseline, and serving class were enough to outplay Swiatek, but in reality, it was her composure in the final set that allowed her to pick up what is arguably the most significant victory of her Grand Slam career so far, given the opposition. It acted as the perfect build-up for Saturday’s final.

Following the 75-minute first set, the broadcasters would display a telling statistic. They have been rating return quality out of 10. In the first set, they rated Sabalenka’s as 9.8 and Swiatek’s as 9.4. The average in the women’s draw so far had been 6.5. As the match started, Swiatek’s serve was simply appalling; for her to not get blown away by her opponent’s power and accuracy, she had to step up on her returns and put equal pressure on Sabalenka’s serve, which she did. In the opener, Swiatek lost 21 of 35 points on



serve, her winning rate on her second serve standing at a dismal 31 percent. Call it a combination of clever, first-strike returning from Sabalenka, who leathered her shots straight back, and the Pole’s utterly ineffective serve. Down a double break at 1-4, Swiatek responded with aggression of her own, returning close to the baseline and taking bigger cuts, sometimes going for broke and hitting winners while returning thunderous first serves.

The result was a marathon first set full of momentum shifts, both players getting out of trouble by getting crucial breaks, trading three each as it went into the breaker, where Sabalenka’s superior serve blew the four-time champion away. But as she returned for the second set, Swiatek knew she had found her feet in the match and the right strategy.

She stayed true to it, turning up the aggression on return and taking a slender lead, following which it was the Pole who was more composed, incrementally improving her serve to level the match. While the momentum had gone Swiatek’s way, Sabalenka’s superior power and serve did not desert her. In this topsy-turvy match, it was now her turn to bounce back. She came up with two immaculate service games, in between which she found the decisive moment to rain down massive groundstrokes and find the break to take a 3-0 lead in the decider. She would not drop a single game from there as Swiatek crumbled, her focus wavering in front of Sabalenka’s newfound clean hitting.

‘We’ve lost our spot in the team, our contracts have been torn up,’ Oman cricketer Kashyap Prajapati



GNS News Agency, June 12

Oman, though, did not win a game in last year’s T20 World Cup 2024 in the USA, and the Caribbean has shown a lot of promise for the future. However, the 15-man squad did not receive the cash prize of 225,000 US dollars announced by the ICC for teams participating. According to the ICC the amount has been disbursed to the Oman Cricket Board but has not gone to the players yet. “Our lives have been upended over this issue; we’ve lost our spot in the team, our contracts have been torn up, and we have been forced to leave the country,” Kashyap Prajapati told ESPNcricinfo. “It’s just so confusing and we don’t understand why the ICC isn’t able to ensure we get paid the prize money we have earned, and why there isn’t a safe space for us to raise concerns?”

“It’s been a massive loss for my career and professionally,” said another player Fayyaz Butt, “I had to leave Oman. I’m not working at the moment, looking for opportunities but our playing careers are over.”

The issue was raised to the World Cricketers Association (WCA) when Oman was playing a tri-series in Canada. “In a sport that is trying to retain players in international cricket and ensure its future and relevance, it’s disappointing to see more non-payment issues, including in pinnacle ICC events held almost a year ago,” Tom Moffat, the WCA CEO, told ESPNcricinfo. “We understand ICC management have continued to chase the boards on this, but the issue reflects poorly on the whole sport and adds to the widespread issues in domestic leagues. There are simple solutions to this problem and whilst the majority of

boards do the right thing, it’s frustrating that some are still not. It’s also extremely concerning if some players are unable to raise their legitimate issues without fear of being punished for doing so,” he added.

Why Andre Russell disagrees with Virat Kohli’s IPL win is ‘five levels’ below Test cricket comment: ‘Different being from West Indies’

Andre Russell said he does not regret not having established a sound Test career, disagreeing with Virat Kohli’s take after the IPL 2025 win. (BCCI) Andre Russell said he does not regret not having established a sound Test career, disagreeing with Virat Kohli’s take after the IPL 2025 win. (BCCI) Caribbean all-rounder Andre Russell is set to return to the West Indies line-up for the first time since November 2024 during the forthcoming T20I series against England. Fresh from the IPL 2025 season, Russell said he has no regrets over his limited game time in his international career in the same timeline where he has established himself as one of franchise cricket’s greatest all-rounders.

Russell is one of a handful of cricketers to have won at least 10 T20 titles across the world, including multiple IPL titles with the Kolkata Knight Riders and T20 World Cup triumphs. However, the 37-year-old has only featured in one Test for the Windies and has not been a part of the 50-over set-up since 2019. Speaking to the Guardian, Russell said he did not look down upon the T20 cricket system and said it remains as important as any international assignment. Russell was responding to a question posed with regard to Virat Kohli’s recent admission after winning his maiden IPL title with Royal Challengers Bengaluru for the first time in 18 seasons. “This moment is right up there with the best moments I’ve had in my career. But it still marks five levels under Test cricket.

It will be pleasure to see Temba Bavuma lift WTC Trophy, says Graeme Smith



GNS News Agency, June 12

Hyderabad: Former South African captain, Graeme Smith, said it would give great pleasure to him to see captain Temba Bavuma and his group lift the World Test Championship against Australia in the final to be played at Lord’s from June 11. “We play for the ICC’s coveted mace, which is handed over to the No 1 Test team in the world. We’re right behind Temba and the team,” Smith said. “As the last man that held the mace at Lord’s in 2012, it would give me great pleasure to see Temba and this group of players lift it. All South Africans should unite and support the team on this important mission,” he said. For the record, Smith famously led the Proteas to the No.1 Test ranking after an epic match against England at Lord’s back in 2012 – a memo-

orable duel which went down to the final hour of Day Five. The former left-handed batter also holds the record for the highest score by an overseas batter (259) and returns regularly as part of the MCC Cricket Committee.

“Lord’s is a special, special place. Right from when I watched South African teams play there as a youngster, there were always positive memories,” Smith said. “There’s so much that comes with it and getting that out the way as you build into playing your games there is important. There’s nothing like walking down the stairs through those Member stands and out to a packed Lord’s,” he said. “It’s an incredible feeling, one of those goosebump moments in your career. It’s something that I really cherish. For me personally, in 2003, going there, getting a double hundred, winning the Test match and Makhaya getting 10 wickets is the most incredible first experience of Lord’s,” he recalled.

“In 2012 we were a team that was in its prime. We had so many incredible players, we were a great unit with a good coaching staff. We were tight, we were a family, and we had a lot of really outstanding players that had come in and been hugely successful.” The Proteas have enjoyed a golden run of ICC event form over the past two years. They reached the ICC Men’s World Cup semi-final, ICC Champions Trophy semi-final, the ICC Men’s T20 World Cup Final and now the ICC World Test Championship Final. “Betway SA20 has certainly helped to create a platform that gives players that exposure and then it’s up to the players to go and perform and to use that platform and take the opportunity,” Smith said. “Someone like Ryan Rickelton had been on the fringes for a while and seeing him use the platform at SA20 to go and elevate his game and almost put himself into a position across formats where he cannot be left out is incredible. He’s got to be one of the first names on every team sheet.

India’s two-time World Cup winner Piyush Chawla announces retirement from all formats at 36

GNS News Agency, June 12

Piyush Chawla announced his retirement from professional cricket at 36. Piyush Chawla announced his retirement from professional cricket at 36. (BCCI) India’s two-time World Cup-winning leg-spinner, Piyush Chawla, announced his retirement from all formats of professional cricket on Friday. “After more than two decades on the field, the time has come to bid adieu to the beautiful game,” the 36-year-old Chawla wrote in an Instagram post.

Featuring for India in the 2007 T20 World Cup and 2011 ODI World Cup triumphs, Chawla amassed over 1000 wickets across formats in professional cricket. Chawla played 3 Tests, 25 ODIs and 7 T20Is for India across six years till his last appearance in 2012, nabbing 43 wickets. Aged 17 years and 75 days when he first represented India in a Test match against England in March 2006, Chawla remains as India’s second youngest male debutant in the format after Sachin Tendulkar (16y 205d).

“From representing India at the highest level to being part of the victorious 2007 T20 World Cup and 2011 ODI World Cup squads, every moment in this incredible journey has been nothing short of a blessing. These memories will forever remain etched in my heart,” Chawla added. In a prolific IPL career spanned across four franchises, Chawla racked up 192 wickets in as many matches, with his last stint coming with the Mumbai Indians between IPL 2022-24. “A heartfelt thank you to the IPL franchises who placed their trust in me – Punjab Kings, Kolkata Knight Riders,



Chennai Super Kings, and Mumbai Indians. The Indian Premier League has been a truly special chapter in my career, and I have cherished every moment playing in it. I owe my deepest gratitude to my coaches – Shri K.K. Gautam and Late Shri Pankaj Saraswat for nurturing and shaping me into the cricketer I became.” “Today is a deeply emotional day for me as I officially announce my retirement from all forms of international and domestic cricket. Chawla made his final competitive appearance for Uttar Pradesh in the Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy in November 2024, recording figures of 4/12 at the Wankhede Stadium. “Though I step away from the crease, cricket will always live within me. I now look forward to embarking on a new journey, carrying with me the spirit and lessons of this beautiful game,” he concluded.

BWF Junior World Championships in Guwahati to witness trial for proposed new 3×15 scoring system; here’s what you need to know

GNS News Agency, June 12

A new, updated relay system will be used in the BWF mixed team tournament that usually precedes the individual events. A new, updated relay system will be used in the BWF mixed team tournament that usually precedes the individual events. The proposed new 3×15 scoring system will be implemented at the individual events at the upcoming BWF World Junior Championships 2025 in Guwahati in October, the Badminton World Federation (BWF), in collaboration with the Badminton Association of India (BAI), confirmed.

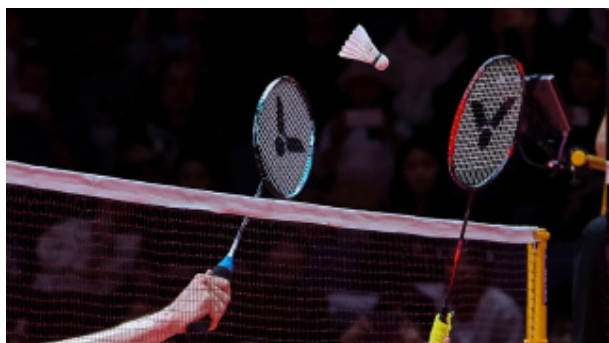
And a new, updated relay system will be used in the mixed team tournament that usually precedes the individual events. It will be a best of three sets up to 45 points, with each set comprising five matches – one of each event from men’s singles, women’s singles, men’s doubles, women’s doubles and mixed doubles. A version of the team relay system was first introduced at last year’s BWF World Junior Mixed Team Championships 2024.

In the individual tournament, the new three-by-15 scoring system will be trialled as part of the wider testing and analysis programme being rolled out by BWF. Both initiatives were approved by BWF Council at the recent BWF AGM in Xiamen, China.

What’s the 3×15 system?

Earlier this year, the BWF announced that the 3×15 system will be tested at selected Continental Championships, Grade 3 tournaments, national and international leagues, and national tournaments. The testing period is approximately April to September/October 2025. Towards the end of the testing period, BWF will survey key stakeholders at each tournament as well as an overall survey of all Members, Athletes’ Commissions (players), technical officials, and commercial partners. “BWF Council will make a final decision whether to propose this new system to the BWF Annual General Meeting 2026,” the governing body had said.

The 3×15 is already defined as part of the ‘Alternative Laws of Badminton’ – in simple terms, a match will consist of the best of three games. The game shall be won by the side that first scores 15 points (instead of the current 21). At 14-14, the game will continue to be played till one side gains a two-point lead first. In the current scoring system, 29-29 becomes the decisive point in a game, which will now change to 20-all. So the side scoring the 21st point will win the game in that scenario. As recently as 2021, there was a big push from BWF to change the scoring system to 11 x 5 (best of 5, with 11 points to win a game). It turned out to be an incredibly close vote at the 82nd BWF AGM. The 11x5 proposal received 66.31% votes for and 33.69% against, but it was marginally short of the two-thirds majority needed (>66.67%)



What was the Indian reaction to the new format?

BAI Secretary General Sanjay Mishra had said there was a mixed reaction from some of India’s top players when he sought feedback in February. “Our players are OK with a different system in leagues, but for the major events on tours, they think the existing system must continue. The feeling is that in a 15-point game, there is not enough time,” Mishra had told The Indian Express. “My opinion is that other Asian countries like China, Malaysia, and Indonesia may oppose it because it takes away their strengths of fitness and playing long rallies.” Among the players, HS Prannoy who admitted it might suit older players like himself in terms of recovery, wasn’t sold on the system still. “It may shorten matches, but I’m unsure how it will help the sport. A 21-game format match usually lasts about 70 minutes, which isn’t excessively long. If we’re aiming for better viewership, we should consider changing other aspects like scheduling, broadcast, etc rather than the scoring,” he had told this tally.

What’s BWF saying?

BWF Secretary General Thomas Lund praised BAI and the Guwahati organising committee for implementing these rule changes. “We are delighted to present a forward-thinking championships promoting innovation for badminton and reflecting a progressive and modern approach by BAI, Guwahati and BWF,” Lund said. “This is part of BWF’s wider long-term considerations for innovation in events and event delivery.

The broader goal remains to modernise badminton in ways that protect athlete wellbeing while making the sport even more exciting and engaging for global audiences. It is essential that this process remains inclusive and well-informed, with any future decision guided by evidence, wide consultation, and what is in the best interest of badminton worldwide. That’s why it is necessary to test such innovations in live tournament settings and it is great that we have the endorsement and backing from our Member in India and the city of Guwahati who share the same vision as us.”

As Ranbir Kapoor shoots for Nitesh Tiwari’s Ramayana, co-star Arun Govil says ‘no star is suitable to play Lord Ram’: ‘You can find someone outside’



With the first part of Ranbir Kapoor’s Ramayana all set to release in 2026, actor Arun Govil has expressed his concern in today’s actors being worthy of playing Lord Ram.

Govil, who is famous for his portrayal of Lord Ram in Ramanand Sagar’s Ramayan, said, “I don’t think anyone is suitable.” The actor’s statement has drawn significant attention, especially since he is part of Nitesh Tiwari’s Ramayana. In a conversation with NDTV, Arun Govil said, “Three-four people tried recreating it, but they were not successful. I don’t think in our lifetime someone should try to recreate Ramayan. As far as some actor playing Ram (is concerned), all the available actors, all the stars at this moment – I don’t think anyone is suitable. Maybe you can find someone outside the industry.”

Arun Govil’s statement has sparked a debate online with many fans expressing concerns regarding Nitesh Tiwari’s Ramayana where Ranbir Kapoor will be seen in the role of Lord Ram. Previously, actor Prabhas played the role of Lord Ram in Om Raut’s Adipurush, a retelling of Ramayana. That film, however, became a target of trolls for its poor VFC and colloquial language. Apart from Ranbir Kapoor and Arun Govil, the film will also star Sai Pallavi as Goddess Sita, Sunny Deol as Lord Hanuman, Lara Dutta as KayKay and KGF fame Yash as Ravana. Yash is also the co-producer of the film along with Namit Malhotra. Other actors who are expected to star in the film are Rakul Preet Singh, Anil Kapoor, Kunal Kapoor and Amitabh Bachchan.

Abhyanthara Kuttavali movie review: Asif Ali film claims to spotlight ‘issues faced by men’; but is that its true intent?

Abhyanthara Kuttavali movie review: At a crucial moment in debutant director Sethunath Padmakumar’s Abhyanthara Kuttavali, Sahadevan (Asif Ali) breaks the fourth wall and tells the audience directly, “Don’t bother reacting; after all, it’s a man who died.” He also, during a court hearing, comments on the rising number of suicide cases among men in the country, particularly owing to “marriage-related problems”. While the well-being of every person, regardless of caste, gender, race or creed, is equally important, and many experts have pointed out that patriarchy harms everyone, including men, Abhyanthara Kuttavali positions itself as an attempt to spotlight issues faced by men. Particularly focusing on how “fake cases” are slapped on them without humane consideration. However, in all honesty, the film ends up being a brazen attempt to overlook and invisibilise the harassment and crimes women have faced for centuries, mostly at the hands of men, by reducing it all to three cases (including two subplots) told through a masculinist lens, by completely villainising the female characters. Although his marriage to Nayana (Thulasi) was a joyous occasion for Sahadevan, his happiness was short-lived. He soon ends up at the Anthikad police station after she files a complaint accusing him of demanding more dowry and physically abusing her. As a result, the police register a case against him under Section 498A of the IPC (now Sections 85 and 86 of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita).

As Sahadevan narrates to the police the “truths” behind the incidents mentioned in the complaint, Abhyanthara Kuttavali cuts to flashbacks, in which we are shown that Nayana, though seemingly happy, has been keeping a distance from Sahadevan since day one. They barely even communicate, let alone have physical intimacy. Nayana soon tells Sahadevan that she wishes to pursue higher studies in the Netherlands, which would help settle there too, and suggests selling the gold ornaments her parents gifted her to fund it. When he objects, she is shown injuring herself. Her parents soon arrive and take her back home, following which she files the complaint. Once the case reaches the court, Sahadevan meets two other men — Peter (Sidharth Bharathan) and Makkar (Harisree Ashokan) — who are also dealing with unfair cases filed against them by their wife and daughter-in-law, respectively, as the system “only favours the women”. The remainder of the film follows Sahadevan’s efforts to prove his innocence. Although Abhyanthara Kuttavali mentions at the start that it is a “work of fiction”, the movie leaves no opportunity to generalise things and give good conduct certificates to men. This is achieved by cleverly portraying the male characters as noble and good-natured, albeit with some flaws like occasional drinking, while most of the women are depicted as apathetic, manipulative and often “gold diggers”. From Sahadevan, his father Menon (Balachandran Chullikkad), and his friends Yudas (Anand Manmadhan) and Deshavasi (Azees Nedumangad) to Peter and Makkar, all the men are portrayed with sympathy, their moral grey areas conveniently omitted. Even Viswanathan (Jagadeesh), Nayana’s lawyer, is ultimately shown in a positive light.

In contrast, nearly all the female characters, except for elderly women who conform to the patriarchal norms of the “ideal mother”, are presented as greedy and lacking compassion. To reinforce this, the film even includes a scene where a woman is shown asking Yudas about his financial assets in detail during a pennukaanal (matchmaking visit), prompting him to give a lecture on how women should fend for themselves. In another instance, one of the few self-reliant women in the film, Anila (Shreya Rukmini), an assistant to Sahadevan’s advocate, is shown sitting silently in court during the only time she appears on her senior’s behalf without speaking up for her client. Although the scene suggests that she is too inexperienced and intimidated to argue in front of Viswanathan, prompting Sahadevan to represent himself, it inadvertently implies that even women who do have a voice choose not to speak up when men are the victims, leaving the latter to fight for themselves. The film is, in fact, packed with similar stereotypical and misogynistic narrative devices that reduce the complex topic of “issues faced by men” to “women are misusing the laws (and the freedom they have been ‘given’)”. It fails to even acknowledge the structural and systemic challenges men face within a patriarchal and elitist society, where only the rich and affluent wield real power.

Towards the end, seemingly in an attempt to suggest that the film isn’t anti-women, Abhyanthara Kuttavali shows Nayana and one of her friends briefly addressing their life struggles. ‘Interestingly’, this is one of the few occasions wherein the movie gives the women the chance to narrate their stories. Almost all other times, we are only shown the men’s versions. While Nayana’s friend shares how she lost a hand due to violence inflicted by her father, Nayana herself recounts how harassment by a teacher made her detest men and marriage altogether, prompting the two to decide to move abroad together and live in freedom. Nayana



mentions this as the reason why she agreed to marry Sahadevan, as it would give her complete ownership of the gold gifted by her parents, which would help them fund their dream. However, their stories appear only as passing references, quickly dropped after five minutes. Just a (rhetorical) question to the makers: what about the heinous crimes faced by these women? It is certain that these were only the tip of the iceberg of the torments they faced in life, including many forms of daily sexual harassment. Were their sufferings not as important as Sahadevan’s to get more screentime and a bit of empathy? While the film addresses the issue of false cases being filed against men, which in no way should be encouraged, it conveniently overlooks the many, many, many instances of women facing physical and emotional abuse within their own homes, the vast majority of which go unreported. A low conviction rate in such cases does not automatically imply that all cases are fabricated. It’s high time we acknowledged that reality. By presenting a one-sided narrative, writer-director Sethunath Padmakumar ensures that Abhyanthara Kuttavali caters to a male audience, particularly those who blindly believe that men’s victimhood exists solely because there are legal protections for the oppressed. The film offers these viewers enough ‘goosebumps-inducing’ moments, especially through quite a few dialogues that denounce alimony. Had men opened their mouths and moved their fingers as diligently and ferociously as they did following the Bengaluru techie suicide of December 2024, the world might have been a better place for all by now.

Although Asif Ali delivers a neat performance as Sahadevan, it can’t be called impactful, largely because the film relies heavily on dialogues to convey his emotions rather than allowing his acting to speak for itself. Nonetheless, there are moments in Abhyanthara Kuttavali where Asif’s strength as a performer in communicating intense emotions through restrained acting shines. Despite limited screen time, Harisree Ashokan makes a strong impression as Makkar. Azees Nedumangad and Anand Manmadhan provide some comic relief, though not all the jokes land consistently. Thulasi, as Nayana, is unfortunately underwhelming. There are several moments in the movie, especially those meant to depict her anger or sorrow, where her portrayal comes across as caricatured. Rahul Raj’s background score, however, does manage to elevate Abhyanthara Kuttavali to some extent and prevents it from slipping entirely into preachy territory. Abhyanthara Kuttavali movie cast: Asif Ali, Jagadeesh, Harisree Ashokan, Sidharth Bharathan, Thulasi, Shreya Rukmini. Abhyanthara Kuttavali movie director: Sethunath Padmakumar. Abhyanthara Kuttavali movie rating: 1.5 stars

Harshvardhan Rane reveals his plans for 'next three months'

Mumbai: Actor Harshvardhan Rane has revealed his plans for next three months, which includes his films, acing his psychology exams and going for wildlife photography. Harshvardhan took to his Instagram stories, where he shared a stunning picture of an owl that he took. For the caption, he wrote: “The plan for next three months. Finish Deewaniyat climax shoot. Ace psychology hrs exams in June end. Go for wildlife photography Head for Omung Kumar sir’s film.” • On June 3, Harshvardhan shared that he has entered the ‘final schedule’ of his upcoming film ‘Ek Deewane Ki Deewaniyat’ and stated the last two schedules have been a meditative filmmaking experience of his entire career. Harshvardhan shared a moment as he prepped for a shoot. Perched on a balcony, he sat calmly while getting his make-up done. The backdrop was breathtaking as it featured majestic mountains bathed in the golden glow of a rising sun. “

Sydney Sweeney opens up about leaked Euphoria 3 picture, says her character Cassie ‘is worse than ever’



Actor Sydney Sweeney knows how to break the internet in more than one way, sometimes with her roles, other times with everything she does outside the set. While she had started making a name for herself through several TV series such as The Handmaid’s Tale, Sharp Objects and Everything Sucks, the gig that transformed her into a household name was her role as Cassie in the HBO series

Euphoria. She recently made an appearance on the Tonight Show where she talked about leaks from the upcoming season and gave a small glimpse into what’s next. Sweeney, who was talking about her new dog, was put on the spot by Jimmy Fallon when he asked her about Euphoria season 3. She admitted that shooting was under-way and that she couldn’t reveal anything about the story, but then Jimmy took out a picture that got leaked, reportedly, from the sets of the show. In the picture you can clearly see Sydney in a wedding dress. Sydney said, “I can neither confirm nor deny that she gets married in the next season. What I can admit is that she is more crazy than ever. She is so much worse than before, but that is everyone’s favourite version of her.” She even tried to brush off the rumours by saying that the picture could be AI, but Jimmy was having none of it.

Sydney Sweeney also sent fans and the rest of the internet into a frenzy when she announced a collaboration with personal care product company Dr. Squatch. The company launched a limited edition soap that was infused with the actor’s bathwater, and while the Anyone But You actor faced some flack over this decision, fans were definitely excited for the product. Even famous YouTube star Mr Beast was hounded with requests by fans to buy them the soap, and he had to ask them to stop. Euphoria premiered in 2019, and the second season of the show came out in 2022. Created by Sam Levinson, the cast of the series also includes Zendaya, Jacob Elordi, Hunter Schafer, Maude Apatow, Alexa Demie, Eric Dane, and Austin Abrams, among others.

Salman Khan and Sanjay Dutt go global with The Seven Dogs by Bad Boys 3 directors, watch teaser

The first teaser for The Seven Dogs, a high-octane Saudi Arabian action-comedy, has been released, offering Indian audiences their first look at Bollywood stars Salman Khan and Sanjay Dutt in a global cinematic crossover. Directed by Bad Boys for Life and Ms. Marvel duo Adil El Arbi and Bilal Fallah, the teaser sets the tone with gritty visuals, high-stakes action, and an international flair. Though plot details surrounding Salman and Sanjay’s characters remain under wraps, the teaser hints at their pivotal involvement in the storyline. Salman appears in a sharp white suit, exuding suave intensity, while Sanjay makes a commanding entrance wielding a revolver, his presence oozing menace. Few months earlier, a leaked footage from the set added to the intrigue, showing Salman in a khaki uniform, zipping through crowded streets in an auto-rickshaw, suggesting his scenes are set in Mumbai. Sanjay, meanwhile, is rumoured to play a powerful figure operating in a Shanghai backdrop. Initially speculated as Salman Khan’s Hollywood debut, The Seven Dogs has since been confirmed as a major Saudi production, boasting a reported budget exceeding \$40 million. The film also stars prominent Arab actors Karim Abdel Aziz and Ahmed Ezz, reuniting after their blockbuster Kira & El Gin, one of Egypt’s highest-grossing films.

The movie follows Interpol officer Khalid Al-Azzazi, who captures Ghali Abu Dawood, an influential member of a secretive criminal organization known as the 7 Dogs. A year later, as the syndicate re-emerges with a dangerous new drug called “Pink Lady” flooding the Middle East, Khalid must team up with his former nemesis to stop the



spread. The Seven Dogs is set to be the first production shot at Big Time Al-Hosn Studios in Riyadh, with the studio doubling for global cities including Mumbai and Shanghai. It is scheduled for a theatrical release in late 2025.

Ranbir Kapoor reveals his new clean shaven look, fan says, ‘He looks like a 20-year-old’



Actor Ranbir Kapoor recently surprised fans by shedding his bearded look and appearing completely clean-shaven. The actor was seen wearing a red t-shirt and a cap from his clothing brand ARKS as he directed the

photographers to take pictures from a certain angle and then later posed for pictures with some of them. This look can be due to his ongoing role in Ramayan, in which he will be portraying the role of Lord Ram. In a video, Ranbir can be seen joking with the photographers as he walked down the flight of stairs and told them never to shoot him from a low angle. He then posed with a couple of them and even gave his hat away.

Fans flooded the comments of a video, swooning over Ranbir’s new look. One user wrote, “He looks like a 20-year-old,” while another commented, “Wake up Sid transformation in the 40s. Unbelievable.” Ranbir Kapoor had been rocking the beard for quite some time now, and he was last seen clean-shaven in Sandeep Reddy Vanga’s Animal, in which he also donned the long locks and facial hair. Ranbir Kapoor has a completely packed schedule on the professional front, with three projects in development simultaneously. The first project is Ramayan, directed by Nitesh Tiwari. The next is Sanjay Leela Bhansali’s Love and War, in which Ranbir will be seen sharing the screen with Vicky Kaushal and Alia Bhatt. The third project in the pipeline is Animal Park, which is a sequel to Animal. Despite the controversies and criticism, the movie made Rs 915 crore worldwide, and the sequel was hinted at the end of the film.

When Rajesh Khanna admitted he was ‘envious’ of Amitabh Bachchan: ‘I always acted as a romantic hero. Never did action films’

Rajesh Khanna, widely regarded as India’s first-ever superstar, remains an enduring icon in the history of Hindi cinema. The tales of his stardom, unprecedented and almost mythical in scale, still leave readers awestruck. Fans would gather in droves, his car would be smeared with lipstick, and his photographs were worshipped in homes. Such was the love and hysteria he commanded at his peak. But as with the nature of fame and life, the tides soon turned. The emergence of Amitabh Bachchan as the nation’s “Angry Young Man” gradually overshadowed the romantic image of Rajesh. While Rajesh’s stardom was meteoric, Amitabh’s proved to be enduring, with a legacy that continues to thrive even today. In an old interview with Lehren Retro, Rajesh acknowledged this shift, openly admitting to feelings of envy toward Amitabh’s lasting success. “He started working with me in Anand and now he has reached such great heights of fame. I not only congratulate him but also only wish the best for him. Always happy to see him grow. I envy him that he started with us and has come a long way. It’s a matter of great pride for me and everyone in the industry.” Yet, Rajesh didn’t hold back from taking a subtle jibe at the kind of cinema that rose to prominence during Amitabh’s rise — especially the shift toward action-



oriented narratives. Reflecting on his own legacy as the quintessential romantic hero, he remarked: “I always acted as a romantic hero. Never did action, nor did I have any ambition to do action films. Always did films which were high on emotions. Did romance, did comedy, did family. And to be honest, what’s greater emotion than romance? What a greater emotion than love? So I’m happy that I took that path.”