

TS TET Exams begin amid tight restrictions in Rachakonda

TS TET Exams begin amid tight restrictions in RachakondaIn light of the Telangana Teachers Eligibility Test (TET), Rachakonda Commissioner of Police Sudheer Babu has announced that BNSS Section 163 restrictions will be enforced within a 200-metre radius of examination centres. The exams are scheduled to take place from today until the 30th of this month.Commissioner Babu advised that gatherings of more than four individuals are prohibited within the designated radius of the examination centres. However, exceptions will be made for police, army personnel, home guards, and flying squads on duty, as well as for funerals.

'Moment of much-needed reset': Lawmaker Sahney on PM Modi-Carney meet



GNS News Agency, June 18
New Delhi: Member of Parliament from Punjab, Vikramjit Singh Sahney, on Wednesday welcomed the agreement between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney to restore diplomatic representation by appointing new High Commissioners for both nations at the G7 Summit.Calling it a "moment of much-needed reset," Sahney said that this positive step would greatly ease the hardships faced by Indian citizens, especially the NRI brothers and sisters, who have long awaited regular and timely visa services to visit their families and homeland.

Emphasising the economic implications of this renewed engagement, Sahney stated that with over \$8.2 billion in bilateral goods trade in 2024 and Canadian investments exceeding \$55 billion in India, there is vast scope to

expand cooperation."India imports over 63 per cent of its potash from Canada and is a major consumer of lentils and edible oils sourced from there. With restored diplomatic normalcy, we must energise this economic corridor to serve the interests of both nations," Sahney said in a statement here.

On the sidelines of the G7 Summit in Kananaskis in Canada, Prime Minister Modi met with Canadian counterpart Mark Carney in a pivotal bilateral meeting aimed at reviving strained ties between the two nations.According to India's Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri, the two leaders had a "very positive and constructive meeting" and agreed on "calibrated steps" to bring stability back to the relationship."Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Prime Minister Mark Carney of Canada have just a short while ago concluded a very positive and constructive meeting on the sidelines of the G7 summit here in Kananaskis in Canada," Misri said.The meeting underscored the mutual desire to strengthen India-Canada ties, which have seen recent tensions."The meeting discussed the importance of the India-Canada relationship, which is based on shared values, democracy and the rule of law, people-to-people contact and many other commonalities," Misri added.As an initial move, both leaders agreed to restore high commissioners to each other's capitals at the earliest opportunity."The Prime Ministers agreed to take calibrated steps to restore stability to this very important relationship, and the first of these steps that was agreed on was to restore high commissioners to each other's capitals at an early date. Other diplomatic steps will follow in due course," Misri added.

BRS to launch Statewide stir against Congress negligence towards Telangana irrigation projects



GNS News Agency, June 18
Hyderabad: In a significant move, the BRS is gearing up to launch a Statewide agitation against deliberate and criminal negligence of the Congress government

towards Telangana's irrigation projects.A high-level strategy meeting with top BRS functionaries, chaired by party president K Chandrashekhhar Rao, will be held shortly to finalise the action plan.The BRS would launch the agitation with a focus on the alleged abandonment of key irrigation projects which are in the final stages of completion. The Palamuru-Ranga Reddy Lift Irrigation Scheme, reportedly 90 per cent finished, and the Kaleshwaram Lift Irrigation Project, crippled under the pretext of structural issues, are expected to be deliberated during the discussion.The silence of Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy on these lifeline projects has drawn sharp flak from the main opposition, which sees this as part of a politically motivated strategy to stall BRS-era initiatives.The meeting is expected to chalk out protest plans, with the BRS preparing for an aggressive campaign exposing anti-farmer conspiracies of the Congress. Chandrashekhhar Rao is likely to speak about the deliberate neglect in taking up repairs at the Medigadda barrage.The BRS has been blaming the Congress government for hiding behind technical excuses, while deliberately starving nearly 10 lakh acres of farmland of water.

Maoists Gajarla Ravi, Aruna killed in encounter in Maredumilli forests in Andhra Pradesh



GNS News Agency, June 18
Kothagudem: Three Maoists, including one Central Committee member, were killed in an exchange of fire between the police and CPI (Maoist) Party cadres in the for-

ests of Maredumilli forests in Alluri Sitaramaraju district in Andhra Pradesh on Wednesday.

The Maoist Central Committee as well as Andhra Odisha Border Special Zonal Committee member, Gajarla Ravi alias Uday alias Birusu and AOB member Venkata Ravi Lakshmi Chaitanya alias Aruna were among the three naxals killed in the encounter. Another naxal was yet to be identified.Aruna was the wife of slain Maoist Chalapathi, who played a key role in the bomb attack on AP Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu in Alipiri forests in 2003. Her mother Mavi and brother Azad were also in the Maoist party and were killed in encounters in the past.According to sources, AP police launched search operations in Maredumilli forests following a tip off received on Tuesday evening about the presence of Maoists. The encounter took place early in the morning. An AK-47 rifle was recovered from the encounter spot.

Raj Thackeray blasts Maharashtra's Hindi as Third-language plan

GNS News Agency, June 18
Mumbai: Maharashtra Navnirman Sena (MNS) chief Raj Thackeray has told the Maharashtra government to drop its plan to introduce Hindi as a third language from Classes 1 to 5 in Marathi and Hindi medium schools. Branding the move "Hindi imposition," Thackeray said the policy threatens Marathi culture, literature, and identity.

Under a recent Mahayuti government resolution, Hindi would be offered, not mandatory as a third language. Any other Indian language can be chosen instead, but a class must have at least 20 students requesting it. If a school lacks a teacher, the subject can be taught online.He argues that once Hindi enters primary grades, Marathi will be sidelined, eroding local literature and heritage. He calls the move a distraction from "real issues" facing the state. Pointing to states like Gujarat, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, and Bihar, he asks why those regions are not required to

add a third language in the same way. Thackeray claims Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis had earlier assured him that Hindi would not become compulsory. He says children can pick up new languages later in life, so making them study an extra language from Class 1 is needless pressure.

In an open letter to principals, Thackeray urges schools to reject the directive. If pressured, he promises the MNS will "stand behind you like a rock." He warns administrators not to "aid the government's hidden agenda" and hints that MNS members will personally visit any school that willingly complies. He calls on journalists, writers, and citizens to voice strong, public opposition.Thackeray vows to monitor schools statewide and keep the issue in the spotlight. "We'll see which schools try to teach Hindi," he said, challenging the government to press ahead if it dares.

Work pressure drives young chartered accountant to suicide in Hyd

Hyderabad: A chartered accountant reportedly died by suicide at a service apartment in Kondapur on Wednesday. According to the police, Suresh Reddy Nirmal (28) booked a service apartment at SV Serenity Apartments at Raja Rajeswari Colony in Kondapur for two days. He worked with a private company at Manikonda. "Suresh bought a helium gas cylinder from the market and kept it in the room. He wore a plastic cover on his face, and it is suspected that he took a pipe and connected one end to the cylinder and inserted the other into the plastic cover. He died of asphyxiation," said the Gachibowli police.

Revanth Reddy inaugurates Google Safety Engineering Centre in Hyd



GNS News Agency, June 18
Chief Minister Revanth Reddy has officially inaugurated the Google Safety Engineering Centre in the city, marking it as the second facility of its kind in the Asia Pacific region and the fourth globally.This state-of-the-art centre aims to bolster secure digital services across the Asia Pacific, with the potential to create thousands of direct and indirect job opportunities within the IT sector.Minister Sridhar Babu was also present at the event, highlighting the significance of this development in enhancing the region's technology landscape.

On the other hand, Telangana Chief Minister Revanth Reddy is scheduled to visit Delhi on Wednesday night. During his trip, he will meet with former Prime Minister of the United Kingdom, Tony Blair, on Thursday. The discussions are expected to centre around key investment opportunities in Telangana.In addition to his meeting with Blair, it is anticipated that Reddy will engage with AICC leaders to address the filling of pending and nominated positions within the party. His itinerary includes meetings with party leadership and various Union ministers.

KTR slams Congress for betraying farmers; questions selective guarantees before local polls

GNS News Agency, June 18
Hyderabad: BRS working president KT Rama Rao on Tuesday said the Congress government was betraying the people of Telangana by failing to fulfil a long list of election promises. He questioned the timing of the Rythu Bharosa rollout for the ongoing Vanakalam (Kharif) season, calling it a tactic to influence the upcoming local body elections while neglecting previous instalments.

Rama Rao termed the release of Rythu Bharosa funds a smokescreen to divert attention from the government's unkept assurances. "Where is the promised bonus for paddy, financial assistance and one tola gold under Kalyana Lakshmi/Shaaadi Mubarak schemes, KCR kits and nutrition kits, Rs 2,500 per month under the Mahalakshmi scheme, electric scooters to young women, Rythu Bima, and the incomplete crop loan waiver?" he asked.Sharing a government advertisement from a vernacular daily on social media platform X, in which the Congress promised to implement its six guarantees within 100 days, Rama Rao said the party made false promises to win the Assembly elections and then swore by the Gods during the Lok Sabha polls."Despite not delivering



on the promises, they are now resorting to fresh gimmicks to woo voters ahead of the local polls," he said.Stating that Congress leaders were focusing more on securing posts than fulfilling their commitments to the people, he warned that the people of Telangana are closely watching the government's attempts to repack-age old promises without delivering results.

Nitin Gadkari Unveils 3,000 Annual FASTag Pass for Private Vehicles, Effective from August 15, 2025



GNS News Agency, June 18
New Delhi: In a major relief for private vehicle owners, Union Minister for Road Transport and Highways Nitin Gadkari has announced a new FASTag-based annual pass aimed at simplifying toll payments and reducing congestion on national highways. The pass, priced at ₹3,000, will be effective from August 15, 2025, and is exclusively designed for non-commercial vehicles such as cars, jeeps, and vans.Taking to social media platform X (formerly Twitter), Gadkari described the initiative as a "historic move" that will enhance travel efficiency for millions of private vehicle users across India. The annual pass will be valid for one year or up to 200 highway trips, whichever comes first from the date of activation. For a one-time fee of ₹3,000, users will be able to travel across national highways with seamless toll access, without needing to make payments at each toll plaza.

To ensure the process is user-friendly and easily accessible, the government will soon introduce a dedicated digital link for activating and renewing the annual pass. This link will be made available on the Highway Travel App and on the official websites of the National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) and the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways (MoRTH).One of the key aims of this initiative is to resolve a long-standing issue related to toll plazas located within a 60-kilometre radius,

which has been a source of inconvenience and frequent disputes. By introducing this prepaid pass, the government hopes to reduce waiting times, ease traffic congestion, and eliminate conflicts at toll booths—offering a smoother and more predictable travel experience for private vehicle drivers.With India's national highway network rapidly expanding, this FASTag annual pass marks another step toward the government's broader goal of modernizing road infrastructure and creating a more efficient, digital tolling system. The move has been widely welcomed by frequent commuters and travel associations, who see it as a practical, time-saving solution for everyday highway users.

PJR Flyover connecting Kondapur and Gachibowli to be inaugurated on June 28

GNS News Agency, June 18
Hyderabad: The Shilpa Layout Phase-2 flyover, connecting Kondapur with Gachibowli, is set to be inaugurated on June 28.Following a suggestion by Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy, the flyover will be named after former Minister P Janardhan Reddy and will be called the PJR Flyover.

In preparation for the inauguration later this month, Mayor Gadwal Vijayalakshmi has instructed officials to complete all beautification and remaining civil works on time.The new flyover is expected to ease traffic congestion for thousands of daily commuters and IT professionals. It will significantly reduce travel time between Kondapur, Gachibowli, and nearby areas such as Hitec City, Madhapur, the Financial District, and other adjoining localities.Spanning 2 km, the flyover was constructed for Rs 172 crore as part of the Strategic Road Development Plan (SRDP), executed by the Hyderabad Road Development Corporation Limited (HRDCL).

Indian Chronicle

English Daily

Ban on bike taxis is tip of the iceberg

'Haste makes waste' is an adage whose eternal relevance is apparently beyond the understanding of the Karnataka government, or it remains oblivious of its wisdom. A growing indication that the state government gives a damn to such moral lessons comes from the highhanded manner with which it slapped a sweeping ban on bike taxis running on the roads. To put it bluntly it smacks of an administrative arrogance that belies logic, one that has no concern for the people and their well-being.

The state government has become the laughingstock of the world while dangling the 'logic' it has employed to impose the absurd ban. It is not only maintaining that personal two-wheelers cannot be used as transport vehicles but has also remained firm that it would not formulate any bike taxi policy, which is even more ironic as such a policy could have streamlined its functioning as also keeping the aggregators under check. To be fair enough to the officialdom, it was not an overnight decision. The state transport department has maintained that it was illegal for owners of two-wheelers to register their vehicle for commercial purposes like bike taxi services. Eventually it set a June 15 deadline for the aggregators to fall in line or face the consequences.

Buoyed by the High Court's refusal to stay the order, the Karnataka government is sticking to its guns-personal two-wheelers cannot be used as transport vehicles. The court upheld the state's contention that two-wheelers used for commercial passenger transport require specific registration and permits that are currently non-existent for bike taxis. This is even as there is a mounting demand by the industry body and users for a regulatory policy for bike taxis.

Rs 2,434 crore 'fraud': CBI opposes Jai Corp, Anand Jain's pleas against FIR

GNS News Agency, June 18

The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) on Wednesday opposed the pleas filed by Jai Corporation Ltd and its promoter Anand Jaikumar Jain before the Bombay High Court challenging the FIR registered by the central agency alleging serious financial irregularities by the company and its promoters. The central agency had alleged defrauding of funds to the tune of Rs 2,434 crore from the public investors in real estate projects among other irregularities. A division bench of Justices Ajay S Gadkar and Rajesh S Patil was hearing pleas by Jai Corp and Jain seeking quashing of the FIR. The CBI, through advocate Kuldeep Patil, sought dismissal of the plea stating that the investigation in the matter was still in progress. The central agency justified its FIR stating that it was initiated based on the HC order of January 31. The CBI on February 12 had constituted a five-member SIT led by its DIG Sarah Sharma to probe the allegations. The HC granted two-week time to file reply to the plea to respondent Shoaib Richie Sequeira, the original complainant who had approached the HC through earlier petition seeking preliminary probe in the matter. The court also granted further two-week time to petitioners to file rejoinder to CBI and Sequeira's reply and postponed further hearing after four weeks. The central agency had claimed that Jai Corp Ltd with Jain, its sister concerns, their directors and promoters, one Parag Shantilal Parekh and other unknown private persons have "committed offences of criminal conspiracy, dishonestly inducing delivery of property, making forged documents for the purpose of cheating, using as genuine the forged documents and thereby caused wrongful gain to themselves." The Jai Corp and Jain in April filed writ pleas in the HC seeking quashing of the CBI FIR and other interim reliefs, claiming that the action against them was arbitrary. On March 17, the Supreme Court had disposed of the appeal by Jai Corp against Bombay High Court order directing CBI Zonal director to form an SIT to conduct thorough probe into the allegation of fraudulent activities to the tune of Rs 3,000 crore by Jain. On January 31, the Bombay HC bench led by Justice Revati Mohite-Dere had passed a judgment on a plea by 61-year-old Sequeira. The HC had noted that there were "national and international ramifications in the case." The HC had also expressed disappointment over conduct of EOW and CBI showing inability to conduct a probe and stressed on the need for fair and efficient probe. The SC appreciated "courage" shown by HC judges to pass the said verdict.

The CBI FIR in question has listed allegations including that "during May 2006 and June 2008, Jain and his group in their individual capacity and as directors/promoters of Jai Corp. Ltd., in conspiracy with sister companies of Jai Corp. Ltd., floated two entities i.e. Urban Infrastructure Venture Capital Ltd. and Urban Infrastructure Trustees Ltd." As per the FIR, they "mobilised funds to the tune of Rs 2,434 crore from the public at large, for the scheme of Urban Infrastructure Opportunities Fund for the purpose of real estate business at Mumbai & other places." The FIR further stated that "on June 31, 2006, Indenture of Trust (IOT) was registered by the two entities with Registrar of Assurances, Mumbai as settlor and trustee, to establish a venture capital fund and got it registered with the SEBI. "The disclosure of interest in the IOT allegedly stated that "no transaction arrangement or investment will be made with another person with whom the director, officer, employee, etc. has some relationship and create conflict of interest". The central agency said that in contravention of the declaration, the accused persons "cheated the public at large and diverted funds by way of making investments/giving unsecured loans within the sister concerns." The CBI further alleged that sister concerns of Jai Corp, over the years, showed the unsecured loans as losses on the basis of false and fabricated documents, so as to justify the constructions/real estate projects. Moreover, these corporate entities too "executed forged agreements against advance paid for the purchase of benami land to justify the losses." The CBI, in its FIR dated February 18, 2025, alleged that through criminal conspiracy, Jain, one Parag Shantilal Parekh, and their group diverted part or whole of Rs 2, 434 crore collected from investors by the two entities in 2006-07 to Mauritius and/or Jersey Channel Islands for incorporation of corporate entities at these places so as to divert the money collected from investors and banks. The FIR further stated that part or whole of Rs 3,252 crore availed as loan from Banks in 2006-07 by Navi Mumbai SEZ Pvt Ltd or part or whole of Rs 686 crore availed as loan from banks by the said company in 2003-04 too was diverted to the Mauritius and/or Jersey Channel Islands.

Indicators of Adulterated Loose Tea

Attributed to Dr. Addu Kiranmayi, Nutritionist, Tata Tea Chakra Gold Gemini



Hyderabad; Tea is an essential part of daily life for millions worldwide, and its significance is only growing. With global production surpassing 5.8 million tons in recent years, the tea industry has expanded rapidly. In India, tea remains a beloved beverage, with consumption steadily increasing. In 2022 alone, India consumed around 1.2 billion kilograms of tea, a testament to its cultural and social importance. However, the increasing demand for tea has led to a rise in adulteration, where foreign substances are added to tea to cut costs and boost profits. This article explores the indicators of adulterated loose tea and offers practical steps for consumers to identify and avoid such products. As economic globalization progresses, tea safety has become a growing concern, especially since adulteration is more common in loose tea than in branded varieties. Ensuring pure, unadulterated tea is the consumer's right, and fostering trust between retailers and consumers is essential.

Understanding Tea Adulteration

Tea adulteration involves mixing inferior substances into tea leaves to enhance appearance, increase weight, or alter the taste. These contaminants range from harmless fillers to dangerous chemicals, driven by the demand for cheaper products. This practice often leads suppliers to compromise on quality. The consequences of consuming adulterated tea can range from mild digestive issues to severe long-term health problems.

Common Adulterants in Loose Tea

- Unnatural Colouring Agents:** To make tea leaves appear fresher and more vibrant, some suppliers use synthetic dyes, which are often toxic and can cause health issues over time.
- Used Tea Leaves:** A common practice is mixing used tea leaves with fresh ones. These re-dried leaves increase the volume but significantly reduce the tea's quality and taste.
- Harmful Chemicals:** Some tea producers add chemicals like lead chromate or copper salts to enhance the tea's appearance. These substances are highly dangerous and can lead to serious health complications, including poisoning.
- Filler Materials:** Low-quality tea often contains filler materials like twigs, sand, or starch. These are added to increase weight but degrade the overall quality and taste of the tea.

Identifying Adulterated Loose Tea

Although adulteration can be challenging to detect, several indicators can help consumers ensure they are buying pure, high-quality tea:

Eminent Leadership Takes Charge: Manthani Friends Club Elects Dynamic New Executive Committee



"PS Ashokan"Indian Chronicle"Manthani, June 18" "In a vibrant display of democratic spirit, the Manthani Friends Club ushered in a new era of leadership with the successful election of its executive committee on Sunday night. The newly constituted body will steer the organization for the forthcoming one-year tenure. "At the helm, Sri Sripathi Banaiah was elected as President, while Sri Suvarna Ganapathi assumed the pivotal role of General Secretary. Sri Mandala Satyanarayana was chosen as Vice President, with Sri Malka Gopal and Sri Komuraju Srinivas taking charge as Joint Secretaries. The position of Treasurer was entrusted to Sri Birudu Madhusudan. "Adding strength to

the leadership panel, the following members were elected as Executive Committee Members: "Sri Ravikanti Satish, Sri Mende Rajayya, Sri Naredla Srinivas, Sri Akula Rajababu, and Sri Gattu Shivashankar. "The electoral process was conducted in an orderly and transparent manner under the vigilant supervision of Sri Gangadhar, who served as the Election Officer. "On this momentous occasion, PCC State General Secretary Sri Duddilla Srinu Babu extended his heartfelt congratulations to the newly elected team. In his address, he encouraged the committee to lead with foresight, execute with excellence, and serve with integrity. He emphasized that each role is not merely a title, but a responsibility to uphold the prestige of the organization. "Manthani Friends Club holds a distinguished reputation in the community. I urge the new leadership to act with innovative thinking and strategic planning to take the club to even greater heights," he remarked. "The new committee members, in a mark of respect and gratitude, felicitated Sri Srinu Babu with a ceremonial shawl, acknowledging his continued guidance and unwavering support. "This newly formed leadership team is poised to infuse fresh energy and progressive vision, setting the tone for impactful initiatives and community engagement in the year ahead.

MLA M.S. Raj Thakur Undertakes Inspection of Maisamma Temple Reconstruction at Basanthnagar Railway Bridge — Emphasizes Swift and Devotional-Centric Development.

"PS Ashokan"Indian Chronicle"June,18"Ramagundam Assembly Constituency MLA, Sri M.S. Raj Thakur, conducted an on-site inspection of the ongoing reconstruction works at the historic Maisamma Temple, situated atop the Basanthnagar Railway Bridge. During the visit, the legislator issued firm directives to the concerned authorities to accelerate the pace of the construction, ensuring timely completion without compromising on architectural integrity. "He underscored the need for the temple to be developed in a spiritually resonant and expansive manner, aligning with the deep-rooted religious sentiments of the local devotees.

He instructed officials to initiate all necessary infrastructural measures to facilitate a comprehensive and aesthetically enriched redevelopment of the sacred site. "Accompanying the MLA, Smt. Manali Raj



Thakur, his spouse, also participated in the inspection.

She emphasized that the devotees' comfort and spiritual experience should

be central to the development, advocating for a blend of structural quality and executional speed. "The inspection program also witnessed the active participa-

tion of several local leaders, elected representatives, and administrative officials, who extended their support towards the successful realization of the temple's reconstruction.

Students should be careful not to drop out: ITDA Project Officer B. Rahul



"Bhukya Ranjith Naik, Bhadradi Kothagudem, June 16 (Indian Chronicle): Since the Tribal Welfare Department has started Gurukul colleges, the concerned principal and teachers should take special care to ensure that all students do not drop out of college and come to the colleges. On Wednesday, he visited the Gurukul Boys' College in Krishna Sagar, Burgampadu mandal. He inspected the classrooms, hostel, kitchens, surroundings, and store rooms of the college and inquired about the accommodation facilities in the college with the students. Speaking on the occasion, he said, "Since the college started, who are the students?" The principal should be responsible so that everyone joins the college without option; timely nutrition should be provided to all students according to the new menu; the concerned principals should observe the students and give them advice and suggestions from time to time; and since the District Collector has provided sports equipment at a cost of Rs 12 lakhs, students should be trained to play their favorite sports and devote time to sports every day. He said that the health condition of the students should be monitored, as they have been acclimatizing to their village environment for many days and have come to the college. He said that the students should also follow the instructions and advice of the principal and teachers and should not neglect their studies; they should make plans to study well from now on and pass with the best marks and keep trying till they achieve what they want in the future. He advised the principal to prepare proposals immediately and send them to him if any minor repairs are done to the college. Principal of the college Devadas, teachers, students, and others participated in the program.

Advisory issued to owners of hoardings along Palkhi routes



As the industrial city gears up to welcome the revered Palkhi processions of Sant Tukaram Maharaj and Sant Dnyaneshwar Maharaj on June 19 and 20 respectively, the Pimpri-Chinchwad Municipal Corporation (PCMC) has issued a formal advisory to all authorised hoarding owners to ensure safety norms are strictly adhered during the procession.

GNS News Agency, June 18

Palkhi procession 2024, PCMC hoarding advisory, Sant Tukaram Maharaj Palkhi, Sant Dnyaneshwar Maharaj Palkhi, A notice was issued to all 1,494 hoarding agencies operating within the municipal limits. (Express file photo) As the industrial city gears up to welcome the revered Palkhi processions of Sant Tukaram Maharaj and Sant Dnyaneshwar Maharaj on June 19 and 20 respectively, the Pimpri-Chinchwad Municipal Corporation (PCMC) has issued a formal advisory to all authorised hoarding owners to ensure safety norms are strictly adhered during the procession.

A notice was issued to all 1,494 hoarding agencies operating within the municipal limits, particularly those with structures along the Palkhi routes — from Nigdi to Dapodi, Dehu to Alandi, and Dighi to Bopkhel. The civic body has directed hoarding owners to immediately inspect the structural stability of all their installations and undertake any additional reinforcements required, considering the large public footfall expected, officials said. Deputy Commissioner of the Sky Sign and Licensing Department, Rajesh Agale, said, "All hoarding structures along the Palkhi routes have valid permissions and up-to-date structural stability certificates. However, as a precautionary measure, we have issued a written instruction to every agency to verify once more the condition of their hoardings and implement any necessary safety measures. In case of any untoward incident, the concerned agency will be held responsible." According to the safety inspection report, from Bhakti Shakti Chowk to Dapodi, 71 hoardings have been verified over an 11-km stretch. From Charholi Phata to Bopkhel Corner, 64 hoardings were found on a 12-km stretch. On the Dehu—Alandi route within municipal limits, 80 hoardings are installed across a 15-km stretch. All hoardings are reported to be authorised, with sizes not exceeding 40x20 feet.

While no unauthorised hoardings were found during the inspection, PCMC has clarified that if any safety concerns arise, swift action will be taken. The civic administration is also ensuring that departments such as disaster management, traffic, and sanitation are completely prepared to facilitate a safe and smooth passage for lakhs of devotees walking along the routes. "The Palkhi procession is a matter of cultural and spiritual importance. It is our collective responsibility to ensure devotees have a safe environment. We request full cooperation from all hoarding agencies in maintaining safety standards," said PCMC chief Shekhar Singh.

Community Connect Program Under the Police



“Bhukya Ranjith Naik, Bhadradi Kothagudem, June 16 (Indian Chronicle):”On the orders of District SP Rohit Raju IPS, the police organized a community contact program in the village of Dameratogu in Gundala mandal on Wednesday. Bhadradi Kothagudem District Additional SP Operations G. Narendra participated as the chief guest in this program. Speaking on the occasion, he said that the

tribal people should not cooperate with the Maoists under any circumstances. He said that the people should cooperate with the government and move towards development. He said that they should not cooperate with the Maoists who are obstructing development. He said that the Maoists have outdated ideologies. Speaking in Illandu, DSP Chandrabhanu said that youth and children will reach high positions only through education. He advised that people should not be unnecessarily involved in cases and jailed by cooperating with anti-social forces and engaging in illegal activities. The officials advised people to keep the surroundings around their houses clean during the rainy season, as excessive accumulation of sewage water increases the number of mosquitoes and increases the risk of contracting toxic diseases like dengue, malaria, and typhoid. Later, Additional SP Operations and DSP Chandrabhanu Gar distributed 50 mosquito nets to the people living in Akka. They distributed notebooks and pens to the children. They said that they would talk to the concerned officials and resolve the mobile network issues soon. Additional SP Operations Narendra specially congratulated Pranik Healing Foundation member Pasha, who helped in the distribution of mosquito nets. Gundala CI Ravinder, SI Rauf, Gundala police personnel, and special party personnel participated in the program.

Garbage should not be thrown in restricted areas. ITDA PO Rahul



should take responsibility for not dumping wet and dry garbage in the vicinity of the embankment, and if necessary, staff should be kept on guard there. On Wednesday, the area was inspected along with Panchayat EO Srinivas after the garbage was burnt at the embankment and smoke was coming out. Speaking on the occasion, the PO said that devotees from different states come to Bhadrachalam Sri Seetha Ramachandra Swamy Temple in large numbers for darshan and go for a holy dip in the nearby Godavari, and he wanted to ensure that the area is kept clean. The garbage collected in the wards of the town should be dumped in the newly constructed dumping yard, and dumping garbage near the embankment will spread mosquitoes, and people will have to suffer from many diseases. He also suggested that the people should cooperate with the Panchayat staff and throw wet and dry garbage only in the tractor and not throw garbage wherever it falls. As garbage was burning next to the embankment, the fire was brought under control by fire personnel using a fire engine. Panchayat personnel participated in this program.

“Shaik Sharief, Bhadrachalam, June 18 (Indian Chronicle): ITDA PO Rahul said that the Panchayat EO

127 drownings in 10 years expose safety lapses at Basar temple’s Godavari River ghats



Temple management has also come under fire. Locals alleged that officials and elected representatives are showing negligence in the administration of the renowned temple. The shrine is largely being run by in-charge executive officers, with review meetings conducted only once during full moon days, leaving key administrative issues unaddressed. Locals demanded the installation of warning boards and cautionary signage at the ghats to alert devotees. They also urged the authorities to develop a system to update pilgrims about flood conditions and river water levels. The identification of black spots, areas where drownings recur, and deployment of rescue teams were among their key suggestions. Termining Sunday’s incident “unfortunate”, Nirmal Collector Abhilasha Abhinav said all necessary measures would be taken to prevent such incidents in the future. She directed officials to conduct a detailed review and ensure safety arrangements for devotees at the river. She added that restrictions would now be implemented strictly.

Hyderabad Police nab eight for drug peddling in Masab Tank

GNS News Agency, June 18
Hyderabad: The Commissioner’s Task Force (West Zone), in coordination with the Masab Tank police, apprehended eight individuals allegedly involved in drug peddling and consumption.

According to the police, the main accused, Mohammed Faizan, a resident of Masab Tank, along with five associates, was regularly selling narcotic substances to addicts across the city. The group reportedly sourced the drugs through known contacts. Two habitual buyers were also taken into custody. During the operation, the police seized 375 ml of hashish oil, 175 grams of ganja, two knives, and three motorcycles from the suspects.

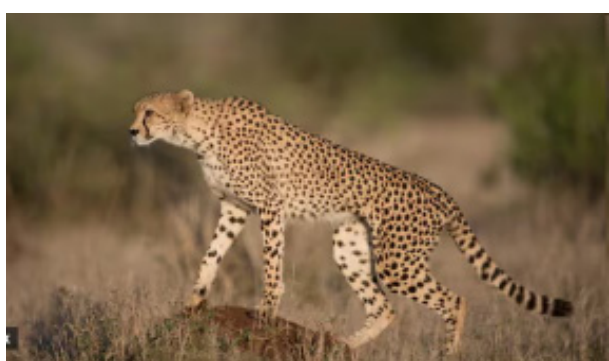
Chimpanzee, cheetah, jaguar and puma: Bengaluru’s Bannerghatta zoo to get new inmates, minister Eshwar Khandre flags off first EV safari

GNS News Agency, June 18

The Bannerghatta National Park in Bengaluru will soon exhibit 10 new species of animals, including chimpanzee, hunting cheetah and jaguar, announced Karnataka Forest, Ecology and Environment Minister Eshwar Khandre while inaugurating the first electric bus safari in the country at the zoo Wednesday. In the next four to five months, the zoo will receive hunting cheetahs and capuchin monkeys from a South American country as part of an exchange programme for other animals, the minister said. The next year, the zoo will get a chimpanzee, a jaguar and a puma, along with other animals, the minister added. With this, the number of species displayed at the zoo will be close to 115.

“To reduce emissions from diesel vehicles within the park, electric vehicles are being introduced for the first time in India on a pilot basis,” Khandre said, adding that tourists can see tigers, leopards, lions, and bears during the safari.

The first electric bus was launched on Wednesday. It’s a 22-seater equipped with a 100 kWh battery, capable of completing eight trips totalling 60 km on a two-hour charge. “Currently, one bus is in operation. By 2027, the entire fleet will be free of fossil fuel-powered vehicles, with the exception of tractors and similar vehicles,” Khandre said. In May,



the zoo recorded 2,58,000 visitors, marking a new high. According to officials, the leopard safari is the main attraction. To tackle the traffic congestion caused by the influx of tourists at the Bannerghatta zoo on weekends, a smart parking system will be put in place and a tender for this system will be issued soon, the minister said. There is a proposal to construct a large aquarium near Bannerghatta National Park. A detailed project report will be prepared, and tenders will be invited soon for this project, Khandre said.

Political sparring erupts in Bengal after Calcutta High Court stays new OBC list

GNS News Agency, June 18

West Bengal OBC list, Calcutta High Court OBC stay, Mamata Banerjee OBC list, TMC OBC reservation, Suvendu Adhikari on OBC list, Suvendu Adhikari (left) hailed the High Court decision to put an interim stay on the OBC list while TMC leader Kunal Ghosh (right) said it is a conspiracy by the Opposition. Political tensions escalated in West Bengal on Wednesday after the Calcutta High Court stayed the implementation of a new OBC reservation list introduced by the Trinamool Congress (TMC) government on Tuesday. The court order came days after Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee laid the revised list before the Assembly. A division bench of Justices Tapabrata Chakraborty and Rajasekhra Mantha directed the state not to take any action based on the list until July 31, when the matter will be heard next. Earlier this month, the West Bengal government had issued a notification expanding the OBC list to include 76 additional sub-castes, taking the total number of communities to 140. Of these, 80 are Muslim communities and 60 are non-Muslim.

The move triggered sharp criticism from the Opposition, with BJP and CPI(M) leaders accusing the TMC of indulging in vote-bank politics. Leader of Opposition Suvendu Adhikari said on X, “I extend my heartfelt gratitude to the Hon’ble Calcutta High Court for its landmark decision to stay the inclusion of 76 Muslim classes in the new OBC list prepared by the Mamata Banerjee government. This is a resounding victory of the judiciary against an arrogant state government that has repeatedly flouted constitutional norms for narrow political gains.”

Alleging religious bias in the reclassification, Adhikari said: “The TMC government’s blatant appeasement politics is evident from the disproportionate inclusion of almost 90% Muslim communities in the updated OBC list. Before TMC came to power in 2010, only 20% of OBC communities were Muslim. Under Mamata Banerjee’s regime, this number has skyrocketed, sidelining deserving Hindu and other non-Muslim communities who have historically required affirmative action.” He added, “Today’s stay order is a powerful reminder that the rule of law prevails over political opportunism.” CPI(M) central committee member Sujan Chakraborty also criticised the government at a press conference, saying: “The state government consistently misleads people on OBC reservation. The High Court had earlier cancelled an OBC list. Instead of rectifying the process, the government repeated the same mistakes. This is nothing but an attempt to mislead the people of Bengal.”



“Celebrating” the High Court order on Wednesday, the BJP distributed sweets in the legislative Assembly. TMC leaders slammed Adhikari for distributing sweets in the state Assembly following the order. “BJP is an anti-OBC party. One must look at the plot being conspired by Opposition leaders here. We have faith in judiciary but one must take note of who were the architects. The picture that is emerging is similar to what we have seen before. We have seen that in this High Court, those who made big statements on recruitment stepped aside to become BJP MPs. Now, they want to damage OBCs and create unrest,” said TMC leader Kunal Ghosh. “Their politics is creating legal hurdles whereas we work towards resolving issues,” Ghosh added. Launching a strong offensive against the BJP, TMC leaders on Wednesday slammed the Leader of Opposition. Addressing a press conference at Kolkata’s Trinamool Bhavan, TMC leader Arup Chakraborty said, “It is unfortunate to see that the one who has been appointed as the Leader of Opposition by the BJP is making such statements, which is a direct attack on India’s federal structure. Making such a statement means they are engaging in anti-national statements. People like Suvendu Adhikari give lectures on patriotism. He should be booked under UAPA for his remarks and the agencies should initiate an investigation against him.”

‘Provide full security’: SC directs Bihar, Delhi senior cops to ensure safety of minor girl seeking annulment of marriage



GNS News Agency, June 18

The Supreme Court Wednesday asked the Bihar director general of police and Delhi Police commissioner to provide security to a girl who was allegedly forced into a marriage with a contractor, and is now seeking its annulment after escaping from her in-laws’ house. A bench of Justices Ujjal Bhuyan and Manmohan also directed the senior police officers to ensure that no harm is caused to her or her friend who held her escape. The court also sought a status report from the police on the next date of hearing on July 15.

In her plea, the girl claimed to have been forcibly married to Bihar-based contractor Jai Shankar on December 9, 2024, when she was 16 and a half years old, towards the repayment of the debts owed by her parents. Alleging physical abuse by the 33-year-old man, she also sought the annulment of her marriage with him under the Prohibition of Child Marriage Act, 2006. “Her husband, who is a civil contractor, claimed that the petitioner’s parents were indebted to them and she would have to continue in the marriage rather than go for further studies to pursue her dream of becoming a teacher or a lawyer,” her plea said.

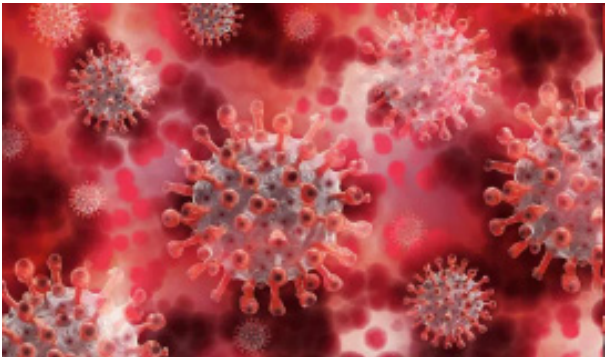
The girl also claimed that she was on the run with a friend, and feared for their lives if they returned to Bihar. She said she was sent away immediately after the wedding ceremony, even though her Class 10 board examinations were due to start. She said she had been assured that she would return to her parents after two days, but was not allowed to do so “by her in-laws who claimed to have given and spent a lot of money for the marriage and repeatedly told her that they wanted a baby.” “The petitioner is a hapless victim of child marriage who stands forlorn with no help from family and society in her fight to walk out of the abusive child mar-

riage and hence pleads for invocation of the parens patriae jurisdiction of this court in the best interest of the petitioner,” the plea added. In the order, the Supreme Court pointed out that the writ petition was filed by “a minor through her next of kin under Article 32 of the Constitution of India.” “Petitioner has alleged that she has been forcibly married off to Respondent No. 4 (contractor) despite the fact that she is a minor. She has not got the parental support required at this stage. On the other hand, Respondent No. 4 and his family members are now pursuing the petitioner and her next of kin. It is in these circumstances that the petitioner has approached this court seeking the following reliefs... Issue notice. We direct the Director General of Police, Bihar, as well as the Commissioner of Police, Delhi, to provide full security to the petitioner to ensure that no harm is caused to the petitioner and her next friend.” The top court also directed that necessary instructions be issued “to the police authorities to be in touch with the petitioner and her next friend”. “In case of any emergency, necessary assistance can be provided. Respondents Nos. 1 and 2 submit a separate status report in a sealed cover to the Court by the next date.”

WhatsApp to start showing ads to users in parts of messaging app

California: WhatsApp said Monday that users will start seeing ads in parts of the app, as owner Meta Platforms moves to cultivate a new revenue stream by tapping the billions of people that use the messaging service. Advertisements will be shown only in the app’s Updates tab, which is used by as many as 1.5 billion people each day. However, they won’t appear where personal chats are located, developers said. “The personal messaging experience on WhatsApp isn’t changing, and personal messages, calls and statuses are end-to-end encrypted and cannot be used to show ads,” WhatsApp said in a blog post. It’s a big change for the company, whose founders Jan Koum and Brian Acton vowed to keep the platform free of ads when they created it in 2009. Facebook purchased WhatsApp in 2014 and the pair left a few years later. Parent company Meta Platforms Inc. has long been trying to generate revenue from WhatsApp.

Study finds Covid protein may trigger immune system to attack healthy cells; New variant spreads globally



GNS News Agency, June 18

New Delhi: Amid a fresh wave of Covid-19, Israeli researchers have discovered that a protein from the SARS-CoV-2 virus can cause the immune system to attack healthy cells mistakenly. The study, published in the journal Cell Reports, sheds light on how severe Covid complications may occur and suggests new ways to prevent immune-driven damage from the virus, Xinhua news agency reported.

Researchers from the Hebrew University of Jerusalem found that the virus's nucleocapsid protein (NP), which normally helps package the virus's genetic material inside infected cells, can spread to nearby uninfected epithelial cells. Once on the surface of these healthy cells, NP would be mistakenly identified by the immune system as a threat.

Machaxi-Padukone School of Badminton to set up centre in Hyd

GNS News Agency, June 18

Hyderabad: Machaxi, a sports-tech company focused on grassroots coaching and digital sports infrastructure, has raised \$1.5 million in a round led by Rainmatter, the investment initiative of Zerodha. The round also saw participation from Indian badminton legend Prakash Padukone and existing investors. The funding will help Machaxi scale its operations beyond Bengaluru into three new cities—Hyderabad, Pune, and Chennai—while also building a The company's AI coaching system is designed not to replace human coaches, but to standardize training quality, assist in performance tracking, and ensure that the coaching model remains scalable. As part of the expansion, Machaxi is collaborating with the Padukone School of Badminton to launch the 'Machaxi x Padukone School of Badminton Programme'. This initiative aims to establish 1000 coaching centres across India within the next four years. A key feature of this partnership is the rollout of an AI-based coaching system that will help maintain consistency in training, regardless of geography or availability of expert coaches. "We always believed in the power of grassroots sports to transform communities. Machaxi's tech-driven approach to coaching, combined with a solid on-ground strategy, aligns perfectly with our mission at Rainmatter to back sustainable and impactful ventures," said Nithin Kamath, Founder of Zerodha & Rainmatter. For his part, badminton legend Prakash Padukone said he had always believed that the future of Indian badminton lied in structured grassroots development.

CM Siddaramaiah points to Congress high command, says re-enumerating caste population data not Karnataka govt's decision

GNS News Agency, June 18

A day after the Congress high command asked the Karnataka Government to re-enumerate the population figures of various communities in the state for its Socio-economic and Educational Survey, Chief Minister Siddaramaiah said the exercise was based on the directions issued by the party leadership and was not the decision of the state government.

Responding to media queries at Gowribidanur in Chikkaballapur district, Siddaramaiah said, "We will do whatever the high command says. It is not my decision. It is not the decision of the Cabinet. It is not the decision of our government. It is a decision of the high command. They have told us to go for re-enumeration," he said. The directions from the high command had come ahead of a special Cabinet meeting convened by the Siddaramaiah administration Thursday, which was said to be keen on accepting the report. The decision was announced by Congress general secretary K C Venugopal after the high command held a meeting with Siddaramaiah and Deputy Chief Minister D K Shivakumar.

The report had kept several communities on tenterhooks, especially the Lingayats and Vokkaligas who had publicly criticised it for being "unscientific". The high command has told us that they have received some complaints because the survey was done in 2015-16. Nine to 10 years have passed, and the data has become old," Siddaramaiah

TSCHE to introduce mock counselling for engineering admissions



GNS News Agency, June 18

Hyderabad: Candidates participating in the Telangana Engineering, Agriculture and Pharmacy Common Entrance Test (TG EAPCET) 2025 web counselling can now view their tentative seat allotment based on their rank and choices submitted. In a major move, the Telangana State Council of Higher Education (TSCHE) and the Technical Education Department have decided to introduce mock counselling

The immune system then deploys anti-NP antibodies, which mark these uninfected cells for destruction.

The process triggers the classical complement pathway, a part of the immune response that leads to inflammation and tissue damage, contributing to severe Covid symptoms and possibly long Covid. Using lab-grown cells, advanced imaging, and samples from Covid-19 patients, the researchers found that NP binds to a type of molecule on cell surfaces. The binding causes the protein to cluster on healthy cells, further confusing the immune system. The study also found that the drug enoxaparin — a common blood thinner and heparin analog — blocks NP from sticking to healthy cells.

In both lab tests and patient samples, enoxaparin helped prevent immune attacks by occupying the binding sites that NP uses. According to the researchers, the discovery may offer new hope for reducing immune-related complications in Covid and potentially other viral infections. Meanwhile, a newly identified Covid variant known as NB.1.8.1 has been recently spreading rapidly across multiple parts of the world, raising fresh concerns. The variant, which belongs to the Omicron family, was first detected in January 2025 and has since reached countries including India, the US, the UK, Australia, China, Maldives, and Egypt. The World Health Organization (WHO) has officially labelled it a "Variant Under Monitoring," meaning it is spreading fast enough to warrant attention, but not enough to be classified as a major threat.



"Machaxi's vision to scale coaching while maintaining quality through AI is forward-thinking and impactful. I am thrilled to be a partner with them in shaping the next generation of champions," he said. Pratik Raj, Co-founder, Machaxi, commented, "This partnership is a big step forward in our mission to make quality sports coaching accessible to everyone in India. With the support of Rainmatter and the visionary backing of Mr. Padukone, we're working toward a future where every aspiring athlete no matter where they come from can train with consistency, purpose, and access to world-class infrastructure. Our AI-powered model is built to ensure that potential is discovered and nurtured, not overlooked. We're proud to be at the forefront of this shift in grassroots sports."



said. The government will now conduct the survey "in a short span of time", within 60-70 days, he added. This does not mean that the entire report will be rejected, the Congress leader stated, referring to the various recommendations made in it. "Principally, the report is accepted, but enumeration will be done again," he added.

The survey was commissioned in 2015 during Siddaramaiah's first term as chief minister but was placed before the Cabinet only in April this year. Dominant communities have opposed the report as the survey found that Other Backward Classes (OBCs) formed 70 per cent of the state's population and dismissed assumptions about the size of the Lingayat and Vokkaliga communities. OBC groups, however, have asked the government to accept the report.

Veg vs non-veg: FDA rules call for segregation while preparation, cooking and storage; clueless eateries stack them one above other



GNS News Agency, June 18

A recent consumer court ruling has once again brought to the fore deep concerns over a vegetarian allegedly receiving a non-vegetarian food item. The Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission in Mumbai dismissed a complaint from a couple who sought compensation regarding the delivery of chicken momos. The couple claimed they had ordered the vegetarian version of the snack, but the Commission noted that if they were "strictly vegetarian," they should not have ordered food from a restaurant that also served non-vegetarian meals. While questions have resurfaced about food safety regulations in India, particularly those governing the segregation of vegetarian and non-vegetarian food, a closer look into the rules mandated by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and their implementation and awareness among the restaurants and food vendors, reveals a huge gap. Consider this: Schedule 4 of the Food Safety and Standards (Licensing and Registration of Food Businesses) Regulations, 2011, framed under the Food Safety and Standards Act, 2006, outlines the general hygienic and sanitary practices for food business operators in India. It states that street food vendors and other non-manufacturing food units must strictly segregate vegetarian and non-vegetarian items. Specifically, the regulations state, "The preparation, processing, and cooking of vegetarian and non-vegetarian products should be segregated." To further prevent cross-contamination, the rules mandate the use of a "separate fridge for raw meat/poultry" and require that staff be trained in proper food handling, with clear instructions to avoid cross-contamination. By contrast, when The Indian Express checked the fridge of a roadside eatery in Nariman Point, which serves both vegetarian and non-vegetarian food, it was found that chicken was stored in a bowl placed on top of another bowl containing pre-prepared vegetables. When asked about following any separate preparation or cooking protocols, the owner, in his early 30s, said he was unaware of any such regulation. When the reporter contacted several other restaurants and roadside eateries, many said they were unaware of these guidelines, and it was evident that they were not adhering to them strictly.

The FDA has also put several other key requirements for handling non-vegetarian foods in its guidelines, which state, "Raw and processed meat should be separated from other foods, items, and surfaces; separate items, including cutting boards, dishes, knives, and preparation areas must be used for raw meats, poultry, and marine products to avoid cross-contamination; and hands should be thoroughly

'How long can we fight anti-social elements?': Once a popular tourist spot, Shimla's Glen Nature Park now lies in shambles

GNS News Agency, June 18

Tattered remains of a welcome signboard at the entry gate, a partially burnt and broken wooden floor of a rain shelter, and piles of garbage at various spots: nearly seven years after it was inaugurated amid much fanfare, Glen Nature Park in Himachal Pradesh's Shimla presents a dismal picture of official apathy today. "When the park was inaugurated, locals and tourists would flock in large numbers to enjoy walking the trails. Over the period, things deteriorated, footfall declined, and unsocial elements made this park their haven," says Raghuvir Chandel, a Kaithu resident and a frequent visitor to the park. The broken and burnt wooden floor at a rain shelter inside Glen Nature Park in Shimla. The broken and burnt wooden floor at a rain shelter inside Glen Nature Park in Shimla. (Express) Inaugurated in July 2018, Glen Nature Park spans around 164 hectares and is surrounded by Annandale, Chaura Maidan, Summer Hill and Boileauganj. It has three walking trails, including the historic British-era Brass Path leading to the Indian Institute of Advanced Study, through scenic vistas lined with cedar, pine and oak trees. The other two trails lead to Himachal Pradesh University at Summer Hill and Sangti village. Entry to the park is free.

"Imagine the hooliganism: people did not just break the wooden floor of the rain shelter, they also burnt it to cook food. It is still lying unrepaired. The park shares a boundary with a government residential colony, and residents found a good dumping ground for their garbage," adds Chandel. Piles of garbage lay unattended at Glen Nature Park in Shimla. Piles of garbage lay unattended at Glen Nature Park in Shimla. The park is bisected by the main link road connecting the Annandale Helipad and Chaura Maidan near the Vidhan Sabha building. The portion under the Gawahi Gram Panchayat, where the three trails are located, is visibly in a better condition than the other half.

"How long can we fight antisocial elements?" says

washed before switching from preparing raw meat, poultry, or marine products to any other activity." The regulations also call for an adequate number of racks for food storage, with clear labelling and dedicated compartments for each food type to minimise the risk of cross-contamination. A former senior Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) officer said regular training sessions are conducted across states to raise awareness among food vendors and hawkers and to bring about behavioural change. But on the ground, the reality is starkly different.

A senior FDA official noted that failing to comply with these guidelines can attract a penalty of up to Rs 5 lakh for licensed establishments and Rs 25,000 for registered ones. An FSSAI registration is required for food businesses with an annual turnover below Rs 12 lakh; those with a turnover between Rs 12 lakh and Rs 20 crore need a state licence. Businesses operating across multiple states or with an annual turnover exceeding Rs 20 crore must obtain a central licence. On inspections, the official added that each food safety officer is required to inspect 10 establishments per month. When asked when the last inspection was conducted, the officer said: "The problem is that we have five food safety officers against the capacity of 49 from the past three years. We will get 40 new officers this month," he said.

Restaurants and eateries, however, claim that no such inspection has taken place in decades. A prominent Mumbai-based restaurateur admitted that while their restaurant follows strict processes to minimise errors, this is largely because they adhere to international standards, not because regulatory bodies like the FSSAI mandate such practices. "If you look at small eateries, hawkers, or roadside vendors, do you think they follow any protocol? Even the water they use is highly questionable," the restaurateur said, adding that despite years in the industry, they are not fully aware of the policies laid out by the FSSAI or FDA. "People who are truly particular wouldn't even visit a restaurant that serves both vegetarian and non-vegetarian food," the restaurateur added. Some claim to be following the norms. Sagar Daryani, president of the National Restaurant Association of India (NRAI) and CEO of Wow! Momo said that guidelines are in place by the FSSAI and FDA, and that every established operator adheres to them.

"There are also standard industry practices that food operators have adopted—not just segregation of vegetarian and non-vegetarian food, but also keeping in mind other dietary preferences and allergens, as well as using separate fryers, steamers, induction cookers, and utensils," he said. When asked how widely these practices are being implemented, he stated that they are adhered to by all the major food operators who are established and want to excel in the industry across cities, including Mumbai. "There are clear FSSAI guidelines, and we are inspected when we apply for licenses, and then there are annual inspections as well. Any good operator would segregate veg from non-veg and have different equipment, refrigerators and storage areas. Most also have dedicated independent auditors to check not only the stock and finances but also the brand, whether the staff were wearing gloves, the way products are stored, expiry date of the products, etc.," he added.



Sanjay Azad, president of the Gram Sudhar Sabha, Gawahi. "We have informed the authorities, including the local police and forest department, several times. Someone from our village calls the police or forest guards every other day. While responses do come, they are temporary. A permanent solution would be regular deployment of guards and staff at the park," Azad adds. Azad is part of a voluntary group working for the betterment of the village and its neighbouring areas, including Glen Nature Park. "But without the authorities' contribution, our wings are clipped," he adds. Pawan Chauhan, Shimla Divisional Forest Officer (Urban), admits that they are aware of these issues. "Though we do not have permanent staff posted at the park, Glen Beat Forest staff visit there periodically. We also conduct cleanliness drives from time to time. The wooden floor of the rain shelter was burned a year ago, and we are aware of it. The wooden floor and signboard will be repaired as soon as we receive a budget," he says. "We have repaired the motorable road and the walking trails, but it cannot support regular vehicular movement. During incessant rains in 2023, landslides took place in the park, and many damaged sections have since been restored," Chauhan adds.

Police seize spurious seeds worth Rs 65 lakh, arrest six in Telangana's Suryapet

GNS News Agency, June 18

Suryapet: In a major crackdown against sellers of spurious seeds, the Suryapet police seized 22 quintals of counterfeit cotton seeds valued approximately at Rs 65 lakh on Tuesday. The operation helped prevent a large quantity of substandard seeds reaching unsuspecting farmers. In a joint operation, police teams from Mothe and Atmakur (S) police stations and the Central Crime Station conducted raids at multiple locations across the district. The operation led to the arrest of six individuals involved in the illegal seed supply racket. Four of the accused were apprehended in connection with a case registered at Atmakur (S) police station, while two others were arrested in a case under Mothe police station. During a media conference held at Suryapet District Police Office, Superintendent of Police K Narasimha said that the accused had been deceiving farmers by falsely claiming the seeds were resistant to herbicides and capable



of delivering high yields. He clarified that no such herbicide-resistant seeds were officially produced and urged the farmers not to trust such claims. He advised farmers to purchase seed only from authorised dealers and government-recognised sources.

Why vaping or e-cigarettes continue to lure Pune young adults despite risks



GNS News Agency, June 18

Despite being banned, vapes are popular among young adults in Pune as many are under the assumption that e-cigarettes are less harmful than traditional cigarettes, while others are simply drawn to the trend under peer influence. Vaping or electronic cigarettes are banned under the Prohibition of Electronic Cigarettes Act (2019). A Kharadi resident, who did not want to be named, said he has several friends addicted to vaping. He added that most people don't think it is harming their health until they start feeling symptoms like throat irritation or a heaviness in their voice. "Vapes are easy to access, even though they're illegal, since many big smoke shops continue to sell them. I have seen these shops import vapes and e-cigarettes from African, South Asian, and especially Gulf countries," he said. A student from Viman Nagar shared that there is a perception that smoking is old and unhealthy. "Even if vaping isn't completely healthy, it feels like a better option, since it also causes less discomfort." Many users have said that youngsters try out vaping to seek new experiences and later on at least become active tobacco smokers.

AI to serve as foundational technology for future networks: DoT

GNS News Agency, June 18

New Delhi: Artificial intelligence will serve as a foundational technology for future networks, with AI-native systems enabling new services like immersive experiences, autonomous operations and integrated sensing, a DoT official has said.

Sanjeev K Bidwai, Member (Technology), Department of Telecommunications, on Wednesday said institutions like C-DoT, IITs and other leading R&D centres are working on indigenous AI-powered telecom technologies, actively contributing to international standards through platforms like ITU-T, ITU-R and 3GPP. "According to ITU-R's vision document M.2160, AI will be a key enabler for future networks, from intelligent radio interface management to cross-domain orchestration and personalised service delivery. "AI native networks will not only manage complexity but will unlock new service frontiers, immersive digital experiences, autonomous systems, integrated sensing and on-demand slicing for multi-tasks. This evolution is not just technological, it is strategic," he said. India is home to one of the world's largest and most dynamic telecom markets, offering a rich and diverse testing ground for AI native solutions, Bidwai said during the 3rd meeting of the ITU-T focus group on AI native for telecommunication networks here.

India's expanding AI startup ecosystem, backed by a supportive policy framework in AI, data governance and digital public infrastructure, makes it ready and a true glo-

A student from Kothrud admitted, "I go to house parties, and even if I don't want to use the vape, it just gets passed around. And I end up smoking it." A vaping addict pointed out the emotional pressure involved in the process. "I got into it under peer pressure, and now it has gotten very difficult to quit. And unlike cigarettes, vapes have a variety. So, it's not the feeling of smoking and the nicotine hit. It's also the fact that there is so much more to try. I can carry them everywhere I go. I just need to charge, and it's ready," she said. Another student from Lohegaon highlighted how easy it is to get hooked, "I think it's the kick of nicotine that makes vapes so addictive. They are very easily available in every other smoke shop for Rs 2,000—Rs 3,000." According to psychologists, vapes and e-cigarettes contain addictive chemicals that make quitting hard. "Many young adults use vaping as a coping mechanism to deal with difficult emotions. Over time, it becomes a habit. They vape when bored, sad, or anxious. Vapes and e-cigarettes are also marketed as sleek and sophisticated, adding to the factor of increased peer-pressure among young adults, and driving them to use these devices," explained Shreyash Chhajed, clinical psychologist. Health professionals have warned against the common misconception that vaping is a safe alternative. "They deliver nicotine, which raises heart rate and blood pressure. E-cigarettes also release substances like formaldehyde and TSNAs, which can increase cancer risk. For the lungs, vaping can cause inflammation, oxidative stress, and even conditions like EVALI and 'popcorn lung,'" said Dr Vivek Gaikwad, Pune-based cardiologist. The fact that the combination of easy access, peer influence, emotional dependence, and lack of awareness continues to fuel this growing trend is a matter of concern among health experts. Vaping may feel safer than smoking, but the risks are real and rising, they said.



bal leader in shaping the future of AI native networks. "IIT Jodhpur, in partnership with the Centre for Development of Telematics (CDOT), is developing AI frameworks for automated network management for detection and diagnostics. "This includes establishing a real-time 5G and beyond testbed compliant with ORAN standards. Further, DOT has signed a letter of intent with ITU to explore AI-driven digital twin technologies for infrastructure planning," Bidwai said.

He said DoT is positioning India at the forefront of AI native networking, fostering innovation and contributing to the evaluation of intelligent autonomous telecommunication networks.

Committee demands adequate compensation for Gosikhurd Dam project affected farmers, families

GNS News Agency, June 18

Members of the Gosikhurd Prakaalpgrast Sangharsh Samiti that represents farmers, agricultural labourers, and fishermen, affected by the ongoing Gosikhurd Dam project demanded adequate compensation for the affected families. Speaking to the media in Nagpur, members of the committee vowed to intensify their agitation and even threatened to move courts against the alleged government indifference.

Speaking at a press conference in Nagpur on Monday, Advocate Govind Bhendarkar and Ram Bante, accused the state government of neglecting the demands of those displaced by the Gosikhurd National Irrigation Project (GNIP) — a major irrigation project being built on the Godavari basin, specifically on the Wainganga river. While around 2,50,800 hectares of land in Nagpur, Bhandara, and Chandrapur were expected to be under irrigation, the Sangharsha Samiti claimed that the project has failed to bring even 40 percent of the promised land under irrigation. The committee further raised concerns over pollution of water and demanded adequate compensation for families affected by the project as per the provisions of the National Rehabilitation Policy 2007 and the Maharashtra State Rehabilitation Act 1999. They demanded that a total sum of Rs 10 lakh be given to each family as compensation instead of Rs 2.9 lakh.

The representatives of the Sangharsha Samiti said that while Gosikhurd Prakaalp Stariya Vyavasthapan Samiti was set up in 1992 and it included both government officials as well as members of affected farmer communities, it has only met 18 times until 2020 and has not met since. "We demand that this committee needs to convene immediately,



and if not, we will have to take this matter to court," Bhendarkar said. A 2018 CAG report tabled in the Assembly revealed that between 2012 and 2017, the Gosikhurd Dam project failed to deliver on key promises. It flagged poor planning, cost overruns, contract violations, and delayed rehabilitation efforts, all of which ultimately allegedly benefited contractors more than communities. Due to the lack of basic civic infrastructure, only 20 percent of the promised land was brought under irrigation. The report also confirmed that the dam water was polluted by untreated sewage and contaminated river inflows. In 2023, Ashok Nete, former MP from Gadchiroli-Chimur, addressed the Lok Sabha on the question of compensation given to the Project Affected Persons saying, "Regarding rehabilitation and resettlement of the project affected families (PAFs), it is informed that the project involves 85 fully affected and 183 partially affected villages, involving 14,984 PAFs.... So far, 12,298 PAFs have been reported by the State Government to have been resettled."

including tips like wearing lightweight, loose-fitting, light-colored clothing and protecting your head with a hat or umbrella.

Earlier on Tuesday, Delhi recorded its season's highest temperature of 43.8°C, 3.6°C above the normal average, highlighting the severity of the current weather. Experts predict relief may only begin gradually after June 12. Dr. Atul Kakar from a prominent city hospital noted that local emergency rooms have seen an increase in cases related to heat exhaustion, heatstroke, severe dehydration, gastroenteritis, and jaundice. "Minimize exposure to the sun, wear long sleeves or use an umbrella to shield yourself. Keep hydrated with water-rich beverages and fruits," he advised. As Delhi endures these extreme summer conditions, both authorities and health experts stress that following these practical guidelines can help minimize the risks and keep residents safe during the peak heat hours.

Drawing lessons from May 26 rain, BMC to widen Mumbai's drains to avoid flash floods, waterlogging



GNS News Agency, June 18

As a preventive measure against waterlogging and flash flooding in Mumbai, the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) will widen the existing drains of the island city to be able to hold up to 120 mm of rainfall in an hour. The civic body's move follows the heavy rain on May 26, which led to flash flooding and waterlogging in several areas of Mumbai and its suburbs. On May 26, the day of monsoon onset in Mumbai, several areas in the city recorded nearly 200 mm of rainfall within just a few hours. This heavy downpour caused flooding throughout the city. Civic officials stated that drains also contributed to the flash flooding, explaining that they were unable to accommodate such a large volume of water in such a short period.

"In Mumbai, the original width of the major drains was able to handle around 25 mm of rainfall every hour. After the 2006 deluge, it was decided that all these drains would be widened so that they could handle 55 mm of rainfall water in an hour. The works were taken up in a phased manner. However, following the rains last month, it has now

been decided that the overall width of the existing major drains needs to be further widened to tackle heavy rainfall of 120 mm," a senior official said. Mumbai has a vast network of drains, comprising 261.52 km of major nullahs (1.5 metres or wider) and 411.56 km of minor nullahs (less than 1.5 metres wide), along with other types of drains, such as arch and roadside drains. "Since the population and demography of the city have changed drastically in the past decades, the quantum of water flow has also increased. Meanwhile, the pattern of rainfall has undergone a significant change in the past few years, resulting in frequent incidents where a large quantity of rainfall occurs within a short period. Therefore, there is a need now to widen the existing width of the drains to improve their carrying capacity," the official said. Civic officials said that a larger number of flooding spots in Mumbai remain in the island city.

Therefore, the need for widening the drains in the island city is of utmost importance to the civic authorities. The BMC will appoint a dedicated agency, such as the Indian Institutes of Technology (IIT) or Veermata Jijabai Technological Institute (VJTI), to conduct a survey of these drains and determine the margin by which each drain will be widened. Civic officials said that instead of undertaking large-scale widening works, the civic body is also exploring local-level interventions to enhance the smooth flow of water. "We will also ask the local ward officers to submit to us their observations regarding the drainage in their area so that we can implement local-level interventions like the installation of mesh to prevent the deposit of floating waste and sludge inside the drains. The primary objective is to improve the water flow of the drains to ensure that they don't overflow following a heavy spell of rain within a short period," the official added.

Pilot to replace paddy with water-saving kharif maize 'too little, too late': experts

GNS News Agency, June 18

A pilot project launched by the Punjab government to encourage farmers in six districts to shift from water-intensive paddy to kharif maize to address groundwater depletion and promote crop diversification has drawn flak from experts. Criticising the initiative, experts say the pilot covers too limited an area compared to the vast expanse under paddy cultivation in the state. They said the government should have aimed for at least 50,000 hectares for the pilot project. Additionally, they pointed out the project should have been launched in the first year of the AAP government's tenure, considering crop diversification is neither a new concept for Punjab nor any party in power. The six districts under the initiative are Jalandhar, Kapurthala, Bathinda, Sangrur, Pathankot and Gurdaspur.

Under this scheme, farmers who divert their land from paddy to kharif maize will get an incentive of Rs 17,500 per hectare (approximately Rs 7,08.5 per acre) as the government aims to divert around 12,000 hectares (29,640 acres) under paddy to maize cultivation in the current kharif season. Kharif maize, sown during the monsoon season, alongside paddy, relies primarily on rainfall and needs 3-5 times irrigation compared to 22-30 cycles by paddy.

Experts term this shift "critical" as Punjab's groundwater resources have been under relentless stress due to decades of intensive paddy farming but are sceptical about the scale and timing of the initiative. "This pilot is not even a baby step," said a senior agricultural scientist at Punjab Agricultural University (PAU), Ludhiana. "With over 32 lakh hectares under rice cultivation in Punjab, diversifying just 12,000 hectares is negligible. The state should have aimed to cover at least 50,000 hectares and included, besides six districts, all other districts where maize is grown, such as Hoshiarpur, Roopnagar, SAS Nagar (Mohali), Ludhiana, Fatehgarh Sahib, Amritsar and Patiala." Maize is widely used in animal feed, starch production, ethanol, silage (a fermented feed for livestock) and food products like cornflakes and baby corn. Kharif maize has the potential to meet Punjab's demand. Over 90 per cent of corn cereal is currently imported to Punjab from other states. Experts emphasise that establishing ethanol production units in Punjab is crucial to boosting local maize consumption. With the government now permitting ethanol blending with vehicle fuel, maize presents significant potential as a future-oriented crop, both economically and environmentally, enhancing farmers' financial conditions. Punjab once had a



thriving maize cultivation, covering 5.77 lakh hectares in 1975-76, but the area steadily declined due to the paddy dominance and was reduced to just around 80,000 hectares by 2024-25. Experts point out that though maize is grown in districts like Hoshiarpur, Roopnagar, Ludhiana and Patiala, its growth remained stagnant. The area under cultivation is between 1.05 and 1.3 lakh hectares over the past two decades, with a worrying dip to just 80,000 hectares last year and around 95,000 hectares in 2023-24.

Dr Hanuman Sahay Jat, Director of Indian Institute of Maize Research (IIMR), PAU, highlighted the need for broader policy support. "Farmers will go for kharif maize if they get more or on par with the yield per acre of paddy. Kharif maize has high-yielding hybrid seeds, but unless Punjab starts developing and distributing its own high-quality seeds, farmers will be dependent on costly private suppliers from other states," he said. Dr Jat also emphasised the urgent need for maize processing infrastructure, particularly grain dryers, and a reliable Minimum Support Price (MSP) mechanism to protect farmers against market volatility. Despite the state's high productivity—15 to 20 per cent above the national average—Punjab doesn't feature among the top 10 maize-producing states in the country. A group of experts argue that the continued provision of free electricity for paddy irrigation is a key barrier to diversification. "If the government withdraws free power for tubewells, farmers will shift to alternative crops like maize within a year," said a senior scientist at PAU. "Although the Punjab government's pilot project acknowledges the urgent need for crop diversification, it falls short in ambition and scale. Without a long-term and comprehensive strategy, Punjab's dream of sustainable agriculture may continue to remain just that—a dream," said a senior scientist at PAU.

Pune's BJMC Psychiatry dept head Dr Niteen Abhivant dies during trek near Shimla



GNS News Agency, June 18

The 42-year-old head of the Department of Psychiatry at B J Medical College in Pune died while trekking in Himachal Pradesh Monday, his colleagues said Wednesday as they expressed shock at his untimely death. Dr Niteen Abhivant was a part of a group that had gone trekking to Buran Ghati in Himachal Pradesh, said Dr Nishikant Thorat, Associate Professor of Psychiatry, B J Medical College. "The group had commenced the trek and were at the base level," added Dr Thorat, who attended his final rites in Solapur Wednesday morning.

"Dr Abhivant collapsed during the trek on Monday, and despite the efforts of medical professionals in the trek to revive him, he had already passed away," a doctor at B J Medical College told The Indian Express. While the post-mortem report ascertaining the cause of death is awaited, doctors said that a possible cause could be a sudden heart attack. Dr Abhivant was an avid trekker and had participated in various expeditions. The Buran Ghati trek that originates in Janglik is approximately 150 km from Shimla. Considered a moderate to difficult trek, it involves challenging ascents, descents and typically takes 6-9 days to complete.

Dr Bhushan Chaudhari, one of his college friends and a professor of Psychiatry at Dr D Y Patil Medical College

and Hospital, said his death is a huge shock. "He would trek frequently and was healthy. His passing away has come as a profound shock," Dr Chaudhari said, as he remembered Dr Abhivant as "always smiling and helpful". Dr Praful Kapse, Associate Professor and Head, Department of Psychiatric Social Work, Maharashtra Institute of Mental Health, said Dr Abhivant was a good academician and administrator. "He always used to look for innovative and cost-effective solutions for mental health care. Dr Abhivant was instrumental in adopting new technologies in mental health care for patients, was empathetic and caring towards patient care and had high ethical integrity. He was known for his excellent communication and pedagogical skills to educate multidisciplinary students, peers and colleagues," Dr Kapse said while paying his tributes.

Daily commute turns into chaotic nightmare

Hyderabad: For thousands who depend on it daily, the Mehdiapatnam Bus Stand is less of a travel hub and more of a stressful, dangerous obstacle course. Designed to connect key areas, this major transit point has instead become infamous for chaos and hardship. The traffic nightmare around the bus stand is constant. Buses cause a lot of this problem, especially during rush hours. Many stop half on the road to pick up passengers, completely blocking lanes and making it very hard for other vehicles to move. Walking here feels unsafe. Sidewalks are always clogged by street vendors and parked vehicles, leaving no space for people to walk. Pedestrians are forced onto the busy road, dodging cars and buses. To make matters worse, frustrated drivers sometimes even drive onto the sidewalks to escape traffic, increasing the danger. Waiting for a bus is frustrating, too. There are no proper lines to stand in and no reliable signs showing when buses will arrive.

Pakistani man extradited to U.S. from Canada over plot to attack Jewish centre on October 7 anniversary



GNS News Agency, June 18

A Pakistani citizen living in Canada has been extradited to the U.S. to face charges for plotting an Islamic State of Iraq and al-Sham (ISIS)-inspired mass shooting at a Jewish centre in New York City around the first anniversary of the October 7 Hamas attacks, U.S. officials said.Muhammad Shahzeb Khan (20), also known as Shahzeb Jadoon, was extradited to the U.S. on Tuesday (June 10, 2025) in connection with an indictment filed in the Southern District of New York, the Department of Justice said in a press release.Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) Director Kash Patel said Mr. Khan allegedly tried to enter the U.S. to commit the attack and planned an ISIS-inspired mass shooting on October 7, 2024, around the first anniversary of the 2023 Hamas terrorist attack in Israel. "Major news... earlier this afternoon, Muhammad Shahzeb Khan, a Pakistani citizen residing in Canada, was extradited to the United States on charges of attempting to provide material support to ISIS and attempting to commit acts of terrorism," Mr. Patel said in a post on X.

Major news... earlier this afternoon, Muhammad Shahzeb Khan, a Pakistani citizen residing in Canada, was extradited to the United States on charges of attempting to provide material support to ISIS and attempting to commit acts of terrorism.U.S. Attorney Jay Clayton for the Southern District of New York said Mr. Khan planned to use automatic weapons to kill as many members of the Jewish community as possible, all in support of ISIS, the press release said.In a communication with undercover law enforcement officers, Mr. Khan claimed that if the plan succeeded, it would be "the largest attack on U.S. soil since 9/11".He was provisionally arrested in Canada in September

last year based on a complaint filed in the Southern District of New York. According to the complaint, Mr. Khan tried to travel from Canada to New York to carry out the mass shooting at a Jewish centre in Brooklyn.

Around November 2023, Mr. Khan began posting on social media and communicating with others on an encrypted messaging application about his support for ISIS, distributing ISIS propaganda videos and literature, among other things. Subsequently, he began communicating with two undercover law enforcement officers and confirmed planning an attack along with a U.S.-based associate in an unnamed American city.Mr. Khan said he had been actively attempting to create "a real offline cell" of ISIS supporters to carry out a "coordinated assault" in a U.S. city using Augmented Reality (AR)-style rifles to "target Israeli Jewish chabads . . . scattered all around" the city. He also repeatedly instructed the undercover officers to obtain AR-style assault rifles, ammunition, and other materials to carry out the attacks, including "some good hunting [knives] so we can slit their throats". Mr. Khan identified the specific locations in the city where the attacks would take place and provided details about how he would cross the border from Canada into the U.S. for these.During these conversations, he emphasised that "Oct 7th and Oct 11th are the best days for targeting the Jews" because "Oct 7 they will surely have some protests and Oct 11 is Yom Kippur", referring to Judaism's holiest day. He changed the target location to New York City around August 20 and decided to target the Jewish centre in Brooklyn.He told the agents that New York is "perfect to target jews" as it has the "largest Jewish population" in the US and said, "Even if we don't attack a[n] Event[,] we could rack up easily a lot of jews." Mr. Khan told the undercover officers that he planned to carry out this attack on or around October 7, 2024 — which he recognised as the one-year anniversary of the terrorist attacks in Israel by Hamas.As part of his plan, Mr. Khan attempted to reach the U.S.-Canada border around September 4 by using three separate cars to travel across Canada towards the U.S.Canadian authorities stopped him in or around Ormstown, approximately 12 miles from the border.Mr. Khan is charged with one count of attempting to provide material support and resources to the ISIS terrorist organisation and one count of attempting to commit acts of terrorism transcending national boundaries. If convicted, he faces a maximum sentence of life in prison.

The endgame in the Russia-Ukraine war

GNS News Agency, June 18

As the Russia-Ukraine war is in its fourth year, with mounting human and economic costs and rising global pressure for a diplomatic resolution, an endgame is in place. The revival of the Istanbul peace process and renewed engagement by key international players have reoriented attention towards diplomacy. Yet major questions persist: Will Ukraine's audacious strikes shift the war's trajectory? Can Ukraine endure the prolonged conflict? And can the main actors — Ukraine, Russia, the U.S., NATO, and the European Union — overcome entrenched divisions to forge a durable peace?

The return of diplomacyAs peace talks stalled under U.S. President Donald Trump, the Istanbul peace process was cautiously revived by Russian President Vladimir Putin. Two rounds of talks on May 16 and June 1 saw prisoner swaps and draft ceasefire terms exchanged. However, deep divisions remain, with both sides presenting largely irreconcilable conditions that hinder meaningful progress.

Russia's 'Special Military Operation' could have ended in Istanbul negotiations in 2022, but a possible peace deal failed as Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy walked away from it. Ukraine chose to continue fighting as it hoped for NATO membership and Western leaders pledged funding, weapons, and training.U.S. President Donald Trump, prioritising his 'America First' and 'Make America Great Again' agenda, views the Ukraine war as a complex foreign policy challenge and seeks a swift end to it. His envoy, Keith Kellogg, and Secretary of State Marco Rubio acknowledged it as a dangerous "proxy war between nuclear powers — the United States, helping Ukraine, and Russia", and began Russia-Ukraine talks in February 2025. Mr. Trump sees no common ground or trust between Russia, Europe, and Ukraine, making an end to the Russia-NATO proxy war difficult. Acting as both participant and mediator, he believes a breakthrough is urgently needed.

Mr. Trump's three months of shuttle diplomacy have sparked hope for peace. The peace framework addresses both sides' concerns. Ukraine won't join NATO, will gain security guarantees, accept a ceasefire, and territorial concessions. Sanctions on Russia will be lifted, and the present frontline will be frozen.Ukraine-Europe peace terms include a permanent ceasefire, no limits on Ukraine's military, and a U.S.-backed security guarantee akin to NATO's Article 5. Sanctions would ease gradually after achieving lasting peace, while occupied territories remain unrecognised. European leaders' 'Coalition of the Willing' meetings, led by the U.K. and France, seek a 'reassurance force' to monitor the peace accord's implementation.Russia demands addressing the war's root causes, Ukrainian neutrality, NATO-membership ban, demilitarisation, denazification, and troop withdrawals. It also seeks ceasefire guarantees that Ukraine won't regroup and receive Western munitions. If



the West does not accept these terms, Mr. Putin warns of imposing terms militarily.

In February, Mr. Trump proposed to initiate denuclearisation talks with Russia and China, considering the Ukraine war's potential for nuclear escalation and the expiry of the NEW START Treaty with Russia in 2026. Russian experts see this as a honey trap, reminiscent of former U.S. President Ronald Reagan's trick with the Soviet Union's President Mikhail Gorbachev. Kremlin remains sceptical of Western intentions and views Russia's nuclear power as a necessary deterrent.The broader Western posture is to continue supporting Ukraine until Russia is strategically defeated. In 2022, the European Parliament and the NATO Parliamentary Assembly designated Russia a 'state sponsor of terrorism,' complicating direct diplomatic engagement, while former U.S. President Joe Biden said 'no' to such a toxic 'terrorist' label for Russia.Mr. Trump's interest in ending the war is due to avoiding damage to America's reputation. He wants to deal with China and engage in the West Asian and Indo-Pacific region. The Ukraine war tests Europe's global autonomy, but its Russophobic stance hampers dialogue by framing Russia as an existential threat and exposing racism and militarisation. The West is waging a proxy war in Ukraine and, as is the case with any proxy in history, Ukraine's agency to decide the course of war is limited. Escalation risks are rising as Ukrainian drones allegedly targeted Mr. Putin's convoy in Kursk on May 20, 2025. Earlier incidents included bridge bombings in Kursk, drone attacks near Moscow, and a threat to the Victory Day parade. In response, Russia has escalated its military campaign, aiming to create a 'security buffer zone' along the Ukraine border. Mr. Putin warned that rejecting current peace terms would make any future peace "more painful."Ukraine's deep strikes into Russia, likely aided by Western intelligence, risk escalation. Under its nuclear doctrine, Russia may retaliate if sovereignty is threatened. Operation Spiderweb escalates Russia's 'Special Military Operation' into a full-scale war. Though humiliated, Russia's engagement in peace talks signals a real interest in ending the conflict. In such a scenario,

tomorrow's crucial racing.In the Under-18 Laser Girls, Alia Sabreen of RMYC Tamil Nadu surged into the lead with two wins and a net of just 5 points, leaving the Bhopal sailors, Mahi and Tulsi, in 2nd and 3rd positions.

In the Under-18 Laser Boys, Sharanya Jhadav of NYSC Goa consolidated his lead with another win and reigned at the top, despite a double penalty that made him retire in one of the two races sailed.In the Under-19 29er Skiffs, the tables turned with the top seeds, Tangai and Divaker, who had a bad first day and were trailing 4th overall. However, they moved up to 2nd place with two high-margin wins and are now poised to win the championship comfortably.A special ceremony for the junior-most sailors participating in the light fleet of half-rigged Optimists was presided over by Smt. K. Shilpavalli, IPS, who delighted the sailors with a powerful and inspiring speech. The ceremony was attended by ex-champion sailor Mahbubee Tungara, now with the Telangana Police, and Telangana's only representative at the Asian Games Sailing 2023 in China, Preethi Kongara.The Beginners Light Fleet regatta, mostly for under-10s, was won by Arepally Gracey of Telangana Social Welfare School, Mahendra Hills, and Konda Samanyu from Gowtham Model School in the Girls' and Boys' categories,

U.S. reaffirms strong support to India in fight against terrorism: State Department



GNS News Agency, June 18

The U.S. reaffirmed its strong support for India's fight against terrorism and the bilateral strategic partnership during the visit of an Indian all-party parliamentary delegation last week, the State Department said. The multi-party delegation led by Congress MP Shashi Tharoor met the U.S. Deputy Secretary of State Christopher Landau last week in Washington.State Department Spokesperson Tammy Bruce said at a press briefing on Tuesday (June 10, 2025) that Mr. Landau reaffirmed the U.S.' strong support to India in the fight against terrorism and the strategic partnership between the two countries.The delegation visited the U.S. as part of the government's global outreach efforts after Operation Sindoor. India launched the operation in retaliation to the April 22 Pahalgalam terror attack that claimed 26 lives.

Responding to a question, Ms. Bruce said that a Paki-

U.S., China say they have agreed on framework to resolve their trade disputes

GNS News Agency, June 18

Senior U.S. and Chinese negotiators have agreed on a framework to get their trade negotiations back on track after a series of disputes that threatened to derail them, both sides have said.The announcement came at the end of two days of talks in the British capital that wrapped up late on Tuesday The meetings appeared to focus on finding a way to resolve disputes over mineral and technology exports that had shaken a fragile truce on trade reached in Geneva last month. It's not clear whether any progress was made on the more fundamental differences over China's sizeable trade surplus with the United States."First we had to get sort of the negativity out and now we can go forward," U.S. Commerce Secretary Howard Lutnick told reporters after the meetings.Asian stock markets rose on Wednesday (June 11) after the agreement was announced.

The talks followed a phone call between President Donald Trump and Chinese leader Xi Jinping last week to try to calm the waters.Li Chenggang, a Vice-Minister of Commerce and China's International Trade Representative, said the two sides had agreed in principle on a framework for implementing the consensus reached on the phone call and at the talks on Geneva, the official Xinhua News Agency said.Further details, including any plans for a potential next round of talks, were not immediately available.Mr. Li and Wang Wentao, China's Commerce Minister, were part of the delegation led by Vice-Premier He Lifeng. They met with Mr. Lutnick, Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent and Trade Representative Jameson Greer at Lancaster House, a 200-year-old mansion near Buckingham Palace.

Wendy Cutler, a former U.S. trade negotiator, said the disputes had frittered away 30 of the 90 days the two sides have to try to resolve their disputes.They agreed in Geneva to a 90-day suspension of most of the 100%-plus tariffs they had imposed on each other in an escalating trade war that sparked fears of recession. The World Bank, citing a rise in trade barriers, cut its projections on Tuesday (June 11) for U.S. and global economic growth this year."The U.S. and China lost valuable time in restoring their Geneva agreements," said Ms. Cutler, now vice-president at the Asia Society Policy Institute. "Now, only sixty days remain to address issues of concern, including unfair trade practices,

stani parliamentary delegation led by Bilawal Bhutto Zardari met officials of the State Department, including Under Secretary for Political Affairs Allison Hooker, during its visit to Washington last week. Ms. Hooker reiterated the U.S. support for the ongoing cessation of on-ground hostilities, "— as you might imagine, thank God — between India and Pakistan", Ms. Bruce said, adding that they also discussed important issues about the U.S.-Pakistan bilateral relationship, including counterterrorism cooperation. "So that meeting occurred." When asked if the U.S. received any assurance from Pakistan that it will take action against terrorists, Ms. Bruce said she was not going to discuss the details of those conversations.

In response to a question on President Donald Trump offering to "mediate" on the issue of Kashmir, Ms. Bruce said, "Well, I — obviously, I can't speak to what's on the mind or the plans of the President. What I do know is that I think we all recognise that President Trump in each step that he takes, it's made to solve generational differences between countries, generational war." Ms. Bruce added that it should not "surprise" anyone that he would want to "manage" something like that."So, while I can't speak to his plans, the world knows his nature, and I can't speak to any details of what he might have in that regard... But it is an exciting time that if we can get to a point in that particular conflict...," Ms. Bruce said adding that it is a "very interesting time".India has rejected any mediation related to the dispute on Jammu and Kashmir with Pakistan and maintains that Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh are and will always remain an "integral" part of the country.



excess capacity, transshipment and fentanyl." Since the Geneva talks, the U.S. and China have exchanged angry words over advanced semiconductors that power artificial intelligence, visas for Chinese students at American universities and rare earth minerals that are vital to carmakers and other industries.China, the world's biggest producer of rare earths, has signalled it may speed up the issuing of export licenses for the elements. Beijing, in turn, wants the U.S. to lift restrictions on Chinese access to the technology used to make advanced semiconductors.

Mr. Lutnick said that resolving the rare earths issue is a fundamental part of the agreed-upon framework, and that the U.S. will remove measures it had imposed in response. He did not specify which measures."When they approve the licenses, then you should expect that our export implementation will come down as well," he said.Ms. Cutler said it would be unprecedented for the U.S. to negotiate on its export controls, which she described as an irritant that China has been raising for nearly 20 years."By doing so, the U.S. has opened a door for China to insist on adding export controls to future negotiating agendas," she said.In Washington, a federal appeals court agreed on Tuesday (June 10) to let the government keep collecting tariffs that Mr. Trump has imposed not just on China but also on other countries worldwide while the administration appeals a ruling against his signature trade policy.Mr. Trump said earlier that he wants to "open up China," the world's dominant manufacturer, to U.S. products."If we don't open up China, maybe we won't do anything," Mr. Trump said at the White House. "But we want to open up China."

Maha Kumbh stampedes: BBC report claims at least 82 killed

GNS News Agency, June 18

At least 82 people were killed in four incidents of stampede at Maha Kumbh in Uttar Pradesh's Prayagraj on January 29, against the State government's official claim of 37 deaths, a report by BBC News Hindi claimed. The report said the families of at least 26 victims were given bundles of 75 lakh each by Uttar Pradesh government officials but their names were not counted among those who died in the stampede.The kin of 37 others who were officially declared dead were given a compensation of 225 lakh each through cheques or in their bank accounts.

Several families from across the country told the BBC that they were made to sign on papers which said their family member has died due to sudden fall in health. They shared photographs of cash bundles and the letters they were made to sign by Uttar Pradesh government officials. The BBC met at least 19 other families who have not been paid any compensation at all.Panic due to a changing-room gate falling on devotees led to near stampede says DIG; survivors recount harrowing experienceMultiple casualties are feared after a "stampede-like" situation broke out at the Sangam on Wednesday amid the ongoing Maha Kumbh, as millions of pilgrims gathered for a holy bath on Mauni Amavasya. Around 2 am, the blaring sirens of ambulances and police vehicles rushing to the Sangam pierced through the continuous chants of mantras and shlokas echoing from loud-speakers across the Kumbh Mela area. | Video Credit: BusinesslineThe Uttar Pradesh government is yet to officially release the names of the 37 victims whose deaths have been acknowledged.

The report said that among the dead was K.N. Vasudevacharya, a retired school principal and the younger brother of former Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) ideologue K.N. Govindacharya. The report said his body was initially declared "unclaimed" but was later brought to Varanasi and cremated after intervention by a Bharatiya Janata Party functionary.Maha Kumbh: Casualties feared after barrier breaks at the Sangam; PM Modi speaks to U.P. CM YogiMultiple casualties are feared after a "stampede-like" situation broke out at the Maha Kumbh on January 29, 2025, as a large number of pilgrims reached the sacred Triveni Sangam to take a holy bath on Mauni Amavasya. | Video Credit: The HinduReacting to the report, Samajwadi Party president Akhilesh Yadav accused the Uttar Pradesh government of lying about the death toll and said those who provide "false statistics" were not wor-



thy of public trust.In a post on X, Mr. Yadav said, "Why was compensation paid in cash? What was the source of the cash? Where did the undistributed cash go? Under which rule was cash distribution approved? Who authorised the cash payments? Is there any written order backing the disbursement?"

Syria's economic recovery will require 'substantial' support, says IMF

Damascus: Syria will need "substantial international" support for its efforts to rehabilitate the economy, meet urgent humanitarian needs, and rebuild essential institutions and infrastructure, the International Monetary Fund said on Tuesday.Syria cannot afford hundreds of billions of dollars of damages and losses from the conflict that first started as protests in 2011 against former President Bashar Assad's totalitarian government.Since current President Ahmad al-Sharaa led an insurgency that ousted the Assad dynasty in December 2024, countries have gradually restored ties with Syria.

During a five-day visit by the IMF in early June — the first to Syria by the 191-country lending organization since 2009 — its team met with officials from the public and private sectors, notably the finance minister and central bank governor."Syria faces enormous challenges following years of conflict that caused immense human suffering and reduced its economy to a fraction of its former size," the IMF said.

Erdogan’s neo-Ottoman foreign policy



Türkiye, a long-standing Cold War ally of the West, has significantly expanded its presence and influence across West Asia and the Caucasus in recent years. Under President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, Ankara has pursued an Islamist-leaning foreign policy aimed at building stronger ties with Muslim-majority countries and repositioning Türkiye as a regional power — all while maintaining its alliance with the Western bloc. The rise to power of the Islamist Hayat Tahrir al-Sham (HTS) in Syria has helped Ankara expand its reach close to the Israeli border. Türkiye already maintains a military presence in Qatar, the rich Sunni Gulf kingdom, underscoring its growing strategic footprint in the region.

During the recent flare-up between India and Pakistan, Türkiye stood by Islamabad. Is this blend of Islamism with a pro-Western tint helping Türkiye remake itself in a volatile world?

When the Republic of Turkey was established in 1923 on the remains of the Ottoman Empire, the country’s new rulers adopted sweeping reforms aimed at democratising polity, secularising society and conciliating foreign policy. Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, founder of modern Türkiye, adopted a ‘peace at home, peace in the world’ foreign policy. After the Second World War, Türkiye joined the western bloc. Its geographical location as a Black Sea basin country with access to West Asia, the Mediterranean and the Caucasus made Türkiye a strategically important ally for NATO. All Turkish leaders, both military dictators and elected leaders, followed this establishment consensus on foreign policy — until the rise of the Islamists.Mr. Erdogan’s AK Party (Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi) that came to power in 2002 also followed this path in the initial years. The AKP came to power after years of political and economic instability, and Mr. Erdogan’s immediate focus was to stabilise the economy. Mr. Erdogan, then Prime Minister, sought close cooperation with the U.S. and integration with the European Union. In the immediate aftermath of the U.S.’s illegal invasion of Iraq in March 2003, Mr. Erdogan wrote in The Wall Street Journal that “My country is your faithful ally and friend”.Türkiye would take a more ambitious foreign policy turn in the early 2010s — with the onset of the Arab Spring protests to be precise.

Ittihad-i Islam (Unity of Islam) was a declared foreign policy doctrine of theOttoman Sultan Hamid IIwho reigned from 1876-1909. During this period, Constantinople sought Muslim unity against enemies in the West. The Islamists in Kemal’s Türkiye, who were more or less politically marginalised until the rise of the AKP, had always advocated for stronger ties with Muslim nations. Before Mr. Erdogan’s rise, perhaps the most influential Islamist voice in Türkiye’s politics was that of Necmettin Erbakan (1926-1991). Erbakan, who had served as Prime Minister briefly in 1996-97 and was later banned from politics by the Constitutional Court for violating the country’s secular laws, argued that Türkiye should protect its religious values, build closer relations with Muslim countries and combat western imperialism. For him, the European Union was “a Christian club”. Erbakan formed different political parties (of which the Welfare Party was the most prominent one) but never managed to break through Türkiye’s political and foreign policy consensus.When the Welfare Party was banned, Islamist politicians formed the Virtue Party in 1997. One of the leaders of the Virtue Party was Recep Tayyip Erdogan. The AKP was formed in 2001 after the Virtue Party was found unconstitutional. In the 2002 election, Mr. Erdogan did what Erbakan couldn’t — he brought the Islamists to power. It was only a matter of time before the AKP turned to Erbakan’s foreign policy doctrine.

“The people’s calls and their most humane demands” must be paid attention to. Mr. Erdogan said in February 2011 amid a mass uprising in Egypt against the rule of Hosni Mubarak. By openly backing the protesters, Mr. Erdogan risked unsettling Türkiye’s relationship with Arab countries. But when the Mubarak regime fell, Türkiye suddenly found strategic depth in its new approach, and it started seeing street protests in Arab countries as a vehicle for ittihad-i Islam. Then Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoglu put this policy tilt in a historical perspective in March 2011, saying the mass protests could break “the template drawn by Sykes-Picot” (the Sykes-Picot Agreement was a treaty between the U.K. and France in 1916 where it was decided to divide the terri-

tories of the Ottoman Empire following World War I) and bring power to the parties “that truly represent the people” of the region. Türkiye started backing these parties, hoping that their revolutionary ascent could open corridors of influence for Ankara in a region which was ruled by the Ottomans for hundreds of years.

When the Muslim Brotherhood, another Islamist party with which the AKP shares ideological and political similarities, came to power in Egypt, Mr. Erdogan’s doctrine was put to practice. When protests broke out in Syria in 2011 against the regime of President Bashar al-Assad, Türkiye backed anti-Assad groups — first the Free Syrian Army and then different Islamist outfits. In Libya, which was divided between two governments — one based in Tripoli in the west and the other in Tobruk in the east — Türkiye supported the Tripoli government dominated by Islamist groups, including the Muslim Brotherhood, after the Gaddafi regime was toppled by a NATO invasion in 2011.Mr. Erdogan did not blindly follow ittihad-i Islam. He mixed his Islamist ideology with pragmatism. He was aware of Türkiye’s limitations.

It is no longer the Caliphate and doesn’t enjoy any politico-religious command over the Muslim world. Geographically, it is only a fraction of what used to be the Ottoman Empire. It is also a treaty ally of NATO. It hosts several Western military bases, including U.S. nuclear weapons at Incirlik. While Mr. Erdogan was ready to risk some friction in Türkiye’s ties with the West, he was cautious not to lead those frictions to a break. At the same time, he saw Türkiye’s support for Islamist groups as an opportunity to rebuild the country’s influence in the Islamic world.Syria is a case in point. When Mr. Assad, backed by Russia and Iran, started turning the tide of the civil war in 2016, Türkiye offered protection to the HTS, the anti-Assad Islamist group that had taken over Idlib. HTS was formerly Syria’s al-Qaeda branch. But Türkiye strongly opposed any military action against HTS. It entered into an agreement with Russia to maintain order on the Turkish-Syrian border. It carved territories on the border, creating a buffer between the Turkish Kurdish regions and the Syrian Kurdish province. And in November 2024, when the Syrian regime was reeling under repeated Israeli strikes, HTS launched an offensive and captured Damascus within 12 days. This further raised Türkiye’s profile in West Asia.

Azerbaijan is yet another example. When Armenia and Azerbaijan went to war in 2023, Türkiye backed Azerbaijan against Armenia, a Russian treaty ally. When Russia, pre-occupied with its own war in Ukraine, was unable to help Armenia, Azerbaijan, with Turkish support and Turkish-made drones, made quick gains. Türkiye supplied drones to Ukraine, but refused to enforce sanctions on Russia. Its decision to buy Russia’s S400 missile defence system had irked Washington. But Mr. Erdogan managed to reset ties and extract concessions from the U.S. when he supported the accession of Sweden and Finland into NATO.Mr. Erdogan has thus been playing a tricky game — balancing between the West and its rivals through traditional diplomacy, while at the same time reasserting itself in the Muslim world using Islamist foreign policy.

While Türkiye’s geographical location, its membership in NATO and its Islamist foreign policy allow the country to portray itself as a major force, its Achilles heel is the economy. Mr. Erdogan, who delivered on the economic front in the first decade of his rule, has ever since struggled to keep the ship afloat. Türkiye has experienced a prolonged period of hyperinflation, and the Turkish lira has depreciated significantly in recent years. Amid high inflation and high unemployment, social unrest has spread, frequently leading to violent crackdowns. Mr. Erdogan, who changed the Constitution turning Türkiye’s political system into an executive presidency from parliamentary democracy, has amassed huge powers in his own hands. He has suppressed political opponents, independent media, and other voices of dissent. Earlier this year, Turkish authorities arrested Ekrem Imamoglu, the popular Mayor of Istanbul, who is the opposition’s candidate for the 2028 presidential election, which Mr. Erdogan can’t contest under the current Constitution.While on the foreign policy front, Mr. Erdogan’s bets have paid tactical results as of now, it is to be seen how Türkiye is going to build on these gains for long-term strategic dividends. True, the regime change in Syria is a huge advantage for Ankara, but Syria is far from being stable. So is Libya, where violence resurfaces frequently. In the Gulf, Qatar is Türkiye’s powerhouse partner. While Ankara has improved ties with Saudi Arabia and the UAE in recent years, old mistrust still lingers. And in the Caucasus and the Black Sea, Türkiye will have to take Western and Russian sensitives into consideration in its foreign policy decisions. Its support for Pakistan provides Ankara some legroom in South Asia, but Türkiye remains an insignificant player in the subcontinent.While Türkiye seeks to expand its strategic footprint in different directions, with a neo-Ottoman tilt and within the framework of the western security umbrella, it also risks turning itself into an authoritarian Islamist regime with a weak economy and political instability.

themselves.Measuring the actual masses is more challenging. This is what sophisticated devices like KATRIN are designed to attempt.

2. A neutrino’s mass is so small that in almost every situation it travels nearly at the speed of light (a particle that does travel at the speed of light, the photon, is massless). It is this unbearable lightness that makes their weight difficult to pinpoint in an experiment. Also, physicists don’t understand why neutrinos are so light.3. In the Standard Model — the current best framework scientists have to explain the ways particles interact with each other — there is no way to theoretically confer masses to neutrinos. Said differently, neutrinos are predicted as massless, in conflict with the Nobel-winning oscillation data. This implies the presence of new, hitherto unseen forces and particle species in new Nature — the clearest index yet that something lurks beyond the Standard Model. What is that something?

4. Are neutrinos their own antiparticles? They certainly fit the bill. The antiparticle of a particle type carries opposite charge, so the first criterion for a self-conjugate particle is that it must be electrically neutral — which neutrinos are. As far as physicists can tell, it’s also an elementary particle. This is unlike, say, a neutron, which is electrically neutral but composed of charged quarks. As antiquarks are distinct from quarks, an antineutron is distinct from a neutron.To seal the deal, physicists need to confirm a third requirement: whether the neutrino has a Majorana mass or a Dirac mass. These terms refer to the mechanism by which a neutrino gets its mass: if it follows the Majorana process, then a neutrino would be confirmed to be its own antiparticle. To settle this, physicists are looking for a very delicate natural process called neutrinoless double beta decay: one way that it can occur requires two neutrinos to mutually annihilate themselves.However, a neutrino is dreadfully hard to catch.

Delimiting by electors rather than population offers a fairer approach



Several recent articles in the mainstream media suggest that a delimitation exercise — if carried out with population as the primary criterion for allocating parliamentary constituencies (PCs) — would disproportionately disadvantage the southern States.Proponents of this view argue that the southern States, having adhered more rigorously to family planning norms than their northern counterparts, would either receive comparatively fewer PC seats or could even be left with less seats than what they have currently.

But the broader question that has not been adequately discussed is: what is the most rational criterion for allocation of PCs: population or the number of electors?Electors in a constituency are not always a subset of the population. Many electors may live outside their registered PCs, or may have failed to register. Census records are sensitive to migration, as they are based merely on a stay of six months or more (or even an intention to stay), without even requiring any proof of residence or registration in the voter list.

Migrants also generally avoid/delay transferring their voter registration for various reasons. Furthermore, variations in the age structure — such as a higher proportion of under-18s — may also lead to large differences in elector numbers between PCs with similar populations.Importantly, the principle of ‘one person, one vote, one value’ aligns more closely with electors than the population. Using elector data avoids the wait for a Census and offers a more accurate measure of representation.The value of a vote can be considered inversely proportional to the number of electors in a PC. Data shows that vote value has varied significantly across regions and over time. Union Territories (UTs), hilly States, and north-eastern States have consistently had a disproportionately high vote value from 1951 to 2024, due to geographical considerations and the minimum representation requirement from each State.

When comparing the southern States with other States, we find that they started with a higher vote value in 1951. However, this trend reversed, and they recorded a lower vote value in 1961, 1971, 1980, 1991, and 1999.The trend reversed once again, with the southern States registering a higher vote value in 2009, 2019, and 2024. It shows a mixed

A Chennai man’s honeymoon murder in Munnar and striking parallels to the Meghalaya case

On the night of June 16, 2006, Anantharaman, a 30-year-old resident of Shankar Nagar, Pammal, and Vidyalakshmi, 24, whom he had married just nine days earlier, boarded a train from Chennai to Thrissur, Kerala, for their honeymoon. The following morning, the couple offered prayers at the famed Guruvayoor temple. They then travelled in a tourist taxi to the scenic hill station of Munnar and checked into Sterling Resorts.

The next day, they visited the Kundala Dam, a popular tourist spot. The couple hired a pedal boat but returned to the jetty earlier than scheduled. They then proceeded to a secluded area near the dam. Sometime later, a visibly shaken Vidyalakshmi ran to their taxi driver and told him that two men had attacked them, strangled Anantharaman to death, and fled with cash and valuables. The driver immediately alerted the police.Elsewhere, two young men — Anand and Anburaj — were travelling from Kundala Dam to Hotel Arafra in an autorickshaw. They grew nervous when they saw police jeeps rushing past them in the opposite direction. The men told the driver they wanted to leave Munnar at the earliest. Sensing their anxiety, the auto driver became suspicious. Later, while the men were at the hotel, he shared his concerns with friends and informed the police.

The police quickly brought the two men in for questioning. Vidyalakshmi was already at the station. According to a report in The Hindu dated June 20, 2006, “The complaint preferred by Ms. Sreevidya [Vidyalakshmi, then wrongly identified] said her husband went into the woods where the assailants attacked him and robbed her of her jewellery.” She likely did not expect to come face-to-face at the police station with the very men who had helped kill her husband.Soon, the truth began to unravel — a secret love affair, a honeymoon, and a cold-blooded murder.Back then, few would have imagined that this sensational case would find eerie echoes 19 years later in Meghalaya, where Raja Raghuvanshi, a man from Indore, was murdered during his honeymoon — a plot allegedly hatched by his wife, Sonam.

What happened in 2006?

Returning to June 2006: at the police station, officers found a handwritten travel itinerary in Anand’s possession, tracing a route from Chennai to Munnar. Under interrogation, he admitted that Vidyalakshmi had given him the itinerary.Investigations revealed that Anand and Vidyalakshmi had been in love since their school days in Chennai. But Anand’s financial instability and his caste background led Vidyalakshmi’s parents to oppose the relationship. Eventually, they arranged her marriage with Anantharaman — a match she accepted, but with ulterior motives.The police learnt that Anand and Anburaj had travelled in an unreserved compartment on the same train as the newlyweds. Anand was originally to be joined by another accomplice, who backed out at the last moment. Anburaj was brought in instead.At Guruvayoor, the two men briefly met Vidyalakshmi while her husband was away. When the couple continued to Munnar, Anand and Anburaj followed them and unsuccessfully tried to check in to the same resort. They then found a room at nearby Hotel Arafra. From there, they made their way to Kundala Dam, where Anantharaman was strangled with his own camera strap. After confirming the attackers had fled, Vidyalakshmi fabricated her story and alerted the driver.Interestingly, she told a different version to Anantharaman’s brother — that the taxi driver had killed her husband. This contradiction later helped the prosecution build a case against her and her co-accused.The police also found minor bloodstains on the clothes of all three accused — stains that matched Anantharaman’s blood group.

It came to light that Vidyalakshmi had been in constant touch with Anand throughout the honeymoon, using her husband’s phone, without his knowledge. When Anand

pattern, with the percentage difference in the average number of electors between the southern States and other States ranging from -10.5% to +5%.Importantly, the southern States began with a higher vote value per parliamentary constituency when the first Parliament was formed in 1951. This initial advantage may have potential long-term implications for government policies and initiatives, development outcomes, and more.Moreover, among the five largest and five smallest PCs (excluding hilly/UTs/north-east) in terms of electors, four in each group are from the southern States. The value of a vote in Idukki is 4.5 times higher than in Malkajgiri and 2.6 times higher than in Bangalore North. This indicates that rationalisation of PCs is more needed in the southern States.According to the elector data for 2024, the southern States account for just 22.45% of India’s electors, yet they hold 23.8% of Lok Sabha seats. Their representation in the Rajya Sabha is even more skewed, at 24.4%, exceeding both their share of electors and their Lok Sabha seat share.

The pattern is reversed for the other States. Although they comprise 71.2% of India’s electors, they hold only 67.4% of Lok Sabha seats and just 64.4% of Rajya Sabha seats.In particular, Tamil Nadu has 39 Lok Sabha seats which is lower than Bihar’s 40 or West Bengal’s 42; but it has 18 Rajya Sabha seats, which is more than the 16 seats allotted to both Bihar and West Bengal.The fairer approach is to allocate seats based on electors. In the table, column 4 shows the proposed PC seats if the total number of seats is raised to 800.To avoid penalising smaller States and UTs, their current seat count is preserved, which results in a total of 810. The table shows that among the large States, Rajasthan (76%), Karnataka (60.7%), and Telangana (58.8%) would see the highest percentage gains in seats.

The current narratives — that PCs are allocated solely on the basis of population, and that the potential reduction in seats in southern States is primarily due to their strict adherence to family planning policies — are not entirely accurate.First, constituency allocation has never been based purely on population. Other considerations, i.e., geographical challenges and minimum representation, have always played a role.Second, linking political representation to population control sets a dangerous precedent. By that logic, similar claims could be made for representation based on religion or caste.For instance, Jains, among all religious groups, and upper castes, among all social groups, have the highest adherence to population control, while Muslims and Scheduled Tribes have comparatively higher fertility rates.Third, when the criterion of using population for the formation of PCs was originally adopted, the consequences of the population enumeration method and the impact of large-scale migration were not anticipated.Therefore, the principle of ‘one person, one vote, one value’ in a true sense is more closely aligned with the number of electors rather than the population across PCs.



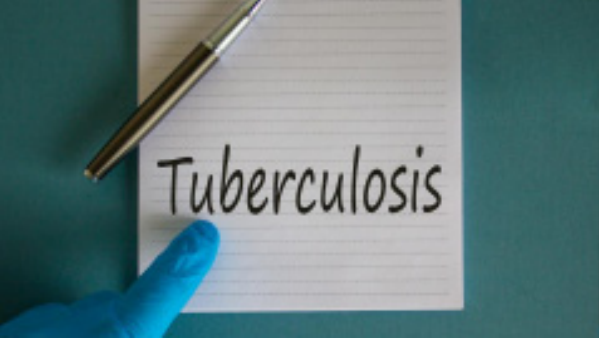
reached Kundala Dam and faced poor mobile phone reception, he used the autorickshaw driver’s phone to get last-minute directions from her.All three were arrested and lodged in Devikulam Sub-Jail. A year later, the trial court found them guilty. Anand and Vidyalakshmi were sentenced to double life imprisonment, and Anburaj to life imprisonment.The three appealed to the Kerala High Court. But in January 2012, a bench comprising Justices R. Basant and P.Q. Barkath Ali dismissed their pleas.“The learned counsel for A1 (Anand) and A3 (Vidyalakshmi) want this Court to accept that the relationship had come to an end in 2004. Evidently, the love letters are not dated and this affords them the opportunity to advance such a contention,” noted the judges. “We have satisfactory evidence about the telephonic contacts between A1 and A3 after the marriage was fixed — immediately before and after,” they added.As to why Vidyalakshmi married Anantharaman despite wanting to be with Anand, the court speculated: “May be more mischievous ideas crept into her cranium and she may have thought that as a widow there may have been better chances of having a life with A1.”Pivotal witnessIf this case was solved on the same day as the murder — unlike the Meghalaya case, which took a week — much of the credit goes to the alert autorickshaw driver who sensed something amiss and acted swiftly. His testimony as “Prosecution Witness Number Two (PW2)” was pivotal. As the Kerala High Court observed: “The assessment and response of PW2, to crown all other circumstances, is eloquent about the manner in which A1 and A2 behaved and reacted on that crucial day.”

Jio BlackRock receives Sebi approval to launch advisory business

New Delhi: Jio BlackRock Investment Advisers Pvt Ltd, a 50:50 joint venture between Jio Financial Services Ltd (JFSL) and US-based BlackRock Inc, on Wednesday said it has received regulatory approval from markets regulator Sebi and leading exchange BSE to commence operations as an investment adviser.

This follows the announcement on May 27, 2025, of regulatory approval from Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi) for Jio BlackRock Asset Management Private Ltd to commence operations as an investment manager for its mutual fund business in India.With this license, Jio BlackRock Investment Advisers will now focus on developing a digital-first product designed to meet the evolving needs of investors, Jio BlackRock Investment Advisers said in a statement.Jio BlackRock Investment Advisers also announced the appointment of Marc Pilgrem as its Managing Director (MD) and Chief Executive Officer (CEO). As Indian investors increasingly seek personalized, insight-driven financial solutions, this joint venture is poised to democratise access to world-class advisory services, JFSL MD and CEO Hitesh Sethia said.

The need for universal and equitable health coverage



India has made substantial and tangible progress in Tuberculosis (TB) care, adopting new strategies to detect, treat and prevent TB. Some key areas of progress include the expansion of molecular testing for rapid detection of TB and drug-resistance; the introduction of the shorter, all-oral BPaLM regimen (a combination of four drugs Bedaquiline (B), Pretomanid (Pa), Linezolid (L), and Moxifloxacin (M)); doubling of the entitlement under the Ni-kshay Poshan Yojana (NPY) for nutrition support to ₹1,000 a month; roll-out of TB preventive therapy; and an expanded role for communities through the involvement of TB survivors and Champions. The impact of the roll-out of these strategies can be seen in the 17.7% decline in TB incidence in India, from 237 per 1,00,000 population in 2015 to 195 per 1,00,000 population in 2023, in tandem with a 21.4% reduction in TB-related deaths.

Since Independence, India's public health system has delivered disease control services through primarily vertical health programmes, such as the National Tuberculosis Elimination Programme (NTEP). While this vertical nature has allowed for concentrated focus and brought benefits in many ways, it has also been limiting. Integration of TB services within the broader public health system is key to India's pursuit of equitable, universal health coverage (UHC) for all.Decentralising TB care for all

The ambitious Ayushman Bharat National Health Protection Scheme was launched in India in 2018 to provide UHC for the Indian population. Today, TB has been integrated within both key components of Ayushman Bharat: the Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (AB-PMJAY), considered the world's largest insurance scheme, and the Ayushman Arogya Mandirs (AAMs, formerly known as Health and Wellness Centres), which provide a comprehensive basket of primary health-care services in rural and urban India.From the perspective of a person with TB symptoms, the best experience would be accessing consistently high-quality services at the first point of contact. The integration of TB services at the AAM primary care level is designed to meet this need, bringing together diagnostic, treatment and preventive care under one umbrella. AAMs serve as sputum collection centres, where people with TB symptoms can give samples for testing. The NTEP has also been optimising sample collection and transportation methods through a diagnostics network optimisation exercise. A person diagnosed with TB at a secondary or tertiary care facility can undergo treatment at the health centre closest to their residence, again minimising time and costs. In the first two months when people with TB are weak and drop outs as well as mortality is highest, community health officers positioned at the AAMs and their teams must be trained to identify and refer such patients for admission.While TB services have been free within the public health system, over 50% of all people with TB symptoms continue to seek care in the private sector. Uneven standards of care across the vastly heterogeneous private health sector has led to delays in diagnosis and contributed to poor outcomes as well as significant out-of-pocket expenditure (OOPE) for families. It is imperative to strengthen referrals from the private to the public health system, particularly for those who cannot afford to incur substantial expenditure on health and who may not be aware that TB services are freely available in the public health system. It is equally essential to ensure that the AB-PMJAY provides full insurance coverage for those who seek care for TB in the private or public sector,

In Tiruchi, smartphone addiction among children causes concern



An increasing number of school children are displaying signs of addiction to their smartphones and other electronic devices, mental health experts in Tiruchi have said.A senior official at the District Early Intervention Centre, Mahatma Gandhi Memorial Government Hospital said that children who are spending over 14 hours on their phones are being referred, at least once or twice a week, at the Tiruchi facility.“We have seen young boys and girls who become aggressive and even threaten suicide when their phones are taken away from them. This is becoming a common issue among children across all ages with access to smart devices,” the official told Approximately three to four children exhibiting symptoms of smartphone addiction are being reported on a daily basis at the Athma Mind Care Hospital (AMCH) in Tiruchi.

“Mobile phones are used as a babysitting device in many homes. As the eye-to-screen time increases, over time, children feel a compulsion to use the mobile phone for pleasure. Parents, teachers and friends play a role in how a child uses the smartphone. Addiction can develop due to factors such as a low intelligence quotient (IQ), undiagnosed learning disability or lack of parental affection. Overuse of phones can make children take up online gambling or even procure drugs through the dark web,” said M. Rajaram, consultant psychiatrist, AMCH.Medical intervention and long-term residential care are required to break the habit in some of the more severe cases, said Dr. Rajaram.

With most schools adopting online tools such as WhatsApp and their own proprietary software to stay in touch with students, parents however, said that mobile phones have become an essential part of the learning module.“Though my daughter's school does not allow mobile phones on campus, the only way to find out about upcoming assignments and other events is through their

particularly those who are severely ill.Equitable and decentralised care for allWhat does the road to equitable TB care look like? There are five key steps we can take to accelerate our progress towards TB elimination and universal health coverage (UHC).

First, while we work to achieve decentralisation, we must strengthen person-centred care approaches, and deliver them at scale. There have been model interventions in several States that have assessed people with TB for social and clinical vulnerabilities and linked them to care. In Tamil Nadu, the Tamil Nadu Kasanoi Erappila Thittam (TN-KET), or “TB death-free project”, has been successful in achieving reduced TB mortality through a robust system of identifying those most vulnerable or sick, and referring them for a brief period of admission. Similarly, there have been other interventions focusing on tribal communities, migrants, and homeless populations. One clear pathway to achieving UHC and increased utilisation of the public health system is by strengthening investment in the traditional ‘inputs’ for health and streamlining their functioning — human resources, supplies and infrastructure.Second, we must develop mechanisms to recognise intersectionalities. Multiple factors such as gender, age, caste, disability, socio-economic status, and occupation determine health seeking intent and access to health and TB services. The intersection of these aspects of identity can both positively and adversely impact TB outcomes. The NTEP has adopted the national framework for a gender-responsive approach to TB, recognising that women, men, and LGBTQIA persons experience TB differently. Improving understanding of gender will take time, and inevitably challenge personal behaviours and norms, but is essential to equitable care. Similarly, there has been some early work to better understand TB and disability, which must be built upon.

Third, integrated care remains a challenge for India's health system, as we continue to build our primary care services. How do we ensure that someone who comes with TB symptoms is tested for Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) or asthma? How can a person with TB be screened for depression or hypertension and linked to appropriate services and counselling? We must adopt models of integrated general health screening in community settings, for example, test for TB and COPD through validated Artificial Intelligence (AI)-enabled chest x-rays and upfront molecular testing, along with screening of common non-communicable diseases through blood pressure, blood glucose, and body mass index (BMI) monitoring.Fourth, UHC approaches are centred around minimising OOPE, thereby eliminating health-related debt. Schemes such as the NPY have helped alleviate the financial burden on families, by providing monetary support for access to nutritious food. Case-finding approaches, such as the ongoing ‘100 Days’ campaign, can help reduce OOPE prior to diagnosis. However, there are still several significant indirect costs that remain. Expanding social protection by extending nutrition support to the family, piloting wage-loss schemes to offset a loss of income during TB treatment and introducing livelihood programmes for TB survivors are potential future actions.Lessons from COVID-19, communicationFinally, equity in terms of access to information and knowledge is critical. TB remains severely misunderstood. Recall how swiftly we were able to ensure public understanding of COVID-19, through a flood of science-based information using a multitude of platforms. We need similar approaches for TB, to encourage people to seek care and adopt simple measures to reduce transmission within homes and communities. Promoting knowledge about drug-resistant TB, in the context of growing anti-microbial resistance (AMR) is vital. Decimating TB stigma is critical to ensuring early detection and successful treatment outcomes for people with TB.An equitable TB programme is one where every individual receives the highest quality of person-centred care that takes into account individual needs. Equity is a cornerstone of health care, and is essential to achieving TB elimination and universal health coverage. India's TB response is well poised to define global standards and benchmarks. Applying the equity lens will only accelerate our progress.

WhatsApp group. My daughter spends at least four hours on her phone after school, both for study and to relax. We argue about it, but we cannot control children for too long, because as grown-ups, we also use our phones constantly,” said a parent.

Maruti, Mahindra and hyundai cars set to get costlier from this April

New Delhi: Cars are set to get costlier from April, with various automakers like market leaders Maruti Suzuki, Mahindra & Mahindra, and Hyundai, announcing price hikes due to rising input costs and operational expenses.

Maruti Suzuki India, which leads the domestic passenger car segment in the country, plans to hike prices of its entire model range by up to 4 per cent from next month. The auto major currently sells various models, ranging from the entry-level Alto K-10 to the multiple-purpose vehicle Invicto in the domestic market, with prices ranging from Rs 4.23 lakh to Rs 29.22 lakh, respectively (ex-showroom Delhi).Its rival Hyundai Motor India said it will increase car prices by up to 3 per cent from April 2025, owing to rising raw material and operational costs.Similarly, Tata Motors intends to increase the prices of its passenger vehicle range, including electric vehicles, from April 2025, for the second time this year.Mahindra & Mahindra said it will hike prices of its SUVs and commercial vehicles by up to 3 per cent from April.Kia India, Honda Cars India, Renault India and BMW have also announced to hike vehicle prices from the next month. Deloitte Partner & Automotive Sector Leader Rajat Mahajan said carmakers usually have two price hike cycles in India, one at the beginning of the calendar year and another at the start of the financial year.“The reason for the extent of hike varies, could be related to currency fluctuations where we need more rupees to import the same product, commodity or component,” he stated.Over the last six months, the US Dollar has appreciated by almost 3 per cent against the rupee, which affects high import-dependent categories that may have a direct or indirect impact on input costs. Besides, original equipment manufacturers (OEMs) with a complete knockdown (CKD) footprint are likely to experience an even greater effect.

5 years after Covid: ‘I am happy if I can climb to the second floor without feeling breathless’



Five years have completely upended the life of 45-year-old Parminder Malhotra. From a robust fitness enthusiast, he struggles to climb to his second-floor apartment in West Delhi's Tilak Nagar, his oxygen levels sometimes plummeting to 80 per cent. He's breathless and needs oxygen support whenever pollution levels soar in Delhi and keeps an oxygen cylinder and concentrator on standby. An electrical engineer who vetted construction sites, he now runs an electrical appliances store. Still, he has managed to move on from Covid and two rounds of being on a ventilator. “As long as I can breathe in fresh air from my balcony, I am okay,” says the long Covid survivor.

Malhotra has been a regular visitor to the long Covid clinic at AIIMS, Delhi, ever since he contracted the Delta variant of the virus in 2021. That led to lung fibrosis, a condition characterised by scarring and thickening of lung tissue, making it difficult for the patient to breathe and absorb oxygen. It's a progressive condition that worsens over time, and while there's no cure, treatments can help manage symptoms and slow down their progression. He now gets a CT scan done every three months to see if he is doing any better. Or worse.“On a routine check-up last week, the doctor told me that I still had patches in my lungs,” says Malhotra. Now his biggest challenge is to climb to the third floor of his apartment block and not feel breathless.“Till date, I feel uneasy for almost 10 minutes after climbing two flights of stairs,” he adds. So he does spirometer exercises and yoga regularly. As part of a test exercise at the AIIMS clinic, he has to blow about 30 balloons one after another.

According to Dr Anant Mohan, professor and HOD, Pulmonary, Critical Care and Sleep Medicine, Malhotra had a severe Covid infection that had damaged a big portion of his lungs. “We didn't know how to deal with Covid in the initial days. So we don't know much about the future of patients who had severe infections then and had to be hospitalised. But what we can do is to monitor them, treat them like any other interstitial lung disease (a condition marked by inflammation and scarring of tissue) case and help them with pulmonary rehabilitation,” he says. They need follow-ups and corrective lifestyle measures for a lifetime. “These patients should maintain good lung hygiene, do breathing exercises, vaccinate for pneumonia, get regular check-ups and follow changes in medication if required,”

Buttermilk or kanji? Which fermented home-made drink is best for the gut?

The lactic acid bacteria present in buttermilk can ease digestion, prevent bloating and restore the balance of gut microbiota.



microbiota.The lactic acid bacteria present in buttermilk can ease digestion, prevent bloating and restore the balance of gut microbiota. As the season warms up, it is the time for including probiotics (the good gut bacteria) in our diet. While commercial probiotic drinks like flavoured yogurts and packaged kefir are readily available, they contain added sugar and chemical additives that you can do without. Home-made probiotic beverages offer a more natural, cost-effective and chemical-free alternative and can be easily incorporated throughout the day.

1. Buttermilk (Chaas): This is rich in lactic acid bacteria, calcium, potassium, vitamin B12, and proteins. It can be low in fat and calories when made from skimmed curd. The lactic acid bacteria present in buttermilk can ease digestion, prevent bloating and restore the balance of gut microbiota. Additionally, the presence of calcium and vitamin B12 supports bone health and energy production.
2. Fermented Rice Water (Panta Bhat/Kanji): This is high in resistant starch and short-chain fatty acids (SCFAs), contains vitamins B1, B6, minerals like magnesium and is rich in good bacteria like Lactobacillus and Bifidobacteria. Since it is rich in prebiotics and probiotics, it enhances digestion, prevents constipation and tames acid reflux due to its alkaline nature. The resistant starch in fermented rice feeds good gut bacteria, promoting a balanced microbiome. SCFAs keep the gut lining intact.
3. Beetroot Kanji: This is made by soaking beetroot and mustard seeds in water with a pinch of salt. During fermentation, Lactobacillus species thrive in the mixture, making it a powerful probiotic drink that supports gut flora. The fibre content in beetroot also acts as a prebiotic, feeding beneficial bacteria in the gut. This is also high in antioxidants, iron, vitamin C, and nitrates which detoxify the liver and enhance cardiovascular health. The natural nitrates in beetroot improve blood circulation and stamina.
4. Sweet Potato Kanji: This lesser-known drink, prepared by fermenting boiled sweet potatoes in water, often with mustard seeds and spices, has good concentrations of Lactobacillus bacteria, which aid digestion and reduce inflammation in the gut. Additionally, the complex carbohydrates in sweet potatoes act as a fuel source for beneficial bacteria. They have fibre and the immunity-boosting vitamin C and beta-carotene.
5. Coconut Water Kefir: This is a fermented drink made by adding kefir grains to coconut water, allowing beneficial

adds Dr Mohan.In October 2024, Dr Mohan published a study after observing and treating patients at the AIIMS long Covid clinic. Malhotra was a test case too. It showed that a third of the patients who came to the clinic weren't breathing properly or getting sufficient oxygen from the air to their blood. The study is significant because it shows that after-effects can be quite severe and last beyond two years after initial Covid diagnosis. This was common in women, the elderly, those who had severe infection and smokers. “It is one of the first studies from a low- and middle-income country (LMIC) to report long-term pulmonary sequelae (after effects) of COVID-19. Some of them still need oxygen support occasionally,” says Dr Mohan.

Malhotra needed oxygen support throughout 2022, a year after being diagnosed. He started tapering it off in 2023 but required it during Diwali that year after an intense coughing bout left him gasping for breath.Parminder Malhotra with his wife Parminder Malhotra with his wife. According to Dr Garima Shrivastav, who was one of the researchers on long Covid, the infected lung tissue undergoes a healing process but some of it leaves a permanent scar in the recovery phase of the Covid infection. “This stiffening tissue makes it difficult for patients to breathe in and breathe out. Their oxygen flow is reduced,” she says.Malhotra, a non-smoker and occasional drinker, was surprised that his body could give in and lungs collapse so easily. “We have had many young patients who had high viral loads and severe scarring without any co-morbidity. Remember that the vaccine was not out back then, so their immunity took a severe beating. Their bodies didn't have any shield,” adds Dr Shrivastav.

“Covid changed our lives,” says Malhotra as he shares throwback moments. His wife Anjali, who was the primary caregiver for Malhotra and the children, had to battle trauma of another kind. “Given his health status that required him to be constantly in and out of hospitals, he was out of work for almost two years. We had to struggle hard to make both ends meet,” she says, having to manage the stress of keeping her husband alive and be the pillar of strength to her school and college-going kids.Recalling April 2021, Malhotra says he developed severe breathing difficulties within three days of developing symptoms. “The doctor suggested a CT scan which showed severe lung damage. Oxygenated blood was not reaching my extremities and my toes had gone black. It took me two hours to climb down the stairs that day,” he says. He was immediately rushed to a Covid centre in Chhattarpur and was put on a ventilator. He stayed there for over a month but his condition did not improve. So he was admitted to the AIIMS Trauma Centre where he needed a ventilator and remained under medical care and supervision till July.When he was finally discharged and signed up for rehabilitation, Malhotra could not keep his job as an electrical engineer with a Gurgaon construction firm as his job entailed site visits and construction dust was anathema to his weakened lungs. For the last year, he has been running an electrical appliance shop near his house, managing orders and rostering employees for field duties.However the couple chooses not to look back and have chosen a disciplined lifestyle to stay healthy for their children and their future. “There is no option but to move on. A new life means it has to be lived better,” says Malhotra.

Buttermilk or kanji? Which fermented home-made drink is best for the gut?

The lactic acid bacteria present in buttermilk can ease digestion, prevent bloating and restore the balance of gut microbiota.



bacteria like Lactobacillus, Saccharomyces and Bifidobacteria to multiply. The fermentation process also breaks down sugars, making it a gut-friendly and low-calorie drink. This refreshing probiotic beverage helps balance the gut microbiome, reduces bloating and supports hydration. The high electrolyte content also makes it ideal for post-workout recovery.Unlike processed probiotic drinks which whittle down the efficacy of good bacteria during manufacturing, home-made fermented drinks are host to a wider variety of probiotic strains. Choose for your gut health wisely.

Health benefits of jackfruit

If the mango is described as the king of fruits, then the jackfruit will be the doctor of all fruits. Jackfruit (Artocarpus heterophyllus) is a plant known in India and the Middle East for a long time and has been used in Ayurveda and Unani systems of medicine as a health aid. Known as ‘kathal’ in Hindi, ‘palaas’ in Tamil, ‘kanthal’ in Bengali, and ‘chakka’ in Malayalam, the plant and its parts are used in cooking in Southern and Northeastern States of India, while it is eaten more as a fruit elsewhere. It is abundant in Southeast Asian countries such as Malaysia, from where it is exported to the Middle East.The jackfruit tree is large, and the fruit does not hang down from branches, but grows directly from the trunk and limbs. This helps it to grow to enormous sizes, the record being a 42 kg specimen from Kerala. The ripe fruit is sweet and tasty. Unripe jackfruit has many culinary uses. It is even used as a substitute for meat, since it has lower fat and cholesterol levels, and tastes just as good as meat! Jackfruit biryani is a tasty vegetarian alternative, as is jackfruit curry.The tree has many other uses. Southeast Asian monks wear robes dyed with jackfruit bark for a radiant, sunlit yellow that is reminiscent of honey. This colour also imbues a pleasing texture to furniture made from jackfruit wood, which is hardy and termite resistant.But it is as a superfood that the jackfruit has been gaining global popularity. A comprehensive review from Cleveland University, U.S. points out that jackfruit is rich in proteins, vitamins, minerals and plant-based chemicals, and elements such as potassium, magnesium and phosphorus. In Duke University's site, scientist Brianna Elliott highlights the nutritional benefits of jackfruit. She points out that sliced jackfruit is nutritionally superior to apples and mangoes.

Obesity and diabetes management drug launched in India by American pharma company Eli Lilly



In India, the demand for GLP-1 class drugs to manage diabetes and obesity has surged, creating a market worth hundreds of billions of dollars. A key drug in this class, semaglutide is set to go off-patent in March next year, and

Patients hit as post-operative specimen biopsy unit at State-run Kidwai cancer hospital in Bengaluru stops functioning

Patients visiting the State-run Kidwai Memorial Institute of Oncology (KMIO) in Bengaluru are finding it hard to get post-operative specimen biopsies done as the only histopathology machine is out of order.

Histopathology services are essential for the diagnosis, staging, and treatment planning of cancer patients. Biopsy is often the first step in the diagnostic process while histopathology is used to confirm the diagnosis and provide additional information about the nature and severity of the condition. Although delayed, small biopsies, such as needle biopsy for diagnosis of new patients, are being done. The worst affected are those who have undergone surgery and waiting to know the stage of cancer. This is because the post-operative specimen biopsies have almost come to a standstill, with a backlog of over 3,000 specimen samples at the laboratory, according to sources.

Tissue embedding station Sources said the tissue embedding station was procured in 2011 at a cost of over ₹20 lakh. With a service life of 10 years, this unit has been under repair since 2023. Although a request was made to install a new unit in 2023, the tender process was delayed due to various reasons. Now, the tender process is over and it is at the work order stage. However, work orders cannot be issued as the institute does not have a signing authority. Attributing the problem to frequent administrative changes, sources pointed out that the term of Kidwai's administrator Naveen Bhat Y., who is also the State Mission Director, National Health Mission (NHM), ended on March 13. The in-charge director does not have signing power. The institute has seen five directors and two administrators in the last one year. Frequent changes in the administration has delayed the tendering process for procurement of life-saving medicines and consumables. Patients are forced to buy expensive cancer drugs from outside, even if they are covered under health schemes. Since February 2024, when the former director V. Lokesh was suspended based

Why is there no Palestine state?

The Digital Personal Data Protection Act 2023 provides an opportunity to complement competition law by regulating data collection, consent, and usage. However, the absence of explicit coordination mechanisms between the CCI and the Data Protection Board of India limits the effectiveness of addressing overlapping concerns. India could draw inspiration from the EU's integration of competition law with the Digital Markets Act (DMA) and GDPR to create frameworks that tackle data exploitation and anti-competitive practices comprehensively. Addressing these challenges is crucial for India to fully harness the potential of its digital transformation, ensuring inclusive growth and equitable access to digital resources across the nation. The Economic Survey 2024-25, recently tabled in Parliament, underlines India's rapid digital transformation and emphasises the critical role of artificial intelligence (AI) in shaping the nation's economic landscape. These developments underscore the imperative for India to adapt its regulatory frameworks, including competition law. As the digital economy continues to evolve, regulatory frameworks must not only catch up but also anticipate emerging challenges posed by rapidly advancing technologies and the ever-expanding influence of tech giants. While the Meta case serves as a pivotal moment in India's efforts to regulate digital markets and address the complexities of data-driven monopolies, it also highlights the need for a more comprehensive and forward-looking approach to competition law. Shri Venkatesh is the founding partner at SKV Law Offices and has over 17 years of experience in commercial dispute resolution and regulatory law. Priya Dhankhar is a Senior Associate at SKV Law Offices and has over eight years of experience in dispute resolution. Harsh Vardhan is an Associate at SKV Law Offices and works with the Dispute Resolution team at SKV

several Indian players, including Mankind Pharma Limited, Alkem Labs Limited, and Dr. Reddy's Laboratories Limited, are in the fray to launch their generic versions of the drug. "The dual burden of obesity and Type 2 diabetes is rapidly emerging as a major public health challenge in India. Lilly is committed to collaborating with the government and industry to promote awareness and improve the prevention and management of these diseases," Winslow Tucker, president and general manager, Lilly India, said. Novo Nordisk's oral semaglutide tablet, Rybelsus, launched in India in January 2022, has already captured nearly 65% of the anti-obesity drug market along with other weight loss medications, including dulaglutide, orlistat, and liraglutide. The market for anti-obesity drugs in India has seen exponential growth, swelling from ₹137 crore in November 2020 to ₹535 crore in November 2024, according to market research firm Pharmatrac. India has about 101 million people living with diabetes, and nearly half of these adult patients are being inadequately treated with suboptimal glycaemic control. Obesity, a chronic relapsing disease and a major risk factor for diabetes, is linked to over 200 health complications, including hypertension, dyslipidaemia, coronary heart disease, and obstructive sleep apnoea. As of 2023, adult obesity prevalence in India stood at around 6.5%, affecting nearly 100 million people. "Obesity and diabetes are recognised as serious conditions linked to various life-limiting health complications, making effective and sustained treatment critical," Manish Mistry, senior medical director, Lilly India, said. "Mounjaro may offer a new approach to metabolic health management, providing healthcare providers with an innovative option to treat these diseases," Dr. Mistry said.



Work order soonThe NHM Mission Director was on Thursday evening given an extension as Kidwai administrator for six months. Mr. Sharan Prakash Patil admitted to being aware of the problem being faced by the patients. He told The Hindu that the administrator will issue the work order for the new equipment soon, and the issue will be sorted out.

And it never gave the land back. Palestinians today demand an independent state based on the 1967 border—which means the whole of the West Bank, Gaza Strip and East Jerusalem. Different Palestinian factions, including Fatah, which runs the Palestine Authority based in the West Bank, and Hamas, which is the main force in the Gaza Strip, have either directly or indirectly accepted the 1967 border. While the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO), of which Fatah is the main constituent, has officially recognised the state of Israel, Hamas has said it would accept a lasting ceasefire with Israel if the Jewish state withdraws to the 1967 border. Israel in the past had committed itself to the two-state solution, but it has never made its position clear on the border. In recent years, Israel's position has further shifted to the right, with its rulers publicly disowning the two-state plan. East Jerusalem has been annexed by Israel. The West Bank has been under Israel's direct military rule since 1967. Israeli troops withdrew from Gaza in 2005, but from 2007 onwards, the enclave remained under Israel's military blockade. The occupation had almost been normalised with even Arab nations reaching out to Israel for normalisation agreements. But then Hamas carried out a massive attack in Israel on October 7, 2023, bringing the Palestine question back to the fore of West Asia. Peace efforts Why there is no peace between Israel and Palestine? To answer this question, one has to look into the history of the peace process between the two sides. After the 1967 war, Israel for years refused to accept Palestinian nationalism. The first Israeli recognition of the Palestinian nationalism came in the 1978 Camp David agreement.

The King David Hotel of Jerusalem is one of the landmark buildings of the contested city. Built with locally-sourced pink limestone and opened in 1931 by Ezra Mosseri, a wealthy Egyptian Jewish banker, the hotel, overlooking the Old City that is holy for all three Abrahamic faiths, is a standing example of both Israel's Jewish roots and its bloody history. From its early days during the British Mandate of Palestine, the hotel hosted royalties and other key visiting dignitaries. During the Mandatory period, the British used the southern wing of the hotel for its administrative and military offices.

On July 22, 1946, members of Irgun, a right-wing Zionist underground militia, entered the hotel disguised as Arab workers and waiters. Their mission: plant explosives in the basement of the main building of the hotel. The powerful explosion led to the collapse of the western half of the southern wing. At least 91 people were killed and 46 injured. The bombing of the King David Hotel, the deadliest attack by Zionists against the British, was one of the early terrorist attacks in modern West Asia. The British found it increasingly difficult to continue their rule of Palestine after the Second World War. Britain turned to the United Nations, saying it wanted to vacate the Mandate. In 1947, the UN General Assembly decided to set up a Special Committee on Palestine (UNSCOP). In a report submitted to the General Assembly, UNSCOP proposed to divide Palestine into 'an independent Arab State, an independent Jewish State, and the City of Jerusalem'. The committee proposed that the city be under an international trusteeship system.

The Jewish Agency immediately accepted the plan, while Arab nations opposed the partition. On May 14, 1948, the day the British Mandate expired, the Jewish People's Council gathered at the Tel Aviv Museum (today known as Independence Hall). David Ben-Gurion, leader of the Jewish Agency, made the declaration from a podium. "We, the members of the National Council, representing the Jewish people in Palestine and the Zionist movement of the world,... hereby proclaim the establishment of the Jewish State in Palestine, to be called Israel," he said. The next day, the Armies of four countries — Egypt, Syria, Transjordan and Iraq — entered Palestine and clashed with the Jewish army, triggering the first Arab-Israeli war. The Arab nations' plan was to destroy the newly created state. But they failed to do so. The war continued for a year and when a ceasefire was signed, Israel was controlling more territories of historic Palestine than even the UN plan offered for the Jewish

US and China agree to a trade truce, but Beijing seems to be gaining the upper hand



The US and China said they have agreed in principle to a framework for dialling down trade tensions between the world's two biggest economies. After a meeting in London, the second time in a couple of months that two sides have met since US President Trump's sweeping tariff onslaught on its trading partners, there were indications of a reconciliation.What is beginning to get clearer, though, after the second meeting, is that this is perhaps not how America imagined the trade war to unfold. China is beginning to dictate the direction of these bilateral talks, with the US almost seen as requesting for much-needed concessions on the resumption of supplies of critical inputs.

In the first round of talks in Geneva, the US delegation led by Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent had asked the Chinese to cut its tariffs in tandem with theirs, primarily because the Americans were facing the heat back home from the early fallout of the high tariffs, including empty shelves at US grocery stores and surging prices of daily use commodities. Now, in London, the American side has asked the Chinese to "suspend or remove" restrictions on rare earths magnets, which has forced a supply-chain crunch that is visible in sectors such as auto manufacturing and electronics assembly. The London meeting follows a call between Trump and Chinese President Xi Jinping on June 5, which was initiated by the White House.After the London talks, US Commerce Secretary Howard Lutnick said the deal should result in restrictions on rare earth minerals and magnets "being resolved". Both sides said they would now take the plan to their country's presidents for approval.

"We have reached a framework to implement the Geneva consensus," Lutnick said after the talks. "Once the presidents approve it, we will then seek to implement it," he said. "The two sides have, in principle, reached a framework for implementing the consensus reached by the two heads of state during the phone call on June 5th and the consensus reached at the Geneva meeting," the BBC quoted China's Vice Commerce Minister Li Chenggang as saying.Chinese export controls over rare earth minerals

were really high on the agenda of the meetings. While Beijing has not imposed an outright ban on the export of rare earth magnets, the process has been made very difficult, which could take up a long time to source and pose shortage risks in the meantime. Rare earth magnets, especially neodymium-iron-boron (NdFeB) magnets, are crucial for EV manufacturing, particularly in electric motors. They provide the strong magnetic fields needed for efficient and powerful electric motors, including traction motors that drive EVs. These magnets also play a major role in other EV components like power steering systems, wiper motors, and braking systems. China has a virtual stranglehold over these rare earth magnets.

Washington and Beijing had agreed a temporary truce over trade tariffs after the Geneva talks in May, but both countries have since accused the other of breaching the deal. The US has said that Beijing has been dragging its feet on opening up exports of rare earth metals and magnets while the Chinese claim that Washington has restricted its access to American goods such as semiconductors and other related technologies linked to artificial intelligence. US Trade Representative Jamieson Greer had said China had failed to rollback restrictions on exports of rare earth magnets. In the run up to this week's talks, the Chinese Ministry of Commerce said Saturday that it had approved some applications for rare earth export licences.In May, talks held in Geneva led to a truce after the tit-for-tat tariff increases by both sides, which led to duties that peaked at 145 per cent. Trump called the outcome of the talks in Switzerland a "total reset", which brought US tariffs on Chinese products down to 30 per cent, while Beijing cut duties on US imports to 10 per cent. Both sides also agreed to a 90-day deadline to try to reach a trade deal.

The problem for Washington DC is that the Chinese side has wrested some advantage ever since then, especially by leveraging its strategy of weaponising its dominance in key sectors. Rare earth minerals and magnets is one such area, where the US is now desperate for concessions. Both sides have since claimed breaches on non-tariff pledges, but clearly the Americans seem more eager for a reconciliation given the impact of the Chinese blockade on its key manufacturing sectors that are struggling to cope with the restrictions on critical inputs such as rare earth magnets.These Chinese trade blockades are already impacting companies in other geographies. Hamamatsu-based small car maker Suzuki Motors, for instance, said last week it plans to suspend the production of its flagship Swift compact hatchback due to China's rare earth restrictions, becoming the first Japanese automaker to be impacted by the export curbs. There are similar worries among other manufacturing entities across the world, including in the US.

Week after UK deal, EU and India wrap up IPR, talks on carbon tax left

A week after India announced its trade deal with the UK amid tariff threats from US President Donald Trump, the European Union and India have made significant progress in their trade talks between May 12 and May 17, closing as many as five chapters including the challenging area of intellectual property rights (IPR), a status report released Tuesday by the EU said.The conclusion of the UK deal is an "important factor" in Delhi's trade negotiations with Brussels, a government official told The Indian Express, since UK's exit from the EU single market in 2020 had given rise to tensions between London and Brussels over new checks, paperwork and delays that particularly affected goods trade between the two partners.India has given market access to several product categories in which the EU and the UK are competitors, particularly spirits, medical equipment, and cars. An early deal with India has already given the UK a first-mover advantage in the Indian market.

The EU report on the 11th round of talks between the two sides said that "good progress" was made in the trade in goods chapter and that the chapters on transparency, good regulatory practices, customs and trade facilitation, IPR, as well as mutual administrative assistance provisions, were closed. There are a total of 23 chapters being covered in the India-EU talks, out of which five have been wrapped up.While both sides made headway in tariff discussions on industrial products – with India and the EU "signalling their positions for industrial products" – talks on the agri-food sector continued "with the aim to enhance the level of clarity about both sides' positions," the report said.Negotiations on goods assume significance as an EU official had said that the trade deal with India hinges on Delhi's commitment to lowering duties on cars, amid an ongoing crisis in the European automobile sector. Moreover, the EU is seeking better access to India's wine and spirits market, in line with the access already granted to the UK.

However, the report on the 'Energy and Raw Materials' chapter said: "It had been agreed ahead of the round that discussions would be put aside for the time being." Negotiations on this chapter are significant as India's metal exports to the EU continue to face restrictions. Official data for April to June showed that the EU slashed India's quota for hot-rolled coil (HRC) by 23.7 per cent, sharply restricting access for a key export item.Data showed that steel and aluminium shipments to the EU dropped by 24.4 per cent – from \$7.71 billion to \$5.82 billion in FY25 compared to the previous financial year."If these issues are not



squarely addressed in the FTA, Indian exporters will continue to face steep EU barriers, while EU goods could enjoy zero tariffs into India. India missed the opportunity to rectify this imbalance in the UK FTA; it cannot afford to make the same mistake with the EU. A fair FTA must remove discriminatory quotas, secure CBAM (carbon border adjustment mechanism) carve-outs or compensation, and preserve India's policy space to grow its industrial base," said Ajay Srivastava, former trade official and founder of the Global Trade Research Initiative (GTRI).Srivastava said that unlike the US – its recent 50 per cent steel and aluminium tariffs are harsh but clearly defined – the EU's trade barriers are complex and opaque. Under the EU's safeguard measures, Indian steel faces a strict country-specific tariff-rate quota (TRQ) system – where volumes beyond a narrow quarterly quota attract a 25 per cent out-of-quota duty, he said.On services and investment, the report said that negotiators discussed and made "substantial progress" in agreeing on the services text, as well as planning for an initial exchange of offers on services. Detailed text-based discussions were held on the liberalisation of investment in areas beyond services, the report said.Negotiators also made substantive progress on digital trade, particularly on digital trade facilitation provisions such as e-invoicing, e-authentication, e-contracts, paperless trade, online consumer protection, spam, digital identities and open government data.The digital trade chapter in trade negotiations typically addresses rules and commitments related to online commerce and the cross-border flow of data and digital services. This part of the negotiations addresses 'cross-border data flows', where trade partners decide on commitments to allow the free flow of data across borders – crucial for e-commerce and global services.

CCEA approves projects worth Rs 6,405 crore to double railway lines

New Delhi: The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA), chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, on Wednesday approved two multi-tracking projects across the Indian Railways network, entailing an investment of Rs 6,405 crore.The first project relates to the doubling of the 133 km Koderma–Barkakana railway line, which passes through a major coal-producing area of Jharkhand. It also serves as the shortest and a more efficient rail link between Patna and Ranchi. The second project involves doubling of the 185 km Ballari–Chikjajur railway line, which traverses through Ballari and Chitradurga districts of Karnataka and Anantapur district of Andhra Pradesh.The two projects covering seven districts across the states of Jharkhand, Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh, will increase the existing network of Indian Railways by about 318 kms and are expected to generate direct employment for about 108 lakh human-days during construction, the official statement said.

The approved multi-tracking project will enhance connectivity to approximately 1,408 villages, which have a popu-

lation of about 28.19 lakh. The increased railway line capacity will significantly enhance mobility, resulting in improved operational efficiency and service reliability for Indian Railways.These multi-tracking proposals are poised to streamline operations and alleviate congestion. The projects are in line with Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision of a 'New India', which will make people of the region 'Atmanirbhar' by way of comprehensive development in the area, which will enhance their employment/self-employment opportunities, the official statement explained.The projects are the result of the PM-Gati Shakti National Master Plan for multi-modal connectivity, which has been made possible through integrated planning and will provide seamless connectivity for movement of people, goods and services, the statement said.These are essential routes for transportation of commodities such as coal, iron ore, finished steel, cement, fertilizers, agricultural commodities, and Petroleum products etc. The capacity augmentation works will result in additional freight traffic of magnitude 49 MTPA (Million Tonnes Per Annum).

Colon cancer survivors now have a surprise recovery tool: Study shows exercise prevents recurrence. What are takeaways?



Exercise has always been a key pillar of post-surgery recovery. Now a breakthrough global study has shown it can reduce chances of cancer recurrence, lower the risk of cancer patients dying by a third and can even be more effective than drugs.The study, involving patients from the US, UK, Australia, France, Canada and Israel, found that a structured exercise programme following surgery and chemotherapy for colon cancer reduced patients' chances of cancer recurring by 28% compared with patients given only health advice. The study also found that structured exercise reduced the risk of death from any cause by 37%. Drugs get approved for lesser efficacy and can even be toxic, the study authors said.The results were presented in Chicago at the American Society of Clinical Oncology annual meeting, the world's largest cancer conference, and published in the New England Journal of Medicine.According to Dr Amanjeet Singh, Senior Director, GI Surgery, GI Oncology and Bariatric Surgery, Gastro Sciences, Medanta, Gurugram, "Exercise improves patient tolerance to treatment and recovery after surgery. It improves the functioning of the gut and feeds beneficial gut microbes, reducing prolonged exposure to carcinogens in the colon."Regular physical activity positively impacts cell division and growth in our bodies that may influence cancer outcomes as well,

How we regulated blood sugar in patient who loved mangoes: Here's a smart hack

Mangoes do cause blood sugar spikes but being a natural sugar will not trigger as sudden a rush as refined flour or rice.Mangoes do cause blood sugar spikes but being a natural sugar will not trigger as sudden a rush as refined flour or rice. One of my patients is a mango lover who kept on asking me the impossible, to be allowed to have the fruit. We just couldn't have his blood sugar levels go northward. So was there a way of satisfying his craving without a sugar rush? We planned out a smart regime to ensure that he could keep both his cravings and sugar levels in balance.Mangoes do cause blood sugar spikes but being a natural sugar will not trigger as sudden a rush as refined flour or rice. Besides, they are rich in fibre, which slows down sugar absorption, and in antioxidants. What you need to do is consider the mango as a high-yielding carbohydrate and not as a fruit. As somebody living with diabetes, you have to keep to your total carbohydrate or calorie allowance of the day and to factor mango in that. Which means if you have a slice, half or full mango, then you will have to omit other fruits and foods that day to keep to your total calorie limit.

First, we measured the HbA1c (average blood sugar counts over three months) of our patient, which was 6 per cent. We do not allow patients with consistently high HbA1c levels between 6.5-8 per cent to have mangoes. The glycaemic index (GI) of mango, which measures how quickly a food raises blood sugar levels after eating, ranges from 51 to 60, considered moderately high. The glycaemic load (GL), which measures the sugar rush from the serving portion of carbohydrates, is approximately 18.9, which falls into the higher end of the medium range.To balance the sugar content of mangoes, we shuffled around with the order of eating — proteins, fibres and good fats first, then



the mango.

Protein-rich foods: Nuts, seeds or yogurt can help slow down the digestion of natural sugars.Fibre-rich foods: Combining mangoes with other fibre-rich foods like whole grains or leafy greens can help regulate blood sugar levels and delay sugar breakdown.Healthy fats: Adding healthy fats like avocado or nuts can help slow down the digestion of sugars while providing sustained energy.

A medium-sized mango contains approximately 100-150 calories. Which means a single slice can have approximately 45-50 calories. A serving size of 1/2 cup or 75 grams is not to be exceeded.Eating mangoes first thing in the morning on an empty stomach is not recommended to avoid a sudden spike. Have it as a mid-morning snack. You can also have mangoes 30 minutes to an hour after breakfast or lunch. Mangoes can be enjoyed 2-3 times a week, counting its calories and subtracting calories from other food sources those days.Do not use mangoes as toppings for desserts and make yourself a sugar bomb, which will cause a huge blood sugar spike and crash, making you hungrier.

Heatwave grips North India: How to hydrate, what to drink, how much and what to avoid

As we are exposed to extreme summer temperatures, the real question is can we quantify the hydration needed to counter it? And since needs differ from person to person, depending on their activity, exposure and perspiration, a baseline is difficult to codify. "Still we can say that anybody without chronic diseases should have 2.5 to 3 litres of water or fluids every day or 40 to 50 ml per kg of body weight. If you are sweating profusely with heat exposure, then just add anything between 500 ml to one litre as extra," says Ritika Samaddar, regional head, Nutrition and Dietetics, Max Healthcare.Extreme heat easily sucks out water from a person's body, which reduces blood volume. This forces the heart to work harder to pump oxygenated blood to other organs. Dehydration in turn limits sweating, resulting in overheating of the body, triggering a heat stroke. "So the best way is to keep labelled bottles with water and electrolytes like sodium, potassium (which we lose rapidly while sweating) close to you. Electrolytes help our muscles and nerve cells function. Remember if water tastes flat, you can zest it up with fruit and herb infusions or lemon. This also tames hunger pangs," adds Samaddar.

When do we know we are dehydrated?

Thirst is not a measure because it is the last indicator of your condition. Our ability to sense thirst decreases with age. Besides medications like weight loss drugs can interfere with signalling. So that's why we go by urine output (once every two-three hours) to broadly understand if we are dehydrated or not. Keep sipping water at frequent intervals if having it at one go seems tiresome.

What do we mistake as water alternatives?

Caffeine and sugar, both of which end up dehydrating the body more, are the key ingredients of cold coffee. Caffeine is a diuretic. To worsen matters, we top our cold coffees and shakes with ice-cream. When you consume extra sugar, your body tries to balance the sugar concentration in your blood and draws water from your cells and tissues, dehydrating you. Even home-made pulped fruit juice is concentrated sugar. Avoid alcohol.

What are the best hydrating drinks?

Coconut water, which is naturally rich in the key electrolytes of sodium, potassium and magnesium. A glass yields 23 to 25 calories and, therefore, can be had once or twice a day. However, it isn't recommended for those with very high blood sugar and kidney disease patients (potassium can be harmful). Lemon water has just five calories



per glass. Chaach or plain buttermilk is also a safe choice, with 98 calories per glass (240 ml). A 250 ml glass of bael juice contains around 140-150 calories along with minerals, fibre and is a great probiotic. One glass of watermelon juice contains 75 calories and is rich in fibre. Meanwhile, a glass of raw mango panna is around 180 to 200 calories and is best avoided by those with blood sugar. A cup of kokum juice contains around 60-95 calories but if you use a concentrate and dilute that with water, the calorie count will become lower.

SBI hires 13,455 junior associates to enhance customer experience

New Delhi: State Bank of India on Wednesday said it has hired 13,455 junior associates to enhance customer experience at the bank's branches across the country.The recruitment aimed to fill vacancies across 35 States and Union Territories, making it one of the significant hiring efforts in the industry, SBI said in a statement.The selection process commenced with preliminary examinations held in February and March 2025 and the main examinations conducted in April 2025, it said.Following a rigorous and transparent evaluation, 13,455 candidates have been selected for appointment, it said. Speaking on the announcement, SBI Chairman C S Setty said the bank's total recruitment across categories is about 18,000 people, out of which around 13,500 will be clerical recruitment, 3,000 will be probationary officers and local-based officers.

Glen Powell’s ex addresses Sydney Sweeney cheating rumours, recalls what he said to her: ‘I was just fed to the dogs’

Glen Powell’s ex-girlfriend, Gigi Paris, recently broke her silence on their high-profile split. The duo first made headlines when they started dating around early 2020 after being spotted together on a romantic trip. They went Instagram official in 2021 and stayed together for three years. However, in 2023, while Glen was filming his romantic comedy Anyone But You in Australia with Sydney Sweeney, rumours started surfacing that the co-stars’ chemistry had spilled off-screen. At the time, Gigi and Powell’s relationship had already landed in trouble, partly because of the distance, but the rumours made things more difficult. By April 2023, Gigi and Glen had officially broken up. Now, Gigi is giving a rare insight into what went down.

On the Too Much podcast, hosted by Emma Klipstein, Paris revealed exactly how hurtful and messy the entire situation was for her. Referring to the wild speculations, she said, “I could either pretend like I was going along with everything and have everyone wonder, like, ‘Are they hooking up? Are they not hooking up? Is she okay with this? What the f—?’ Or stand up for myself and say, ‘No, I’m actually not okay with this, and I’m walking away.’ So that’s what I decided to do... I was shattered.” (Via People)Klipstein pressed Paris on whether she ever received clarity from Powell about their relationship, and if there was any moment that stuck with her. The model described an incident when she was supposed to fly to Australia to visit him. He told her that he and the producers decided it would be best if she didn’t visit. That phone call completely broke her. “And that’s when I hung up. And I was like, this motherf— is done to me,” she added. “I think that’s where I just also fell out of love... I was like, where the f— are your balls to stand up for yourself?”

Still, she flew to Australia to confront him face to face, but claimed she wasn’t allowed anywhere near the movie set or production. She was stuck there for two weeks for work, but was kept away from Glen’s filming activities. She called the entire experience “very bizarre.” Paris also said she was frustrated that Glen never publicly defended her while people speculated that he and Sydney were secretly together. All he had to do was publicly deny the rumours and say, “I would never cheat on my girlfriend.” But he never said anything like that, which made her feel abandoned.

Kim Soo Hyun scores first big win: YouTuber Kim Se Ui’s properties seized, Tzuyang case reopened, arrest warrant looms if he skips summons

The legal battle between Kim Soo Hyun and YouTuber Kim Se Ui resulted in the first win for the actor. On June 9, the Seoul Central District Court approved a request filed by the Queen of Tears star’s agency, Gold Medalist, allowing them to seize two luxury properties owned by Kim Se Ui. The actor had earlier filed a lawsuit worth 12 billion KRW against Garosero’s (The YouTube channel) head and late actor Kim Sae Ron’s family for accusing him of dating the actor when she was underage, alongside breaching privacy and publicly disclosing private matters while fabricating the facts.

K-media Money Today reported the court found enough merit in the agency’s damage claims to greenlight the seizure, at least at this stage. The seized properties include a 120.27? apartment in Seocho Buksan Blooming and a 208.65? unit in Apgujeong-dong’s Hanyang Apartment Complex 4. Since the second property is co-owned with the YouTuber’s sister, only his 50% share was allowed to be seized. Gold Medalist is trying to secure at least 4 billion KRW from these properties, 2 billion each, as part of its civil lawsuit. Jonjae Law Firm’s attorney Noh Jong Eon stated, “The court likely found reasonable grounds in the claimed damages. However, since this is a provisional seizure, Kim Se-ui’s rebuttal has yet to be reviewed. The final compensation could change after a full hearing.” According to the current market analysis, the Seocho apartment is valued at around 2.5 billion KRW; meanwhile, the second one could be valued at around 8.87 billion KRW. However, both properties reportedly have large mortgage loans, so extracting the exact amount to recover their damages might not be easy for Gold Medalist if the court rules in their favour later.

Earlier, it was reported that police are preparing paperwork to summon Kim Se Ui, who has been dodging questioning for a while now. The Garo Sero host is now cornered by a double setback. In a completely separate but parallel case, popular YouTuber Tzuyang also filed a lawsuit against Kim Se Ui in February 2025, accusing him of blackmail, coercion, violation of the Anti-Stalking Law, and defamation. The case was reopened after the YouTuber appealed and gave her statement in May 2025. When police tried to summon Kim Se Ui for questioning in both the Tzuyang and Kim Soo Hyun cases, he skipped appear-

Gauri Khan shares updates about Mannat renovations: Shah Rukh Khan’s renovated house should be ready by...

An important address in Mumbai lost much of its charm as Shah Rukh, along with his family, moved out of Mannat earlier this year. The house, which is a Grade III heritage site, has been the actor’s home for 24 years now and has gone through several modifications and tune-ups during that tenure. Now under the expertise of his wife Gauri Khan, who has made a name for herself as an interior designer, Mannat is getting two new floors.

She talked to News18 about the expected timeline for the project and also about various other endeavours that she has taken upon herself. Gauri admitted that the house is expected to be completed

sometime around next year and couldn’t really zero in on a date. Apart from designing her own home, Gauri is now expanding her business with new offices in New Delhi as well. According to initial reports, Shah Rukh and Gauri have decided to add two new floors to the house, while the first actual change in the house was the nameplate beside the gate, which was changed from the bright diamond one to a more subtle brown and silver plate.While renovations go on, Shah Rukh and Gauri, along with Aryan Khan, Suhana Khan and AbRam, have shifted to a rented duplex in the Pali Hill area of Bandra. They have leased two apart-



Later, it was suggested that the rumours around Glen and Sydney’s “flirty behaviour” during the film’s promotions were part of a publicity stunt to create buzz and help sell the movie. “And I honestly hoped that they’d end up together, because I was like, at least it would make it worth it for me, you know? I hope they are in love or whatnot,” she said.Even today, Gigi says she doesn’t know for sure if Glen actually cheated on her or not. She claimed all she had heard were different versions of the story. But what she wanted was respect, which she never received. “Like, don’t make an a” out of me. Like, just don’t make a fool out of someone you’ve been with for over three years, talking about forever with. Just have some decency, you know? And at the end of the day, it was like, well, work comes first. And if that’s the case, power to you, that’s your priority. I gotta walk away. What su*** was how it was handled. I felt like I was just fed to the dogs.”Sydney Sweeney, meanwhile, was engaged to Jonathan Davino during the time of promotions. The duo ended their relationship earlier this year. Sydney once remarked that fans love seeing onscreen couples flirt offscreen, and both she and Glen leaned into those rumours because it helped sell the movie. Meanwhile, Glen, for his part, later admitted that the promotions were hard for him because he was going through a real breakup while pretending to have fun with Sydney for the movie’s press tour.



ances twice, citing his involvement and business in South Korea’s presidential election. Now that the election is over, police are preparing to summon him again. Authorities have also warned that if he continues to ignore summons, they may issue an arrest warrant.

The public dispute between Soo Hyun and Kim Se Ui started back in March, following Kim Sae Ron’s tragic death. The YouTuber accused the actor of being in an “inappropriate relationship” with the deceased. In response, the actor and his agency held a press conference where they denied the allegations, stating that the two only dated after Sae Ron became an adult. Following that, Garo Sero dropped more pictures, video call logs, and even message transcripts, some of which were reconstructed. The actor then filed both criminal and civil cases, and in response, Kim Sae Ron’s family filed a countersuit against Kim Soo Hyun, accusing him of violating child welfare laws and making false accusations. The legal investigations are still ongoing.

by film producer Vashu Bhagnani, and the family is reportedly paying an exorbitant price of Rs 24 lakh. The family has also leased a Rs 1.25 lakh residence exclusively for their staff, and it is located in Pankaj Society, which is just 100 metres from their interim residence at Puja Casa. The iconic bungalow was bought by Shah Rukh back in 2001, and the original name for the house was Villa Vienna. After renaming it to Mannat, as the house symbolised an important checkpoint in his life and an important dream checked off the list, the 27000-square-foot home went through several upgrades. Designed by Gauri Khan and designer Kaif Faquih, the house boasts



a state-of-the-art gym, a swimming pool, and an in-house theatre brimming with Bollywood memorabilia. Due to the cultural importance of the original Villa Vienna, the actor was not allowed to make any structural changes to it, and he decided to build a six-storey annexe at the back.

Ramayan’s ‘Lakshman’ Ravie Dubey, wife Sargun Mehta lease luxury apartment in Bandra West; to pay Rs 11 lakh rent per month

Actors Ravie Dubey and Sargun Mehta, who had a humble beginning as struggling actors, have today become one of the most notable producers in the Punjabi film industry. With a reported net worth of Rs 150 crores, Ravie and Sargun recently relocated to Bandra West. Earlier, it was reported that the couple has bought a flat in the luxurious Freeda One residential tower. Now, FreePressJournal has reported that the couple has leased an entire floor in the tower for five years.

According to the media publication, the lease agreement spans 60 months (five years) and includes a hefty security deposit of Rs 80 lakh. Sargun and Ravie will reportedly pay a monthly rent of Rs 11 lakh for the first year. The rent will increase with each passing year with the couple paying Rs 11.55 lakh in the second year, Rs 12.12 lakh in the third year, Rs 12.73 lakh in the fourth year, and Rs 13.37 lakh in the fifth year, respectively.The locality is home to several Bollywood actors. With Sargun Mehta and Ravie Dubey relocating to Freed One, they have become neighbours to Indian cricketer KL Rahul-Athiya Shetty and veteran actor Jackie Shroff.

After appearing on television shows like 12/24 Karol Bagh, Phulwa, Comedy Circus Ke Ajoobe, and Nach Baliye 5, Sargun Mehta marked her film debut with 2015 Punjabi film Angrej. Now, she is among the highest paid actress in the Punjabi film industry, who reportedly charges Rs 2 crore per film. In 2021, she marked her debut as a producer along with her husband Ravie Dubey under the banner Dreamiyata Drama.

Sidhu Moosewala’s 3 new songs ‘008’, ‘Take Notes’, ‘Neal’ released on YouTube and Spotify on his birth anniversary

Today marks the birth anniversary of Punjabi artiste Sidhu Moosewala, who went down as one of the most polarising Indian performers of this century. Ever since his break-out hit ‘So High,’ the Brampton rapper never looked back and amassed a fan base transcending international boundaries, religion and identity. His career and fame were, however, shortlived, as Sidhu was killed in 2022. To mark his birthday, three of his unreleased tracks as part of the ‘Moose Print’ mixtape were dropped on his official YouTube channel and Spotify page.

The songs were released just a few hours after BBC dropped the first two episodes of a documentary which dives deep into Sidhu’s life, career and the events leading up to his death. The singer’s father Balkaur Singh had filed for a stay order on the release of the documentary film, as he claimed that the BBC had used Sidhu’s name, image and his entire story without taking proper permission from the family. Balkaur’s lawyer also pointed out that certain aspects which have been highlighted in the documentary could damage his son’s reputation and interfere with the ongoing trial regarding his murder.Faced with the controversy and the threat of a stay order, BBC cancelled a planned screening in Mumbai and dropped the first two episodes on YouTube. The Judge overseeing the case had initially refused to stop the film from screening and has now ordered a full hearing on June 12. The three songs released on Sidhu’s YouTube channel are titled ‘Take Notes,’ ‘Neal,’ and ‘0008,’ and the tracks have been produced by The Kidd, Mrxcj, Jay B Singh, and Sidhu himself.

Adar Poonawalla echoes Khushi Kapoor’s vaccine argument from Nadaaniyan, says he’s allowed to make creative inputs in Dharma movies

In the widely panned film Nadaaniyan, Khushi Kapoor’s character tells her parents that she has been practicing her debating skills, and proceeds to make an argument for pharma companies charging money for vaccines during the pandemic. Nadaaniyan was produced by Karan Johar’s Dharma Productions, whose new co-owner is the Serum Institute of India’s Adar Poonawalla. In the movie, Khushi’s character says that the pharma sector needs to be funded in order to innovate, and that providing free vaccines would ultimately harm the industry. In a new interview, Adar Poonawalla made the same arguments. He told journalist Barkha Dutt on MojoStory that he needs the money not for personal reasons, but to fund further innovation in the sector.

In Nadaaniyan, Khushi’s character says that she has taken a keen interest in debating, which prompts her father, played by Suniel Shetty, to ask what her latest subject was. She says, “It was a debate around the morality of private healthcare. Was it right to sell vaccines during the pandemic, or should they have been distributed for free.” She tells him that she chose to argue for the motion, because she wanted to give herself a ‘challenge’. Her father remarks, “You were for it, really? Arguing against it would’ve been easier. You would’ve got moral brownie points. So, what was your argument?”

She says, “I wanted a challenge, so I argued that the raw materials for vaccines are expensive. Syringes and serums obviously don’t grow on trees. Not to mention the compensation deserved by scientists who’ve devoted their entire lives to finding a cure for this virus in such a short time. If the government or some charitable trust can cover these costs, we can distribute the vaccines to the public for free. Otherwise, pharmaceutical companies will go bankrupt, and no one will ever invest in finding the cure for any disease. Honestly, it’s really the only sustainable way to fund and incentivise scientific development.” Her impressed father reacts, “Was that my baby princess arguing? Look at you! You kept it so balanced and nuanced.”

In his interview with Barkha Dutt, Poonwalla spoke about charging money for vaccines during the pandemic, and offered some context first, “If you really look at where people are spending money today, on consumer goods, on beauty, on clothes, on cars, phones, bikes, paying Rs 400 for a vaccine as opposed to Rs 200 is not a significant increase. Even today there’s a battle about price-capping being controlled by the government. If you want a Pfizer, GSK or a big company that can make, create, and innovate in India, instead of us having to partner with foreign



Ravie and Sargun met on the sets of 12/24 Karol Bagh in 2009. In 2012, they took part in the dance reality show Nach Baliye 5 where Ravie proposed to her for marriage. In 2013, the couple tied the knot. They have now ventured into Punjabi cinema, television, and digital content. In 2023, they also entered the music industry with Dreamiyata Music, through which they launched their now-viral song Ve Haaniyaan.On the work front, Sargun recently appeared in the Punjabi film Saunkan Saunkanay 2. Meanwhile, Ravie Dubey will be seen playing the role of Lakshman in Nitesh Tiwari’s mythological drama, Ramayana, with Ranbir Kapoor in the lead role.



Sidhu was shot dead by unidentified assailants on May 29, 2022 in the Jawaharke village in Mansa district of Punjab. The Canadian gangster Goldy Brar and a member of the Lawrence Bishnoi gang claimed responsibility for the attack. After his first posthumous song ‘SYL’ got taken down from YouTube, around 10 tracks with various artistes including Mumbai rapper Divine have been released on various platforms, including the three mentioned before. Within a few hours of their release all three songs have the combined viewership of over 7.8 million on YouTube.



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institutes that create these molecules, you need this industry to thrive. Look at the IT or auto industries; the average company is making \$1 billion in profits in a quarter. Our turnover, despite being the largest in the world, is just \$1 billion. A Pfizer or GSK is 100 times that.”He continued, “If I want to spend \$500 million to create a new molecule for a vaccine, where do I get the money? My profit is some \$300 million, and that’s not enough for even one product. For example, we funded our malaria vaccine over five years, and managed that way. India has the best talent, the most hardworking people. Our costs in all other infrastructure are quite low. All we need is the ability to price our products in a way which is fair, and make enough profits. What are we going to do with the profits? I can’t take it to heaven. I’m going to make more vaccines with it. People say, ‘You’re going to make more money’. But what am I going to do with that money? I’m making new vaccines to protect you only. We want to make in India, create in India, and innovate in India, but how are we going to do that?”In the same interview, he said that Karan Johar continues to hold complete creative freedom over Dharma projects, but that he will also be open to any inputs that he, Adar, were to make.