

INDIAN CHRONICLE

IIT Hyderabad bags 664th rank in QS World University Rankings

Sangareddy: Indian Institute of Technology Hyderabad (IIT-H) has improved its position in the QS World University Rankings 2026, by securing a global rank of 664. This marks a significant rise from last year's position in 681–690 band. Most notably, IIT-H secured a place in the top 10 per cent of global institutions in citations per faculty. This metric, which evaluates research influence, had seen the highest growth among all evaluated indicators, showcasing the increasing global recognition of IIT-H faculty contributions.

Fire guts plastic unit at IDA Bollaram; no casualties reported

Sangareddy: A massive fire broke out at Veer Plastics Limited in the IDA Bollaram industrial area during the early hours of Saturday. Fortunately, no staff were present inside the unit when the fire erupted.

Upon receiving an alert from the security personnel, fire tenders were rushed to the spot. Firefighters were engaged in efforts to prevent the blaze from spreading to adjacent industrial units. However, material stored inside the facility was completely destroyed. The extent of the damage is being assessed by the management and officials.

517 Indian nationals brought back from Iran so far, says MEA



GNS News Agency, June 21

Days after starting Operation Sindhu to evacuate Indian citizens from conflict-hit Iran and Israel, India will fly out two more evacuation flights from Iran to New Delhi's Indira Gandhi International Airport on Saturday (June 21, 2025). The first flight from the Iranian city of Mashad is expected to land in New Delhi at 4:30 p.m. and the second flight will arrive late evening at 11:30 p.m. The Embassy of India in Tehran also announced that citizens of Sri Lanka and Nepal will be evacuated by the Government of India as per requests from Colombo and Kathmandu. The special flights from Mashad are being arranged with support from the Iranian government as it will relax air space restrictions to allow Indian citizens to leave for home as Tehran deals with the conflict with Israel. Official Spokesperson of the Ministry of External Affairs Randhir Jaiswal informed earlier that till Friday (June 20, 2025), India had evacuated 517 Indian nationals from Iran under Operation Sindhu. Operation Sindhu flight brings citizens home. India evacuated 290 Indian nationals from Iran, including students and religious pilgrims by a charter flight. The flight arrived in New Delhi at 2330 hrs on 20 June and was received by Secretary (CPV& OIA) Arun Chatterjee," MEA Spokes-

person Randhir Jaiswal wrote on X. "Government of India is grateful to the Government of Iran for the facilitation of the evacuation process," he said. The previous flights had taken off from Ashgabat, Turkmenistan, Yerevan, Armenia and Qatar. The Government of India has also extended Operation Sindhu to Israel saying that Indian nationals in Israel who wish to leave will be "facilitated". On Friday (June 20, 2025), a group of Indian nationals who were in Israel crossed over to Egypt through the Taba land port. "Indians who crossed into Egypt via the Taba border crossing were received by Indian Embassy in Cairo team. Necessary assistance and logistical support were extended. The Embassy remains in close coordination with the authorities to ensure safe transit and welfare of Indian nationals," said the Indian Embassy in Cairo on Friday (June 20, 2025). Indians are among the various groups of people who are being evacuated from Iran and Israel as the conflict turned a week old with both sides firing missiles and bombs at each other."

Rahul Gandhi gives cold shoulder to Revanth Reddy again



GNS News Agency, June 21

Hyderabad: Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy flew back to Hyderabad from New Delhi on Friday without meeting Congress MP Rahul Gandhi yet again triggering intense speculation among party leaders and political circles alike that he was being deliberately coldshouldered by the party high command. The Chief Minister flew to New Delhi on Thursday and met a couple of Union Ministers. Rahul Gandhi's birthday was also celebrated grandly by the leaders on the same day.

A few leaders, including Nagarkurnool MP Mallu Ravi and former Union Minister Pallam Raju met Rahul Gandhi and greeted him. However, the Chief Minister, who was in the national capital, was unable to call on Rahul Gandhi. There were expectations among the party leaders that the Chief Minister would meet Rahul Gandhi on Friday and extend his wishes personally. But that did not happen and this left his followers disappointed. The Chief Minister had met AICC leaders, including Rahul Gandhi in the national capital on June 10 to discuss Cabinet expansion and other issues. Interestingly, Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah and Deputy Chief Minister DK Shiva Kumar also had met the Congress MP and photos of their meeting were extensively shared on social media. However, the pictures of Revanth Reddy's meeting with Rahul Gandhi were not shared, triggering speculations in the Telangana Congress.

India becoming global destination for healing through yoga, says PM Modi

GNS News Agency, June 21

Visakhapatnam: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday said that India is empowering the science of yoga through modern research and that the country is becoming the best global destination for healing.

Addressing the main national event to mark the 11th International Day of Yoga here on Saturday, he said leading medical institutes in the country were engaged in research on yoga. He referred to the research done at All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS), Delhi. "For the expansion of yoga in the world, India is empowering the science of yoga through modern research," said the Prime Minister, who performed the Common Yoga Protocol (CYP) along with over three lakh people at RK Beach. "We are also encouraging evidence-based therapy in the field of yoga in the country's medical and research institutions. Delhi AIIMS has done a good job in this regard. Its research has shown that yoga has a critical role in the treatment



of cardiac and neurological disorders, and it also plays an important role in women's health and mental well-being," he said.

He also noted that the mantra of yoga and wellness is being promoted through the National Ayush Mission. "Digital technology has also played a key role in this. Over 10 lakh events were registered through yoga portal and Yogandhra portal," he said. PM Modi stated that the conduct of yoga events in every nook and corner of the country today shows its growing popularity. "We all know that the 'heal in India' mantra is also becoming popular around the world. India is becoming best destination for healing for the entire world. Yoga also has

a key role in this," he said. He expressed his happiness over drafting of Common Yoga Protocol. He noted that initiatives like over 6.5 lakh trained volunteers of Yoga Certification Board, about 130 recognised institutes and the 10-day yoga module in medical colleges were creating a holistic ecosystem. The Prime Minister also mentioned that trained yoga teachers were being deployed at Ayushman Arogya Mandirs. The government is also issuing e-Ayush visas so that the entire world benefits from the wellness ecosystem of India. Drawing the attention of all to obesity, the Prime Minister said increasing obesity was a challenge for the entire world.

KTR pitches Telangana's growth story to global audience at Oxford



GNS News Agency, June 21

Hyderabad: Telangana's development model was showcased once again on a global stage by former Minister and BRS working president K T Rama Rao, who addressed the Oxford India Forum at Oxford University, UK on Saturday. Rama Rao presented a case study on the State's rapid transformation since its formation in 2014. Under the theme 'Governing Innovation – A Telangana Case Study', he highlighted key milestones in economic growth, welfare, and innovation that have positioned Telangana as a model for other States and developing regions.

Describing Telangana as "the most successful startup State of independent India," he said its formation was the result of decades of peaceful democratic struggle. In just over a decade, Telangana has moved from aspiration to achievement, rising from the 12th position in national economic rankings to becoming a leader in agriculture, industry, and technology. The State's Gross State Domestic Product (GSDP) has surged from Rs.4 lakh crore to Rs.15 lakh crore, while per capita income rose from Rs.1.12 lakh to Rs.3.57 lakh. However, Telangana's story, he noted, goes beyond numbers—it represents restored dignity, empowered citizens, and a resilient society. Among the landmark achievements he highlighted were the Kaleshwaram Project—the world's largest lift irrigation project—completed in a record four years. It revolutionised irrigation and made Telangana the top State in inland fisheries. He also pointed to the State achieving 100 per cent safe drinking water coverage for one crore households and eradicating fluorosis. On the economic front, K T Rama Rao showcased Hyderabad's emergence as a global technology hub, hosting the world's largest campuses of companies like Amazon and housing T-Hub, the world's largest innovation campus that supports thousands of start-ups. Telangana's pharmaceutical sector now produces one-third of global vaccines, solidifying its leadership in life sciences. He underlined the effectiveness of the TS-iPASS policy, which guarantees industrial clearances within 15 days and helped Telangana secure top rank in NITI Aayog's ease of doing business index. Rama Rao also spoke about the transformative Rythu Bandhu scheme, which has transferred \$9 billion directly to 70 lakh farmers, boosting agricultural output. Paddy production grew from 68 lakh metric tonnes to 3 crore tonnes within a decade. He attributed Telangana's success to process-driven governance, replacing personality-driven systems with transparent, accountable institutions.

DGCA asks Air India to remove three officials from all roles related to crew rostering

GNS News Agency, June 21

The DGCA on Saturday (June 21, 2025) directed Air India to remove three officials, including a top executive part of flight operations department, from their roles and responsibilities for "systemic failure in crew scheduling, compliance monitoring and internal accountability", according to multiple sources. The DGCA order, a copy of which has been reviewed by The Hindu, stated that internal disciplinary proceedings must be initiated against these officials without delay. An official confirmation from the DGCA is awaited.

The order stated that there were "multiple violations concerning flight crew being scheduled and oper-



ated despite lapses in licensing, rest, and recency requirements." The findings were revealed during a review after the airline changed its crew scheduling software. It is learnt that the software change happened last year in May. One of the key officials against whom the DGCA has asked for a disciplinary action is the Divisional Vice President of

Integrated Operations Control Centre (IOCC). An IOCC is essentially the "nerve centre" of an airline, responsible for coordinating and managing various operational aspects to ensure safe, efficient, and legally compliant flights. It falls under the Operations department of an airline that oversees all flight operations and pilots and cabin crew, in-

cluding their rosters. "We acknowledge the regulator's directive and have implemented the order. In the interim, the company's Chief Operations Officer will provide direct oversight to the Integrated Operations Control Centre (IOCC). Air India is committed to ensuring that there is total adherence to safety protocols and standard practices," an Air India spokesperson said. The DGCA also warned Air India that future violations in crew scheduling will invite "strict action", including licence suspension and operational restrictions.

The latest direction from DGCA has come at a time when the airline has been under strict scrutiny in the aftermath of the Boeing 787-8 Dreamliner crash last week.

Intimidating laws will be used against political rivals despite SC ruling

GNS News Agency, June 21

Slamming the authorities of gross misuse of state laws like the UP Gangsters and Anti-Social Activities (Prevention) Act, 1986, a Supreme Court bench, comprising Justices Vikram Nath and Sandeep Mehta, has made it clear that the Act was not an instrument to target individuals, who are guilty of involvement in a single incident of anti-social activity. While warning governments against invoking such stringent laws as a tool of harassment or intimidation, the bench asserted that it was tantamount to extreme abuse of the governing laws when such an Act is used as a means of oppression, especially when political motivations are suspected. In a veiled attack, the apex court has sent across a message loud and clear that they cannot be used to settle political scores. By definition, the Uttar Pradesh Gangsters and Anti-Social Activities (Prevention) Act, 1986, is designed to prevent and combat gangsters and related anti-social activities. It defines "gangster" and provides for the punishment of individuals involved in organized crime, including imprisonment and fines, especially if the offence is committed against a public servant but not for staging demonstrations, when used as an expression of right to expression that had no other ulterior motives. Mere involvement in a demonstration or protest after a communal clash cannot be reason enough to invoke the provisions of the Gangster Act, was made clear by the Supreme Court. Putting to rest many self-satisfactory interpretations about the provisions of



the Act, most of which were invoked for serving political interests in violation of the law, the apex court drove home the point that the constitutional guarantee of personal liberty acquires greater emphasis when extraordinary legislation with stringent provisions, such as the UP Gangsters Act, is invoked. In unequivocal terms, it stated, "When a statute creates serious fetters on personal liberty, the evidentiary foundation for its invocation must be commensurately strong, supported by concrete, verifiable facts rather than vague assertions." This, in essence, implies that the Act cannot be invoked to stifle voices and silence dissent. Quashing an FIR lodged on April 30, 2023 against an 'organised gang', based on a social media post that cried foul of a particular religion, which led to violent protests 'involving' the appellants Lal Mohd and others, the court maintained that the complaint provided no evidence to substantiate systematic planning or coordinated criminal activities against the group.

Rajnath Singh briefed by top military brass on border security, arrangements for Amarnath



GNS News Agency, June 21

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh was briefed by top Army brass on Saturday (June 21, 2025) on the prevailing security situation in Jammu and Kashmir with a focus on border areas, anti-terrorist operations and the Amarnath Yatra scheduled to start next month, officials said.

Chief of the Army Staff General Upendra Dwivedi, General Officer Commanding-in-Chief, Northern Command Lt Gen Pratik Sharma and other senior officers including commanding officers of all units attended the meeting at Udhampur-based northern command headquarters, they said. Singh reached Udhampur headquarters of the northern command on a two-day visit on Friday and led the International Day of Yoga celebrations of the Armed Forces on Saturday morning, performing various asanas and breathing exercises with 2,500 soldiers. After the yoga session, the top Army brass briefed the defence minister on the prevailing security situation in the Union territory, the officials said.

Israel hits Iranian nuclear research facility as war continues into second week

GNS News Agency, June 21

Israel's military said Saturday it struck an Iranian nuclear research facility overnight and killed three senior Iranian commanders in targeted attacks as the war between the two nations continued into a second week.

Early Saturday, smoke could be seen rising from an area near a mountain in Isfahan, where a local official said Israel had attacked the nuclear research facility in two waves.

The target was two centrifuge production sites, and the attacks came on top of strikes on other centrifuge production sites elsewhere in recent days, according to an Israeli military official speaking on condition of anonymity under army guidelines to brief reporters. It was the second attack on Isfahan, which was hit in the first 24 hours of the war as part of Israel's goal to destroy the Iranian nuclear program.

Indian Chronicle

English Daily

Credible move by Election Commission

In a diverse and complex democracy like India's, the credibility and integrity of the Election Commission are of paramount importance. Unfortunately, the hard-earned reputation of the poll panel as an impartial and independent institution has come under a cloud in recent times. The opposition parties have been accusing it of compromising on its long-cherished values of fairness and professionalism and becoming a pliable tool in the hands of the ruling dispensation. Against this backdrop, the EC's recent decision to enable webcasting from 100 per cent of the polling stations with internet connectivity is a welcome move that would go a long way in salvaging its image. Reinforcing the independence and impartiality of the poll panel should be a priority for all stakeholders in Indian democracy, particularly political parties and the judiciary. In areas where there is no internet access, alternative arrangements for videography would be made. The move comes in the wake of Congress leader Rahul Gandhi alleging widespread rigging in the 2024 Maharashtra Assembly polls. It is also important for the EC to provide adequate infrastructure for information technology, internet, TV displays, mobile phones and technical staff to ensure the smooth conduct of the polls. This initiative will first be implemented in the upcoming Bihar Assembly elections. Thanks to modern technology, the electoral process in India has become more efficient and transparent. The Election Commission's latest directive will help institutionalise real-time monitoring, allowing for a layer of surveillance that could deter malpractice and reassure both voters and political stakeholders. The significance of the current measure lies in its universality. Earlier webcasting efforts were limited in scope, covering only select polling stations and leaving critical gaps in electoral oversight.

Prof. Jayashankar Remembered with Reverence on His Death Anniversary.



“PS Ashokan”Indian Chronicle“Manthani June 21”“As per the directives of Honourable Minister Sri Duddilla Sridhar Babu, a tribute programme was held in Manthani to com-

memorate the death anniversary of Professor K. Jayashankar, the ideological architect of the Telangana movement. The event was organized under the leadership of Mandal Youth Congress President Mr. Sadhula Srikanth, during which a floral tribute was offered to the portrait of the late leader. “The programme witnessed the presence of several key leaders including SC Cell Division President Mr. Manthani Satyam, former Youth Congress Presidents Mr. Erukala Praveen, Mr. Gotikari Kishan Ji, and Mr. Poosala Balaji. “Addressing the gathering, the leaders recalled Professor Jayashankar's lifelong dedication to the Telangana cause.

They described him as a visionary who tirelessly worked to awaken the spirit of self-governance among the people of Telangana. His slogan, “Our Water, Our Resources, Our Jobs,” became the driving force of the separate statehood movement. “They further stated that the Telangana Congress government is committed to realising the ideals of Prof. Jayashankar, ensuring that every community progresses towards self-sufficiency. They noted that Telangana is now making rapid strides in development, competing with other states across various sectors. “The speakers emphasized that true homage to Prof. Jayashankar lies in building a prosperous, inclusive, and self-reliant Telangana, which reflects the dreams he envisioned. “The event concluded with active participation from Congress party leaders and Youth Congress members, who pledged to continue working towards the vision laid down by Professor Jayashankar.

Sri Padmavati Mahila Visvavidyalayam Hosts Grand International Yoga Day Celebration with Over 1000 Participants““



June 21, Indian Chronicle Rayalaseema coordinator”Sri Padmavati Mahila Visvavidyalayam (SPMVV) today marked International Yoga Day with an enthusiastic and large-scale yoga program, drawing over 1000 students, faculty members, and staff. The event, held in collaboration with the National Institute of Naturopathy, Pune, and the Ministry of AYUSH, underscored the profound benefits of yoga for physical and mental well-being. “Professor V. Uma, Vice-Chancellor of SPMVV, emphasized the importance of integrating yoga into daily life for overall health. “Yoga is essential for both physical and mental well-being, and everyone should make it a part of their routine,” she stated, speaking at the event where she participated alongside Registrar Professor N. Rajini and EGS Gopalakrishnamurthy. “Today's grand celebration at SPMVV was the culmination of the month-long ‘Yogaandhra’ program, an initiative by the Government of Andhra Pradesh that ran from May 21st to June 21st. Professor Uma explained that this program involved daily yoga sessions at the university, catering to diverse groups including students, teaching staff, non-teaching staff, sanitation workers, self-help groups, and local communities, following a structured protocol. “The Vice-Chancellor expressed immense joy over the program's success, noting the generous sponsorship provided by the Ministry of AYUSH, the National Institute of Naturopathy, and the Academy of Gandhi and Studies. This support enabled the provision of yoga mats, t-shirts, and breakfast for the 1000 participants at SPMVV. Additionally, 400 individuals participated in a parallel event at the Taraka Rama Stadium of SV University, contributing to a wide-



spread celebration of yoga across the region. “Professor Uma encouraged all participants to not only practice yoga for their personal health but also to disseminate awareness about its significance to their families and communities, as many remain unfamiliar with its extensive benefits. She highlighted that two crore people across Andhra Pradesh participated in various yoga events today, with options for both in-person and daily online classes. “She concluded by reiterating the critical role of yoga in maintaining a healthy lifestyle, urging individuals to dedicate at least 30 minutes to an hour daily to yoga practices, which she affirmed can effectively address various health challenges. “The event saw active participation from faculty, non-teaching staff, and students, all contributing to the vibrant atmosphere of International Yoga Day.

"Stop Rampant Soil Looting — Appeal to Manthani Tahsildar to Deny Excavation Permits in Reddy Cheruvu““



“PS Ashokan”Indian Chronicle“Manthani, June 21”“Boodida Ganesh, District Secretary of the Agricultural Labourers’ Union, formally submitted a memorandum to the Manthani Tahsildar, urging the immediate cessation of soil excavation permissions in the vicinity of Reddy Cheruvu under the Manthani revenue limits. “In his appeal, Ganesh expressed serious concern over the unchecked dominance of the so-called “soil mafia” across the Manthani constituency. He alleged that brick kiln operators, in connivance with these illicit groups, are plundering the natural resource of fertile black soil, leading to severe ecological degradation. “He stressed that any excavation in public water bodies like Reddy Cheruvu must only proceed following comprehensive joint inspections and reports from the Revenue, Irrigation, and Mining departments. He questioned the rationale behind senior authorities issuing unilateral permissions without ground-level verification. “Ganesh lamented that unscrupulous soil traders are recklessly digging even into the tank bed area, violating environmental norms. He revealed that excavation approvals have already been granted twice for Reddy Cheruvu, allowing private operators to amass crores of rupees in profits while remit-

Sheikh Chand Pasha should participate in International Yoga Day



““Sherlingampalli June 20 Indian Chronicle Reporter Krishna. Senior Congress party leader Sheikh Chand Pasha said in a statement that everyone should participate in the yoga program on Saturday morning on the occasion of International Yoga Day. Chand Pasha said that everyone should be healthy, that is, they should walk, do yoga, and exercise every morning to maintain their health, and everyone, young and old, regardless of age, should participate and make International Yoga Day a success.

Declare Prof. Jayashankar as 'Father of Telangana' — Stirring Appeal to State Leadership on His Death Anniversary"



““PS Ashokan”Indian Chronicle“Manthani, June 21”““Marking the solemn occasion of Professor K. Jayashankar's death anniversary, social activist and Manthani Students' Union leader Bejjanki Digambar made an impassioned plea to the Telangana state government to officially recognize Professor Jayashankar as the ‘Father of Telangana’. “He extolled the late professor as the intellectual beacon and ideological architect of the separate Telangana movement. From the inception of the agitation through its multiple phases, Jayashankar was unwavering in his commitment — steering activists with clarity, courage, and a deep sense of purpose. His scholarly insights and grassroots mobilization laid the very foundation for the eventual realization of a separate Telangana state. “Digambar expressed disappointment that despite his monumental role in the formation of Telangana, Jayashankar's contributions have not received the formal recognition they truly deserve in the political narrative post-statehood. “He urged the present Telangana government — which has been acknowledging the services of movement leaders — to show due reverence by conferring upon Professor Jayashankar the historic and symbolic title of ‘Telangana Jatipitha’ (Father of Telangana). “This heartfelt request was made directly to Chief Minister Revanth Reddy and IT & Industries Minister Duddilla Sridhar Babu through the social media platform X (formerly Twitter), calling for immediate action in honour of a visionary who dedicated his life to the cause of Telangana's self-determination.

Most AI tools are not built for India's MSMEs, says Vexoo Labs

GNS News Agency, June 21

Singapore: Most artificial intelligence systems suffer from the flaw of ‘hallucination’ and are not meant for India's small enterprises in the manufacturing sector, deep-tech company Vexoo Labs has said and claimed its AI solutions are for the “real world”. “The focus on factual accuracy is both rare and crucial,” said Ajay Kumar, Senior Business Leader, AI Evangelist and a Board Advisor at Vexoo Labs. He said most AI tools today are built for a showcase, not for reliability. In the industrial alleys of Rajkot, the looms of Tiruppur, and the machining units of Coimbatore, India's small and mid-sized manufacturers are facing a silent crisis, he noted. “It's not rising input costs or labour shortages alone — it's the growing complexity of data, and the absence of any reliable AI system to help make sense of it,” Kumar told PTI on the sidelines of Super AI, a mega exhibition and conference held June 18-19.

According to Kumar, despite the global boom in artificial intelligence, “most systems on the market today suffer from a dangerous flaw: hallucinations — confidently delivering factually incorrect information”. “For India's MSMEs, where decisions have direct operational and financial consequences, this isn't just a flaw, it's a liability,” he added. He further said that even at global AI showcases like Super AI, dozens of platforms claim to be transformative. But behind the gloss lies a glaring truth — most are built atop general-purpose language models that continue to hallucinate. “While the world chases scale and speed, accuracy has quietly fallen through the cracks,” he said, adding, Vexoo Labs' reasoning-first architecture, compact models, and local execution capabilities make it especially relevant for Tier-II and Tier-III cities, where India's manufacturing momentum truly lies. He said the company's focus on trustworthy AI for real-world India is already resonating across enterprise and public sector conversations. “We didn't set out to build a shinier chatbot.

Kishan Reddy asks party cadres to expose Govt's failures

Hyderabad, GNS News Agency, June 21: Union Minister Kishan Reddy today took part in the party's local body election workshop at the BJP state office in the city. He alleged that the Congress government was bringing various issues to the fore to divert the attention of the people in Telangana state. He asked the party cadres to put pressure on the people to implement the 6 guarantees given by the party. Stating they the phone tapping case in the state has become very scary, he claimed that the phones of the staff, leaders and social media team working in the BJP office were also tapped. “The phones of judges, businessmen, film stars, opposition leaders and elected representatives were tapped during the previous BRS government. However, the Congress-BRS parties are playing tricks on the phone tapping case. These two parties are conspiring to stop the BJP. When Revanth Reddy was in the opposition, he demanded a CBI investigation in this matter. He is talking differently after coming to power,” Reddy said. He said that the corruption and irregularities that took place when the BRS party was in power and the failure of the Congress government to fulfill the guarantees and promises given should be explained to the people and awareness should be brought. The new leadership that has emerged from the mandal committees and district committees should be prepared for struggles with movements in the coming days. A BJP government should come to the state in line with the aspirations of the people of Telangana. We can save Telangana only under the leadership of Narendra Modi,” he said. He alleged that the Telangana state was in debt due to the incompetence of the BRS and Congress parties and added that a situation had arisen, where welfare programs cannot be provided to the poor people. He said that the BJP workshops should be organized mandal-wise and district-wise across the Telangana state and added that New leadership should come from the youth and the poor and vulnerable sections in rural areas. He said that the central government was working with dedication and sincerity for the development of Telangana state and added that Without the cooperation of the central government in all sectors like railways, education, national highways, health sector, development in villages, no development program was being implemented in the state of Telangana. He said that the development programs carried out during the 11-year Narendra Modi regime should be widely taken to the people and added that the people should be informed about all the issues including corruption, irregularities and abuse of power during the BRS party's rule while noting that There is a need to sensitize the people. Reddy said that the failures of the Congress party should be exposed and added that the state government should be questioned from time to time regarding the six guarantees and 420 promises given by the Congress party.

BRS threatens to block ORR if Rythu Bharosa dues not cleared

Sangareddy: Former Minister T Harish Rao on Saturday warned that the BRS would block the Outer Ring Road (ORR) if the Congress government failed to release Rythu Bharosa assistance to over two lakh farmers in the Rangareddy, Medchal-Malkajgiri and Patancheru districts. Addressing a farmers' meeting at the Jinnaram mandal headquarters in support of farmers from the Patancheru Assembly constituency, Rao said the Congress government had ignored farmers' demands and failed to deliver on its promises. He alleged that Rythu Bharosa benefits were denied to farmers for the past two seasons and that over half of the state's farmers had not received the promised loan waiver. The former minister also accused the government of humiliating Lagacherla and Gadwal farmers who had opposed land acquisition plans. Recalling the BRS government's decade-long support to the farming community under former Chief Minister K Chandrashekar Rao, he said farmers were now being denied even Rythu Bima benefits.

Telangana must become a guiding light for nation in power sector: Bhatti



Hyderabad, June 21 Telangana should emerge as a guiding force in the power sector for the entire country and the state government is moving ahead with a well-structured strategy to achieve this, said Deputy Chief Minister Bhatti Vikramarka. He was addressing a gathering at Praja Bhavan on Saturday after officially announcing the hike in Dearness Allowance (DA) for power department employees. The Deputy Chief Minister stated that employee welfare is a top priority for the state government and as part of this, the government has decided to enhance the DA by 1.944 percent for power employees and pensioners. This magnanimous decision by the government will benefit 71,417 employees and pensioners across the state, he added. The revised DA also applies to artisans along with power employees and pensioners. The DA has been increased from 14.074 percent to 16.018 percent, and the revised rate will be implemented retrospectively from January this year. The enhanced DA will result in an additional monthly burden of

Rs.11.193 crore on power utilities. However, he emphasized that employee welfare remains the government's primary goal.

Electricity has become as essential to industrial production in today's competitive world as air is to life. During the previous government's tenure, in March 2023, the peak power demand stood at 15,000 MW. After the Congress government assumed office, the demand rose to 17,162 MW by March 2025, an increase of 2,000 MW. Despite this sharp rise in demand, the government and power employees have worked like a family to ensure uninterrupted and quality power supply, Bhatti Vikramarka reminded.

He stated that looking ahead, the state government anticipates a steep rise in demand. According to a central government agency report, Telangana's peak power demand is projected to reach 26,299 MW by 2029–30 and 33,773 MW by 2034–35. To meet these future requirements, the state government is already planning ahead to boost power generation capacity, Bhatti Vikramarka said. After the formation of the people's government, the new Green Energy Policy–2025 was introduced, targeting the production of 20,000 MW of green power by 2029–30. The Deputy Chief Minister stated that the power sector workforce must be ready to face future challenges and reiterated that the government and power employees together form an ideal family. The event was attended by TRANSCO CMD Krishna Bhaskar; Power Engineers Association leader Ratnakar; Electrical Engineers Association leader Shivaji; 1104 Union leader Saibaba; 327 Union leader Sridhar; Power Diploma Engineers Association leader Besireddy; SC/ST Association leader Shyam Manohar; 1535 Union leader Wazir; Pensioners Association leader Satyanarayana; and TRVKS Union leaders among others.

SCR Observes 11th International Day of YOGA – 2025

Hyderabad, GNS News Agency, June 21 South Central Railway (SCR) observed the 11th International Day of Yoga at Indoor Stadium, Railway Sports Complex, Secunderabad on Saturday. Arun Kumar Jain, General Manager, SCR was the Chief Guest on the occasion. Neeraj Agrawal, Additional General Manager, SCR; Siddharth Kati, Principal Chief Personnel Officer, other Principal Heads of Departments, Officials, Staff, RPF personnel and Scouts & Guides Volunteers also took part in the program in large numbers. The program was also live streamed on SCR's Social media platforms to enable others from the zone to witness & participate through virtual mode.

Speaking on the occasion, Arun Kumar Jain, General Manager, SCR stated that Yoga is a way of life and should be practiced regularly to improve health and attain inner peace. He appreciated Murari Mohan, renowned Yoga Teacher for conducting today's Yoga session and sharing his valuable insights on leading a stress-free life. Murari Mohan, renowned Yoga Teacher and State Coordinator for Art of Living Society, Hyderabad conducted the session with Asanas, Pranayama, Meditation and Sankalpam etc., Murari Mohan shared the benefits of practicing Yoga, he stated that Yoga is not merely a form of physical exercise



but a path towards total harmony of mind, body and spirit. He encouraged the staff members to practice Yoga regularly to improve physical and mental well-being. Earlier, the General Manager and others witnessed the live streaming of IYD-2025 hosted at Visakhapatnam, Andhra Pradesh wherein Narendra Modi, Prime Minister joined the event along with other dignitaries and addressed the large gathering of yoga enthusiasts.

"Minister Sridhar Babu Facilitates Doorstep Distribution of 59.35 Lakh Worth Kalyana Lakshmi & CMRF Cheques Across Palakurthi and Kamanpur Mandals"



“PS Ashokan” Indian Chronicle “Manthani, June 21” In a remarkable gesture of welfare outreach, Hon’ble Minister for IT, Industries, and Legislative Affairs, Sri Duddilla Sridhar Babu, has sanctioned and ensured the doorstep delivery of

85 financial assistance cheques under the Kalyana Lakshmi and Chief Minister's Relief Fund (CMRF) schemes across Palakurthi and Kamanpur Mandals of the Manthani Assembly Constituency. “The total sanctioned amount stands at an impressive ₹59,35,220, demonstrating the Minister's unwavering commitment to inclusive development and targeted beneficiary support.” Palakurthi Mandal received 08 CMRF cheques. “Kamanpur Mandal benefitted from 45 Kalyana Lakshmi cheques and 32 CMRF cheques.” True to the spirit of governance at the grassroots, the cheques were not merely distributed at public events but were personally handed over at the beneficiaries' doorsteps in their native villages. This humanitarian act was executed by Sri Akula Chandrasekhar, the Minister's Personal Government Assistant, under the direct instructions of Minister Sridhar Babu. “Villages covered under this initiative include:” In Palakurthi Mandal – Kannala, Ranapur, Bamla Nayak Thanda, GD Nagar” In Kamanpur Mandal – Nagaram (Lingala), Shalapalli, Penchikalpet, Rompikunta, Julapalli, Gollapalli, Gundaram, Kamanpur, Kishitampalli, Perapalli, and several adjoining hamlets. “This initiative underscores the Minister's visionary leadership in ensuring that government welfare schemes are not just sanctioned, but sincerely delivered, reaching the hands of the truly deserving, with dignity and efficiency.” – Minister's Camp Office, Manthani

Hyderabad's Ganapathi tops Telangana EdCET 2025

GNS News Agency, June 21

Hyderabad: A Hyderabad resident walked away with the top rank in the Telangana Education Common Entrance Test (TG EdCET) 2025 results declared here on Saturday. With normalised marks of 126.839991, Vajisha Ganapathi Sashty of Gowlipura in Hyderabad bagged first rank. The second and third ranks were secured by two men, Garrepelly Sharath Chandra of Secunderabad and Kaudagani Nagaraju of Warangal, respectively.

It was interesting to note that a total of 26,304 women took the entrance test, which was approximately 4.5 times higher than the men (5,801). However, men bagged seven ranks in the top 10. In the results declared by the TGCE Chairman, Prof V Balakista Reddy and TG EdCET 2025 Chairman and Kakatiya University Vice Chancellor Prof K Pratap Reddy, 96.38 percent out of 32,106 candidates who took the entrance test for admissions to two-year BED programme were declared qualified.

According to Prof Balakista Reddy, a total of 208 colleges, including 201 private and seven government colleges, offered 18,550 seats in BED programmes during the academic year 2024-25. Of the total seats, 14,420 were filled during the last year. “Admission counselling is linked to



With normalised marks of 126.839991, Vajisha Ganapathi Sashty of Gowlipura bagged first rank in Telangana Education Common Entrance Test for admissions to a two-year BED programme

degree semester examinations. The TG EdCET 2025 counselling is expected to commence in the month of August,” he added.

"Heart-Wrenching Protest at Manthani: Grieving Parents Demand Justice for Son Left in Vegetative State After Alleged Police Brutality"



““PS Ashokan” Media Today” Manthani, June 21 “In a deeply emotional and soul-stirring protest, the distraught parents of Raj Kumar, a youth from Sripada Colony in Manthani, Peddapalli district, staged a poignant demonstration at Ambedkar Chowrasta on Saturday, pleading for justice for their critically ailing son. Raj Kumar, son of Home Guard Devender, has reportedly slipped into a semi-comatose state after allegedly being subjected to severe custodial assault by the Manthani police.” “The grieving parents brought their unconscious son in an ambulance and sat in protest, demanding swift action against the officers responsible and adequate medical intervention to save his life. Devender, overwhelmed with emotion, lamented that despite serving in the police department himself, his son was shown no mercy, and justice remains elusive.” “According to him, during the previous Kharif procurement season, his son was falsely implicated in a minor altercation at a rice

purchase center. Acting upon baseless complaints, the local police allegedly registered a fabricated case and brutally assaulted Raj Kumar, inflicting grievous injuries that rendered him bedridden and virtually lifeless.” “Devender condemned the police for their inhumane behavior and decried their deliberate attempts to stall the investigation. He asserted that the Manthani police bore full responsibility for his son's vegetative condition, having not only assaulted him but also failed to ensure timely medical support or justice.” “The protestors, joined by concerned citizens, expressed profound disillusionment with the police department, citing repeated incidents of negligence. They recalled a recent case where a woman, harassed by her in-laws, was ignored by the police despite filing a complaint — and now, yet again, justice hangs in the balance.” “Responding to the escalating public outcry, Manthani Circle Inspector Raju Goud arrived at the scene and attempted to pacify the protestors. He assured them of a transparent inquiry and promised strict action against those found guilty. With this assurance, the distressed parents reluctantly ended their protest, though their demand for justice continues to echo through the streets of Manthani.

Five-Day Millet Health Activists Conference Kicks Off in Hyderabad

Hyderabad: On the eve of International Yoga Day, a significant national initiative, Millet Udyami Bharath 2025, was successfully launched at Minerva Halls, Hyderabad. This program brings together over 140 participants from 25 states across India, with the objective of fostering a new generation of millet product manufacturers and health experts centered around millet-based wellness.

Organized by the Millets National Media Portal (www.millets.news), this five-day program was inaugurated by Mr. Prasanna Srinivas Sarakadam, Chairman of the Millets National Media Portal. Mr. Sarakadam highlighted the initiative's ambition to empower individuals beyond the Telugu states and across the country, stating, “Thousands of health-related questions and answers are available through our portal. Anyone interested in becoming an expert in millets—whether in production



or wellness—can connect with us.” The program showcases a roster of distinguished experts dedicated to enhancing knowledge and expertise in millets. Among them is Mr. Tapas Chandra Roy, an Agricultural Officer from the Department of Agriculture and Farmers' Empowerment in the Government of Odisha, who is training farmers on

scientific millet production practices. Additionally, Mr. Jagannath Chinnari, a renowned expert in millet product manufacturing from Jaipur, is mentoring aspiring food entrepreneurs on effective production methodologies.

Furthermore, the Indian Institute of Millets Research (IIMR) is hosting a two-day advanced training

session featuring Dr. J. Stanely, CEO of Nutrihub, who will share insights on millet innovation, alongside Smt. Akita Upadhyay, an expert in the field providing guidance and best practices. Specialized sessions focused on millet-based public health and the prevention of lifestyle diseases will be led by Dr. Monica Sravanthi from the HNA Council.

ooting Competitions Begin with Enthusiasm and High Spirits



Hyderabad: The XI Telangana State Shooting Championship commenced today (21st June, 2025) at the SATS Shooting Range, University of Hyderabad, Gachibowli, with tremendous enthusiasm and a vibrant display of sporting spirit. Organized by the Telangana Rifle Association (TRA), the championship has brought together over 500 shooters from across Telangana, comprising both emerging talents and seasoned athletes. This landmark event marks a significant milestone in the state's sporting calendar and reinforces TRA's commitment to nurturing competitive shooting. The training day witnessed an impressive turnout, with participants actively engaged in intensive practice sessions across multiple ranges—including 10M Air Rifle/Pistol, 25M Pistol, 50M Rifle, and Trap events. The venue was filled with anticipation as athletes fine-tuned their skills, preparing themselves for the challenging days ahead.

The inaugural ceremony was led by Mr. Amit Sanghi, President of the Telangana Rifle Association and Vice President of the National Rifle Association of India (NRAI), accompanied by TRA's core committee members. Mr. Sanghi, along with the leadership team, toured the competition areas—25M, 50M, and Shotgun (Trap) ranges—to inspect facilities and equipment, ensuring compliance with international standards. He also took time to interact with the participants, offering words of encouragement and acknowledging their commitment to the sport.

Speaking at the inauguration, Mr. Amit Sanghi said:

“This championship is more than just a competition—it is a celebration of the growing talent pool and infrastructure in Telangana. The passion and performance of our young shooters reflect a bright future for shooting sports in the state.” The main competition rounds will officially begin tomorrow, 22nd June, from 8:00 AM onwards, featuring events such as Trap, 25M Pistol, and 10M Air Pistol for both men and women. Over the coming days, athletes will compete under strict, internationally recognized rules and technical standards, ensuring a fair and high-caliber tournament.

One dead, one injured in car crash on ORR in Hyderabad

GNS News Agency, June 21

Hyderabad: In a tragic incident, one person died and another was injured after the car they were travelling in went out of control, allegedly due to a rear tyre blowout, and crashed into a road median on the Outer Ring Road in Ghatkesar on Saturday.

The Mahindra Bolero was heading from Gandipet towards LB Nagar when the mishap occurred. Upon reaching Ghatkesar, the vehicle's rear tyre reportedly burst, causing it to hit the median and overturn.

UP Police arrest elderly Pakistani woman for ‘obtaining Aadhaar, ration cards’; release her on personal bond



GNS News Agency,June 21

Pakistani woman Bareilly, Aadhaar fraud, Uttar Pradesh police, citizenship fraud,The police said they received a tip-off about a Pakistan-born woman allegedly availing government schemes using forged documents.The Uttar Pradesh Police Friday booked a 68-year-old woman of Pakistani origin in Bareilly for allegedly obtaining an Aadhaar card and ration card through fraudulent means. The woman has been residing in India for nearly six decades on a long-term visa. The police said that during a campaign against Bangladeshi and Pakistani nationals staying illegally in the

district, they received a tip-off about a Pakistan-born woman allegedly availing government schemes using forged documents.Sources said that the police verified the information, and after finding the allegations to be true, they lodged the case.A case has been registered against the woman, identified as Farhad Sultana, under relevant sections of the Citizenship Act and for cheating at the Baradari police station in Bareilly, said a police officer.Station Officer Dhananjay Pandey of Baradari police station said that the investigation will also look into how the woman's Aadhaar and ration cards were prepared, and who was involved in facilitating them.He added that after registering the case on Saturday, the police took Sultana into custody and later released her on a personal bond.During the preliminary inquiry, the police learned that Sultana, born in Karachi, arrived in India in 1965 at the age of eight with her mother and sister, Nusrat, on a long-term visa. While her mother and sister later returned to Pakistan, Sultana remained in Bareilly, living with her maternal uncle and continuing her education thereIn 1985, she married Shahid Khaleel of Sufi Tola locality. The couple has six children – four daughters and two sonsThe long-term visa of Farhad is till July, said Pandey. He added that they are collecting more details of the case.

Planned in 1997, completed in 2025: Vikhroli ROB in Mumbai opened for traffic

GNS News Agency,June 21

Mumbai's Vikhroli Railway Over Bridge (ROB) is set to become operational on Saturday, June 14, for vehicular movement, 28 years after its conceptualisation. Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis has maintained that no inauguration ceremony will be held considering the ongoing monsoon season and the bridge will be opened for traffic straight-away from 4 pm. The idea of constructing the bridge was first mooted in 1997 and was subsequently included in the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation's (BMC) Development Plan (DP) model.The primary goal of the project is to ease the east-west connectivity at Vikhroli – one of the growing population hubs during the 1990s and now a prominent residential zone in the eastern suburbs. However, the project got delayed multiple times owing to several challenges like land acquisition and clearing encroachments. It took nearly 28 years for the BMC to finish the construction of the 615-meter-long bridge.



Even though the project was conceptualised in the late 1990s, work orders were issued only 21 years later, in 2018. According to civic officials, one of the primary reasons for the delay was the planning of the site.“The bridge passes above the railway tracks of Mumbai, so initially we had to seek NOC for constructing the bridge. This took many years as initially the alignment of the structure, the blueprint had to be approved,” the official explained.

“Last year, we decided that the bridge would be opened in its entirety instead of opening it in a phased manner. After we secured permissions for removing the trees and encroachments that were obstructing the bridge's alignment, we decided to ramp up the work and I instructed my team to finish the work before monsoon 2025 intensifies,” Abhijit Bangar, Additional Municipal Commissioner (Projects), told The Indian Express.“The bridge was ready by May 31. However, considering it's a new bridge that was built from scratch, the Mumbai Traffic Police had some inputs with regards to the surface of the roads which we had to implement and follow before we went ahead with the final load test. These factors took us an additional two weeks to open the bridge,” Bangar said.

“In Mumbai, most of the existing ROB's were built during the 19th and 20th centuries. This was one of the recent projects that were taken up, and over time, many new guidelines came up for example, the height of the bridges should be increased to allow more headspace for the trains passing from below. These kinds of amendments in the rules allowed us to change the plan multiple times before we could go ahead with the tendering process,” the officer said.After issuing the work orders in 2018, the BMC set a two-year deadline to finish the bridge by 2020. However, the authorities failed to meet the deadline owing to the presence of multiple encroachments on the plot where the bridge was being constructed, and the deadline was later postponed to 2022. Meanwhile, the project got delayed further, and in 2023, the final decision was taken to finish the work by the middle of 2025. The initial cost of the project at the time of issuing the work order stood at Rs 70 crore. However, owing to multiple delays, the cost now stands at Rs 180 crore.

How will the bridge ease the lives of Mumbai residents?

The Vikhroli bridge will connect the Eastern Express Highway in the east with Lal Bahadur Shastri (LBS) Marg in the west of Vikhroli in Mumbai's eastern suburbs. To date, there is no direct east-west link in Vikhroli and residents have to either take the ROB from Ghatkopar or Kanjurmarg for their journey. The flyover will also provide pedestrians with direct access to the platforms. Once operational, the bridge will, therefore, bring down the commute time to seven minutes instead of the current 25-30 minutes or even more, depending on the traffic. This bridge will be India's longest structure having an open-web-girder (OWG) system that will run above railway tracks. The total length of the bridge is 615 metres, 12 meters wide, and is made of stainless steel with four vehicular lanes. The weight of each girder is around 1,100 metric tonnes. Alongside these, the bridge will also have footpaths for pedestrian movement.

Faridabad fake cardiologist case: Police yet to receive medical records of imposter at heart centre



GNS News Agency,June 21

Four days after a First Information Report (FIR) was lodged in connection with a case of alleged impersonation of a cardiologist in Faridabad, the Haryana Police are yet to receive relevant medical records from the civil hospital where the accused imposter was working at a heart centre.The police on Tuesday registered the FIR against the doctor, identified as Pankaj Mohan Sharma, and five officials associated with the private hospital that had employed him.

tions of impersonation, forgery, criminal conspiracy, and causing deaths in the matter.Meanwhile, Faridabad Chief Medical Officer Dr Jayant Ahuja said Saturday that only the private hospital would have the necessary medical or patient records for the case.“We do not have any such records. The matter is sub judice now, so no further comments.”The managing director and HR head of the Kerala-based hospital have also been named as accused.Several complaints were also raised on the CM's portal.His prescriptions allegedly falsely displayed his credentials as MD and DNB (Cardiology), and he used a stamp identifying himself as a cardiologist, further deceiving patients and hospital management, said officers.The FIR mentioned that Sharma served as the managing director of a film-making company.In his complaint, Gupta pointed out that at least three FIRs had been filed earlier against the heart centre and its staff.“Want murder, culpable homicide charges added” Gupta told The Indian Express on Saturday that the matter had come to light based on both his investigations as well as the real doctor's complaint.“The FIR took four months to be lodged. I alerted the authorities by email and through letters, be it the police, the chief secretary, or the Health Department, in the first week of February itself. But there were no proceedings. Recently, I met the DCP (recently) with the evidence. Then the case started rolling,” he said.In the echocardiogram matter, he shared he is also a witness in the case.“I had gone for a check-up at the time as I was having some trouble. The raid happened in front of me,” he revealed.The record of three deaths is with him, and he suspects that the records of surgeries conducted by the imposter are missing since the number of deaths would have been by now otherwise.“I have even received information that the Chairman and managing director of the private hospital is planning to flee the country, and have received threats to withdraw the complaint. If the records are discovered, it will be known whether the patients are alive or have died. For now, the full figures are not known officially,” he said.Regarding the offences invoked in the FIR, he said, given the nature of the crime, attempt to murder and culpable homicide (amounting to murder) should also have been invoked.“I will continue being part of the case and the legal journey to follow to get these charges added. I will stand by the victims and ensure their bail pleas of the accused are vigorously opposed,” Gupta asserted.DCP Ahmed said that though the complaint and certain reports mentioned at least three deaths, they cannot act on it until they have any substantial records.

Sharma, who conducted around 50 heart surgeries over eight months at the hospital, continues to have his phone switched off when contacted.“We will arrest the main accused imposter soon. The others, we will call them to give their statements and ascertain their role. They obviously had some role to play, even if at the document verification stage, it cannot be otherwise, so they have to answer,” Maqsood Ahmed, Faridabad Deputy Commissioner of Police, New Industrial Township (NIT), told The Indian Express Saturday.The doctor, who allegedly has only an MBBS degree, worked at the heart centre operated by a Kerala-based private hospital for around eight months.The heart centre was operating out of the government-run Badshah Khan Hospital.It was shut down in February this year over compliance issues.DCP Ahmed added that they have asked for all relevant medical and patient records from the hospital and the Chief Medical Officer.“We have asked for records relating to the surgeries done and deaths, etc. We have not received it yet. As soon as we do, we will begin working on it. We will be questioning the private hospital's management.”The FIR was based on a complaint filed in April by Sanjay Gupta, a city-based advocate.The police have invoked Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS) sec-

On ED’s plea, Bombay High Court sets aside magistrate’s order accepting EOW’s closure report in Topsgrup case



GNS News Agency,June 21

As per the ED, the MMRDA contract awarded to Topsgrup was facilitated by Sarnaik, who allegedly received kickbacks of at least Rs 7 crore.As per the ED, the MMRDA contract awarded to Topsgrup was facilitated by Pratap Sarnaik, who allegedly received kickbacks of at least Rs 7 crore. The Bombay High Court on Wednesday set aside a magistrate court's September 2022 decision of accepting a closure report filed by the Economic Offences Wing (EOW) in a case against Topsgrup Services and Solution Limited.The Enforcement Directorate (ED) had relied on the EOW's case to register a money laundering case against Amit Chandole, a close aide of Shiv Sena minister Pratap Sarnaik, and had subsequently probed the leader.

Ramesh Iyer, a former employee of Topsgrup and the original complainant, had informed the magistrate that he had no objection to the closure report, claiming that his complaint was filed “due to a misunderstanding.” The court had then accepted the report, prompting the ED to challenge the decision before the high court.The ED's case was based on an FIR registered on October 28, 2020, based on Iyer's

complaint. He had alleged that Topsgrup defrauded the Mumbai Metropolitan Region Development Authority (MMRDA) of Rs 175 crore. As per the ED, the MMRDA contract awarded to Topsgrup was facilitated by Sarnaik, who allegedly received kickbacks of at least Rs 7 crore.On Wednesday, a single-judge bench of Justice Madhav Jamdar – while allowing the ED's plea – noted that the magistrate “didn't apply mind” to the ‘C’ summary report (closure report) and it was accepted solely on the ground that the complainant had given no objection.The EOW had filed the C-summary report in January 2022. The order of the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate court, dated September 14, 2022, noted the EOW's submission that after reviewing witness statements and relevant documents, it concluded that no cognizable offence could be made out.The high court bench has now sent the matter back to the magistrate court, directing it to reconsider the C-summary report filed by the EOW expeditiously. The high court clarified that it had not examined the merits of the closure report and that all contents of the parties remained “expressly kept open.”

Justice Jamdar noted that the magistrate was duty bound to apply his/her mind to the facts of the case, the closure report and accompanying material before passing an order, either accepting the report, rejecting it and taking cognisance of the offence and initiating proceedings, or ordering further investigation.“A bare perusal of said Order dated September 14, 2022 shows that the ‘C’ Summary Report is accepted without application of mind and only on the ground that the First Informant has given no objection,” the high observed.The bench further noted that the question of whether the case needs to be committed to the special court under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) would arise only if the magistrate rejects the closure report and initiates proceedings.

Ahmedabad plane crash: Hope to start a family ends for couple on surprise visit

GNS News Agency,June 21

After a final video call from his son, Harshit, and daughter-in-law, Pooja, from their seats inside the Boeing Dreamliner, Anil Patel was riding back home when he began receiving calls about a plane crash. He turned his vehicle around and rushed to the site. “I searched for them everywhere. I came to the civil hospital next in search of them, but they were nowhere to be found,” Patel said.On Saturday morning, Patel again made his way to the Kasauti Bhavan, set up at the Ahmedabad Civil Hospital, awaiting further information on the couple.



Initially holding on to hope that they could be found alive, Anil Patel now waits at the hospital to receive the final remains Initially holding on to hope that they could be found alive, Anil Patel now waits at the hospital to receive the final remains. On June 2, Patel had received a surprise visit from Harshit and Pooja, the first in two years since they left for the UK for better prospects. Patel, who worked as a security guard and now as a security supervisor in Ahmedabad, lost his wife six years ago to blood cancer, a year after his son got married.

“Pooja was like a daughter to me. Knowing that I would be left alone once they leave for the UK, she insisted that I live close to her parents and eat all my meals there. She would constantly check on me to see if I'm eating and taking care of my health. I feel the loss of two children,” Patel said.Pooja and Harshit met at their workplace over seven years ago and fell in love. Harboursing dreams of studying in the UK, Pooja got into a university two years ago to study business administration. She went to Leicester on a student visa, while Harshit went as her dependent.

for Pooja's medical treatment,” Patel said. Pooja had a miscarriage while in the UK and was in touch with a doctor in Ahmedabad.Patel said that the doctor had advised her to come in for an examination and further treatment. “Of the 10 days they were here, six-seven days went in treatment. The rest they spent at home with her parents and me. She was happy and hopeful that they could start planning a family again. Even though it was a short trip, I was happy that they could come back and meet me,” Patel said.On Thursday, Patel went to the airport to drop them. “On the last videocall from inside the plane, they said they were going to reach home by evening, UK time, and had asked a friend to pick them up,” he said.He said Harshit was close to his mother, and after her passing, the UK life was what they looked forward to, putting their past struggles behind. Patel took loans from friends and family to send Harshit to the UK.Initially holding on to hope that they could be found alive, Patel now waits at the hospital to receive the final remains. “Once we complete the last rites, it will be me alone again,” he said.

“They were working hard to make a life there. They were unable to visit since they went in 2023 and came here

how Pune’s ‘nullah garden’ was transformed into the tranquil oasis Osho Teerth Park

GNS News Agency,June 21

Amid the lush greenery of Koregaon Park, there once was a 12-acre expanse of garbage dumps and eroded land through which a nullah, an open sewer, flowed. Today, the space is one of the few tranquil corners in the city where one can enjoy greenery, birdsong, and find a spot to rest ones' jangled nerves. How the ‘nullah garden’ transformed into the Osho Teerth Park holds crucial lessons when it comes to reviving other eyesores across the city.The nullah, a central feature of the park, passed through several village-like settlements and collected dirt, refuse and pollutants along the way. The land was heavily overgrazed and constantly trampled by livestock, the soil was eroded and the bedrock exposed. The putrid smell of the sewer drew clouds of mosquitoes.



“The Shunya Foundation, part of the Osho International Foundation, decided to transform the area. There was resistance from some villagers and, for three years, the Foundation worked on convincing them. The restoration project began in May 1990 with an investment of around Rs 50 lakh and was completed by September 1991 under Swami Nihar, an Australian agriculturist and landscaper,” says Ma Amrit

Sadhana, who is part of the management team of the Osho Meditation Resort.She adds that Osho, the spiritual head of the resort, held great respect for nature. The foundation aimed to “reverse the degradation of nature in a model project which will help re-establish a balance between a clean, healthy environment and the needs of a modern city,” says a report by the Osho Spiritual Health Organisation.The project was undertaken in three main phases. First, livestock was removed from the land to prevent damage by grazing. The water was also cleaned through the construction of sewerage and drainage lines, retaining walls and four large ponds that run in a series. The ponds were cleaned and Gambusia fish, that eat mosquitoes, were released into

it. “This alleviated the mosquito problem,” says Sadhana.In the second phase, an irrigation grid was created to improve the fertility of soil. Pathways – on which a thousand people walk every weekday now – were created and dotted with bridges. A plant nursery was also added.

The unbridled energy and freedom of thought that Osho preached did not find favour among many local residents. So, when the park was complete, the surrounding community was invited to enjoy it. “This ensured that fears surrounding the park's impact on local communities were abated by the foundation's commitment to answering questions regarding drainage, cleanliness, maintenance and other factors,” says Sadhana.Averaging 2,500 visitors on weekends now, the Osho Teerth Park quickly became one of Pune's key spots, whether for a morning stroll or an evening picnic. The park takes on a meditative approach by uniting nature and human life. Among the overhead trees and shrubs, polished marble slabs provide corners for meditation. Statues of Buddha in various meditative positions, and a statue of the Osho himself can be found at certain locations in the park.The thick vegetative cover is varied: Strolling through the park, one can be in a blooming patch of yellow flowers, or beside a cascading waterfall. One can walk on numerous bridges and climb up a cool bedrock, or wade through ankle-deep water. Entry is free, although the park operates at specific timings in the mornings and evenings.

Maharashtra Congress flays BJP for trying to ridicule objections raised by Rahul Gandhi



GNS News Agency, June 21

THE Maharashtra Congress has criticised Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis and BJP leaders for trying to ridicule the objections raised by Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on the “rigging of assembly polls” in Maharashtra. “Opposition leader Rahul Gandhi has raised objections with the Election Commission regarding the rigging of assembly polls in Maharashtra. However, BJP leaders are trying to ridicule the objections and are backing the Election Commission when they should be raising questions over the functioning of the poll body,” said Congress spokesperson Gopal Tiwari in a press release.

Tiwari said Rahul Gandhi has presented facts and figures about the “poll rigging” allegations that he made. “But instead of asking EC to come clean on the matter, the BJP leaders are behaving as the spokesperson for the poll body

Scholarship scam: Former registrar of private university granted bail

GNS News Agency, June 21

A Kaithal court has granted bail to a former registrar of a private varsity situated in the town in an alleged scholarship scam observing that “being an office-bearer in the administration of university, he might have played an active role to give undue benefit to owner of the university but he may not be the actual beneficiary of the alleged fraudulent amount”. The Haryana Anti-Corruption Bureau (ACB) had arrested former registrar of NIILM university Sumesh Kumar Sharma on May 26 this year. The present case pertains to alleged embezzlement and mis-utilisation of funds of scholarship, which were meant for the upliftment of students belonging to the Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe. The said misutilisation was allegedly done by the administration of NIILM University, Kaithal, during the academic year 2013-14 and 2014-15 by making fake admissions of students. After preliminary enquiry, an FIR was registered in 2018.

Sharma remained an employee of the university during 2012-14. He has been an associate professor of a Delhi-based institute since 2015. After his arrest in the last week of May, Sharma through his counsel Sartaj Singh and Mahadev Maharaj Singh approached the court for his bail. However, the prosecution opposed his bail plea. The prosecution informed the court that there are 25 accused in the present case, including officials of the university and 17 brokers or agents who allegedly facilitated the admission process.

In its order of June 11, the court observed that many co-accused were either already granted anticipatory bail or regular bail. The court noted that the then in-charge of admissions in the university and its vice-chancellor were granted anticipatory bail in 2024 while the then chancellor

AAP govt has turned into commission agent for realtors; Mann and Kejriwal aggregators: Jakhar



GNS News Agency, June 21

BJP chief Sunil Jakhar, Punjab CM, Bhagwant Mann, Arvind Kejriwal, Chandigarh”The true intent is to track the money trail by following the US dictum of ‘follow the money’ by tracking the person who is the end-beneficiary of ill-gotten wealth through corruption.” BJP chief Sunil Jakhar. Punjab BJP chief Sunil Jakhar Friday accused the AAP government of turning into “commission agents for real estate houses” and said Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann and AAP national convenor Arvind Kejriwal are acting as land aggregators.

“The AAP regime is colluding with real estate developers to illegally usurp the prime agricultural land of Ludhiana by hoodwinking and cheating the innocent farmers. People of Ludhiana on June 19 will cast their ballot against this move to illegally acquire their land and they would weed out AAP’s corruption,” Jakhar said. He was addressing reporters in Ludhiana on Friday along with Union Minister Ravneet Bittu and BJP candidate Jeewan Gupta. He was replying to queries on the Punjab government’s move to acquire nearly 24,000 acres of land near Ludhiana for developing urban estates. Jakhar also demanded a high court-monitored probe to ascertain if the “corruption money” allegedly being collected from drug trade and other illegal activities was reaching politicians.

The true intent is to track the money trail by following the US dictum of ‘follow the money’ by tracking the person who is the end-beneficiary of ill-gotten wealth through corruption. Leaders, from top to bottom, of all parties should be probed for ascertaining the source of this turn of fortunes of these leaders, he said. Jakhar also questioned Mann’s commitment to fighting corruption and drug abuse in the state. Jakhar said while the chief minister repeatedly claims to eradicate corruption and drugs, nothing concrete is being done on the ground.

“You claimed to have files of all the corrupt leaders and asked others to look you in the eye. Yet, no action has been taken against a single one. Why is only a select group like tehsildars being targeted? If you truly have evidence, take action, start from your own house,” he said referring to Mann’s earlier statements. Jakhar, who was talking to reporters here, urged Ludhiana West voters to “vote wisely” in the bypoll. “The people are being fooled and Punjab is

and are supporting it. This is condemnable and unconstitution,” he said. Tiwari said under Rahul Gandhi’s leadership, the Congress won 102 seats which indicates the public support across the nation. “Living up to his responsibility as a strong opposition leader, Rahul Gandhi has raised some serious points about the poll rigging in Maharashtra. He had first raised the issue in Lok Sabha, then through a press conference and now through a newspaper article. Congress leadership has also given a written complaint to the Election Commission,” he said. Tiwari said, “The article written by Devendra Fadnavis in The Indian Express as an answer to Rahul Gandhi’s article in the same paper shows his literal bankruptcy. Fadnavis said Congress appointed 25 ECs in fact it’s not true.. Actually, Since Nehru Govt to Shastri, Morarji Desai, Indira Gandhi, Rajiv Gandhi, VP Singh, PV Narsinha Rao, Atal Bihari Vajpeyi, Dr Manmohan Singh & their own BJP Govt appointed ECs time to time .. but not a single EC has been challenged or objected by any Opposition party during last 64 years up to 2014. Moreover, during Congress era CEC T S Sheshan brought reforms and controlled expenditure during elections strictly.” On the contrary, Tiwari said, “When Modi Govt appointed EC , he was objected in SC. When SC directed Modi Govt to appoint EC Selection Committee which included CJI, PM & Opposition leader, it was unfortunate that Modi Govt deleted CJI’s name and took Home Minister instead of CJI. It shows their malafide interest clearly. Why did Fadnavis hid this Selection Committee’s amendment done by Modi Govt. These tactics itself exposed Fadnavis...”



of the university and wife of its owner was granted anticipatory bail in 2018. Now she is stated to have expired. However, the court observed that the anticipatory bail application of the founder and de-facto owner of the university Vinay Rai was first dismissed by the district court and later by the Punjab and Haryana High Court. He is still at large and stated to be abroad, said the court. The court also observed that accused Sumesh Sharma, in his alleged disclosure statement, stated that he was acting as per the directions of university owner Vinay Rai, who is allegedly the main beneficiary. In his order, Kaithal Additional Sessions Judge Dr Amit Kumar Garg held: “It is a well-known fact that the private employee has varying level of job security and stability; and one has to work as per the directions of his employer for his faster career growth because private sector is more vulnerable due to economic fluctuations, leading to higher job insecurity and lay-offs. In the private sector, career progression is based upon performance and so, one has to obey the command of his boss/ employer.”

paying the price,” he said. Earlier on Tuesday, Jakhar had demanded a probe by the Income Tax (IT) department into the income of the state’s political leaders to ascertain how much assets they possess now and how much they had before joining politics. The BJP leader was then replying to a query on a statement made by state Finance Minister Harpal Singh Cheema, seeking a dope test of the Congress and Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD) leaders in the state. “Before conducting the dope test, I request that the Income Tax department be allowed to conduct an ‘income trail test’ of the state’s political leaders,” said Jakhar, adding that he never took any money from any drug seller.

Maharashtra Health Minister Prakash Abitkar reviews preparedness ahead of Pandharpur Wari pilgrimage

GNS News Agency, June 21

Maharashtra Health Minister Prakash Abitkar on Friday conducted a review of the preparedness ahead of the annual Pandharpur Wari — a centuries-old pilgrimage that sees lakhs of devotees, known as warkaris, walking from Dehu and Alandi in Pune to Pandharpur in Solapur. This year, the Sant Tukaram Maharaj Palkhi will begin its journey from Dehu on June 18, Wednesday, followed by the Sant Dnyaneshwar Maharaj Palkhi from Alandi on June 19, Thursday. The spiritual procession is dedicated to Lord Vitthal and will conclude in Pandharpur on Ashadi Ekadashi, which falls on July 6. The pilgrimage spans around 20 days and covers nearly 250 km, with daily halts in towns and villages along the route. Throughout the journey, warkaris chant devotional songs and hymns. In view of the large gatherings anticipated and the surge in COVID-19 cases, state health officials have intensified preparedness measures. While most recent COVID-19 cases have been mild, authorities have advised individuals with co-morbidities to wear masks and take necessary precautions to ensure a safe and incident-free pilgrimage. State officials said there will be small dispensaries

(Aapla Dawakhana) every 5 km along the route and 331 ambulances that will be on call 24x7 (dial 108 or 102), besides identifying 45 intensive care units in case of emergencies. Around 1,300 healthcare personnel will also be deputed for the purpose, including 138 specialists and 149 medical officers. Around 437 nurses will provide care as part of the measures. “There are cases of dysentery, diarrhoea, fever, and even heart-related issues, so we must remain extremely vigilant,” said a senior health official.

As Punjab launches Easy Jamabandi, why it matters to public, and how it may help govt save resources



GNS News Agency, June 21

Punjab has become the first state to launch Easy Jamabandi, an online system to provide easy access to land records and related services for citizens. The Punjab Land Records Society (PLRS) has digitised and streamlined processes related to the revenue department. The services, related to revenue record, maintained by the revenue department would be available after applying on the state government’s portal, through sewa Kendra and doorstep delivery sahayaks by calling on 1076 helpline.

As 99.9 per cent land records in about 12,500 villages are digitised, the landowners will be able to view the ownership records on the portal and jamabandi will be made available on WhatsApp to the applicant, a request for mutation could be made online, a request for Rapat entry (court cases related to land, and also for getting bank loans for buying property), application for ‘fard badar’ (land record corrections or changes) and application for subscription of revenue record of a specified khasra number could be made online. These services will be available online on <http://www.easyjamabandi.gov.in>, and could be accessed at the sewa kendras across the state and provided at home by calling on 1076 helpline under Doorstep Delivery of Services scheme of the government. According to Additional Chief Secretary, Revenue and Rehabilitation, Anurag Verma the government has started a novel service for NRIs and defence personnel who often report fraudulent changes in revenue records in their absence. “By paying Rs 500 to the PLRS annually, and using Subscribe To Your Land Records feature, the NRI brethren and the defence personnel would be able to keep a track on the changes made to the revenue records of the Khewat numbers of their properties. If

Inside Girgaon Chowpatty’s 100-year-old Café General, which has survived World Wars, seen Independence, and is now a college favourite

GNS News Agency, June 21

If you’ve ever been in and around Girgaon Chowpatty, chances are you’ve passed Cafe General — a landmark that has stood for over a century. Once a go-to for daily essentials, it later became a popular tea-and-snack stop, and for the last 50 years, it’s been a beloved spot to enjoy a chilled beer and a hearty meal while overlooking the Arabian Sea. And, if you’ve dropped by in recent years, you’ve likely been greeted by the ever-smiling, polite Rustom Sheriar Irani — a hospitality graduate and the third-generation custodian of the cafe. In the early 1900s, a young Rustom Sheriar Irani — the current owner’s grandfather — migrated from Iran and set up a provision store named Cafe General & Stores opposite Girgaon Chowpatty. Like most Irani stores of the time, it stocked everyday necessities: chocolates, butter, biscuits, soaps, razors, and toothpaste. During World War II, financial pressures forced them to downsize the establishment to its current size. “My father, Sheriar Rustom Irani, would tell me how they had to shut shop by 6 pm. It became difficult to pay the rent, so they decided to cut back,” shared Rustom. Rustom stands in front of a wall adorned with black-and-white photographs of Cafe General and the Chowpatty shoreline. (Express photo by Akash Patil) Rustom stands in front of a wall adorned with black-and-white photographs of Cafe General and the Chowpatty shoreline. Express photos by Akash Patil

After Independence, the provision store slowly transformed into a cafe. “My father must have been 18 or 19 when he joined the business. My uncle, Shapur Sheriar Irani, followed soon after. They began serving tea, coffee, samosas, bun maska, mutton pattice, sandwiches — the works,” he said, recalling how regulars would settle in with a newspaper and bun maska. Over time, the duo expanded the offerings and, by the 1980s, turned it into a full-fledged restaurant and bar. Mughlai, Indian-Chinese, and, most importantly, Parsi cuisine became staples. “They also added an air-conditioned section and an ice cream parlour. I remember coming here after school just for a mango or raspberry duet,” he laughed. Having served generations, Cafe General has built a loyal clientele. “People often come and share stories — how their parents dined here, then they did, and now they bring their kids along. It’s always very nostalgic,” Rustom shared, adding that among them was Jackie Shroff. “When he was living in Walkeshwar’s Teen Batti chawl, he would often drop by for a meal. This was before his modelling career took off. We’ve also had several cricketers over the years, especially Ranji players,” he added.

Rustom’s own journey with the cafe began during his college days. As a student at Dadar Catering College, he would stop by for a couple of hours. After graduating, those hours stretched and eventually turned into full-time responsibility when his father and uncle passed away a little over a decade ago. “I like experimenting with food. I always cooked at home, but after my culinary education, I started

any changes are made in the records, a message would be sent to them on their phone numbers. The subscriber will also have an option to raise an objection to the proposed change. His objection would automatically land in the inbox of concerned revenue officer.” He said this is being done as many as time legitimate/illegitimate changes are made in the revenue record without the knowledge of existing landowners.

About 40 lakh people visit the Fard Kendras for getting certified copies of Fards (copy of Jamabandi). Even if half the people start using digitally signed and QR coded Fard module, about 20 lakh man days will be saved. An amount of Rs 45 crore is paid annually to the vendors for issuance of Fards. Half of this amount will be saved, even if half the people start using this module, said Verma. He added that the volume of issuance of these documents was huge. For instance, 8 lakh mutations (transfer of land through sale and inheritance), 2 lakh entries of Rapat (court order, loan) and 60,000 Fard Badar (correction of clerical error) issued by the department annually. “As we all know that the department is riddled with corruption, it takes long for the landowners to get their works done. It is a Herculean task to find a Patwari. Now, that dependence will be over. This online system will help nail the corruption. For raising the objections, we have laid down the rules that the objections could be raised by the revenue officials only once. Now, for getting the mutation of land done, the revenue officers have been given a deadline of 30 days. We will keep on reviewing the performance. A Patwari will be given 15 days on an application, lanugo will get 5 days and Tehsildar will be given 10 days to clear the application for mutation. Now, the control is in the hands of citizens. Now, our responsibility is to ensure this revenue record in 30 days unlike the earlier deadline of 45 days.” Currently, the applicant has to meet the DC or SDM for reporting corruption. With the new system, as soon as the applicant submits the application, the department proactively sends the What’s App message to the applicant. The message asks the applicant to click a link on the portal if anyone has asked for bribe or money for sanctioning of mutation. If the applicant clicks on the link and lodges a complaint, the message is sent to the Deputy Commissioner of the district. The citizen is proactively informed when his application is submitted, when Patwari sends the case to Kanugo, when Kanugo sends the case to Tehsildar and when Tehsildar finally decides the case.



tweaking the dishes here,” he said. Take the crispy paneer, for example — now topped with a creamy white sauce, bell peppers, and olives. Sizzlers got an upgrade too: four chicken lollipops over a bed of rice, crowned with a slice of cheese. The menu slowly expanded to include pizzas, burgers, and other fast food items. Veg Shashlik, Chicken Lollipop Sizzler, Salli Boti, Parsi Curry, and Crispy Paneer in White Sauce are among the popular dishes at Cafe General. Express photos by Akash patil Veg Shashlik, Chicken Lollipop Sizzler, Salli Boti, Parsi Curry, and Crispy Paneer in White Sauce are among the popular dishes at Cafe General. (Express photo by Akash Patil) Among the dishes we tried and enjoyed were the chilli paneer, and the veg shashlik — a colourful medley of batter-fried vegetables on rice, topped with a sweet-and-spicy Indian-Chinese sauce.

The cafe also runs a Gupta Kulfi franchise, with their kulfis and towering faloodas being a major draw. Served both inside and from a road-facing counter, these treats are best enjoyed with a view of the sea. The falooda, rich and indulgent, easily satisfies the sugar cravings of two to three adults. Unlike many Parsi eateries that are fading away due to a lack of successors, Cafe General has not only survived but evolved. “The clientele has changed. Now we get younger, college-going crowds,” said Rustom. Families still come for dinner and on weekends. The interiors reflect this shift. Redone six years ago, the old marble-top tables and bentwood chairs have given way to cafe-style seating. Posters about beer, Harley-Davidson signs (Rustom and his brothers-in-law are biking enthusiasts), and a patch of faux grass with a “Cafe General” signboard now add to the vibe. Still, one wall is dedicated to the past — with black-and-white photographs of Cafe General and the Chowpatty shoreline. And the menu, while ever-growing, continues to honour its Parsi roots. Their coconut-based curry — mildly spiced and available in vegetarian, chicken, or other variants — is a must-try. So is their salli boti, a Parsi classic: tender mutton in a rich tomato-based gravy, topped with crisp potato salli. Hearty and nostalgic. “Hopefully a second branch,” Rustom said with a smile. The plan has been in the works for a while. He’s considering locations between Bandra and Andheri, hoping to reconnect with customers who’ve since moved to the suburbs.

‘We are told the plan, not asked’: 86% of elders feel valued, but unheard, excluded, says report

GNS News Agency, June 21

The youth in India primarily associate elders as being “lonely”, “dependent”, but also “wise” and “respected”, indicating a mix of empathy and admiration, along with the existence of stereotypical views, according to a latest report by HelpAge India to mark World Elder Abuse Awareness Day (June 15). The first-of-its-kind national study titled ‘Understanding Intergenerational Dynamics and Perceptions on Ageing’ report (India Intergenerational Bonds — INBO Report) also pointed out that though 86 per cent of elders feel valued, many elders still feel emotionally distant, unheard, or excluded from meaningful engagement. The study was conducted across 10 Metro and non-Metro cities (Delhi, Mumbai, Kolkata, Chennai, Bengaluru, Hyderabad, Ahmedabad, Kanpur, Nagpur, and Madurai), covering the youth and the elderly population. It addresses the urgent need

to understand emotional, relational, and psychological aspects of intergenerational ties in urban India. “This report offers both a heartening affirmation and a timely wake-up call. While respect for elders and family ties remain deeply cherished in India, with 86% of elders feeling valued, beneath the surface lies a quieter, more concerning disconnect. Many elders still feel emotionally distant, unheard, or excluded from meaningful engagement. Expressions like ‘We are told the plan, not asked’ reflect a perception-practice gap that needs to be addressed as per the report,” Rohit Prasad, CEO, HelpAge India, said. The study combined the quantitative element along with qualitative Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) to explore perceptions, interactions, and emotional dynamics between youth and elders in urban India. “Through intentional collaboration across generations—in caregiving, digital literacy, lifelong learning.

Iran retaliates for Israeli attack with missile strikes



TEL AVIV/DUBAI/WASHINGTON, GNS News Agency,June 21 - (This June 13 story has been corrected to specify that a Houthi missile is reported to have injured, not killed, Palestinians in West Bank in paragraph 11)Iran and Israel traded missiles and airstrikes on Saturday, the day after Israel launched a sweeping air offensive against its old enemy, killing commanders and scientists and bombing nuclear sites in a stated bid to stop it building an atomic weapon.In Tehran, Iranian state TV reported that around 60 people, including 20 children, had been killed in an attack on a housing complex.In Israel, air raid sirens sent residents into shelters as waves of missiles streaked across the sky and interceptors rose to meet them, killing at least three people. An Israeli official said Iran had fired around 200 ballistic missiles in four waves.

U.S. President Donald Trump has lauded Israel's strikes and warned of much worse to come unless Iran quickly accepts the sharp downgrading of its nuclear programme that the U.S. has demanded in talks that had been due to resume on Sunday.But with Israel saying its operation could last weeks, and urging Iran's people to rise up against their Islamic clerical rulers, fears have grown of a regional conflagration dragging in outside powers, with global economic and financial repercussions.The United States, Israel's main ally, helped shoot down Iranian missiles, two U.S. officials said.Iranian fire still struck residential districts in Israel, however, and Defence Minister Israel Katz said Iran's leadership had crossed a red line."If (Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali) Khamenei continues to fire missiles at the Israeli home front, Tehran will burn," he said in a statement.

Iran had vowed to avenge Friday's Israeli onslaught, which gutted Iran's nuclear and military leadership and damaged atomic plants and military bases, killing 78 people including civilians according to Iran's U.N. envoy.Tehran warned Israel's allies that their regional military bases would come under fire too if they help shoot down Iranian missiles, Iranian state television reported.Iran's own ally, the Yemeni Houthi group, fired missiles at Israel on Friday night but at least one appeared to go astray, injuring five Palestinians including three children in the Israeli-occupied West Bank, the Palestinian Red Crescent said.However, 20 months of war in Gaza and a conflict in Lebanon last year have decimated Tehran's strongest allies, Hamas in Gaza and Hezbollah in Lebanon, reducing its ability to project power across the region along with its options for retaliation.

Gulf Arab states that have long mistrusted Iran but fear coming under attack in any wider conflict have urged calm as worries about disruption to the Gulf region's crucial oil exports boosted the price of crude by about 7% on Friday.Iran's overnight fusillade included hundreds of bal-

India orders inspection of Boeing 787s after Air India crash

AHMEDABAD/NEW DELHI, GNS News Agency,June 21 India's aviation regulator has ordered all Boeing 787s being operated by local carriers to be inspected after an Air India crash killed 270 people this week, the aviation minister said on Saturday, adding the authorities were investigating all possible causes.

The aviation regulator on Friday ordered Air India to conduct additional maintenance checks on its Boeing 787-8/9 aircraft equipped with GENx engines, including assessments of certain take-off parameters, electronic engine control tests and engine fuel-related checks. The Reuters Tariff Watch newsletter is your daily guide to the latest global trade and tariff news. Sign up here."We have also given the order to do the extended surveillance of the 787 planes. There are 34 in our Indian fleet," aviation minister Ram Mohan Naidu told a media briefing in New Delhi."Eight have already been inspected and with immediate urgency, all of them are going to be done."He did not say whether government officials will be involved in the inspections.

787-8 Dreamliner with 242 people on board bound for Britain's Gatwick Airport began losing height seconds after take-off on Thursday and erupted in a fireball as it hit buildings below, in what has been the world's worst aviation disaster in a decade.Air India operates 33 Boeing 787s, while rival airline IndiGo has one, according to data from Flightradar24.IndiGo did not respond to a request for comment.In a statement, Air India said it is currently completing the one-time safety checks directed by the Indian regulator, adding that "some of these checks could lead to higher turnaround time and potential delays on certain long-haul routes."The planes, however, have not been grounded, but a source on Friday told Reuters the Indian government was considering that as an option.

Naidu also said the government will look at all possible theories of what led to the crash.Air India and the Indian government were looking at several aspects of the crash including issues linked to its engine thrust, flaps, and why the landing gear remained open as the plane took off and then came down, Reuters has reported.At least 270 bodies have been recovered from the site of the crash, Dhaval Gameti, president of the Junior Doctors Association at B.J. Medical College, told reporters.

Only one of the 242 passengers and crew on board survived while others were killed as the plane struck the medical college's hostel as it came down.The crisis has cast a shadow on Air India, which has for years struggled to rebuild its reputation and revamp its fleet after the Tata Group took over the airline from the Indian government in 2022. Tata's chairman said on Friday the group wants to understand what happened, but "we don't know right now."Naidu said a government panel was investigating the crash and will issue a report within three months. "We are going to improve every necessary thing that is going to come our way, to improve the safety," he said at the briefing, declining questions from journalists.Dozens of anxious family members have been waiting outside an Ahmedabad hospital to collect bodies of loved ones killed in the crash, as

listic missiles and drones, an Israeli official said. Three people, including a man and a woman, were killed and dozens wounded, the ambulance service said.

In Rishon LeZion, south of Tel Aviv, emergency services rescued a baby girl trapped in a house hit by a missile, police said. Video showed teams searching through the rubble of one home.And in the western suburb of Ramat Gan, near Ben Gurion airport, Linda Grinfeld described her apartment being damaged: "We were sitting in the shelter, and then we heard such a boom. It was awful."The Israeli military said it had intercepted surface-to-surface Iranian missiles as well as drones, and that two rockets had been fired from Gaza.

Item 1 of 19 A rescue personnel works at an impact site following missile attack from Iran on Israel, in Rishon LeZion, Israel, With Iran's air defences heavily damaged, chief of staff Tomer Bar said "the road to Iran has been paved".In preparation for possible further escalation, reservists were being deployed across Israel. Army Radio reported units had been positioned along the Lebanese and Jordanian borders.In Iran, explosions were heard overnight across the capital, state media reported. Fars News agency said two projectiles had hit Mehrabad airport, located inside the capital, which is both civilian and military.State television reported that a 14-storey housing complex, Shahid Chamran, had been flattened by a missile. It said 60 people had been killed, though there was no immediate official confirmation.Israel's military did not immediately comment on that report.Iran's U.N. envoy Amir Saeid Iravani said 78 people had been killed in Israel's strikes on Friday and more than 320 wounded, most of them civilians.Israel sees Iran's nuclear programme as a threat to its existence, and said the bombing campaign was designed to avert the last steps to production of a nuclear weapon - even though U.S. intelligence says it has seen no sign that this is imminent.Israeli U.N. envoy Danny Danon called the strikes "an act of national preservation".

A military official on Saturday said Israel had killed nine Iranian nuclear scientists, and that the damage to the nuclear facilities at Esfahan and Natanz would take "more than a few weeks" to repair.Tehran insists the programme is entirely civilian in line with its obligations under the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) and that it does not seek an atomic bomb.However, it has repeatedly hidden parts of its programme from international inspectors, and the International Atomic Energy Agency has reported it in violation of the NPT.Israel, which is not an NPT signatory and is widely understood to have developed a nuclear bomb, has said it cannot let its main regional foe gain atomic weapons.Iranian talks with the United States to resolve the nuclear dispute have stuttered this year.Tehran implied that it would not attend the round that was scheduled for this weekend in Oman, albeit without definitively refusing."The other side (the U.S.) acted in a way that makes dialogue meaningless. You cannot claim to negotiate and at the same time divide work by allowing the Zionist regime (Israel) to target Iran's territory," state media quoted foreign ministry spokesperson Esmael Baghaei as saying."It is still unclear what decision we will make on Sunday in this regard."Pope Leo appealed "to responsibility and to reason".The commitment to building a safer world free from the nuclear threat must be pursued through respectful encounters and sincere dialogue to build a lasting peace, founded on justice, fraternity, and the common good," he said."No one should ever threaten the existence of another. It is the duty of all countries to support the cause of peace."Reporting by Reuters; Writing by Cynthia Osterman, Stephen Coates and Angus McDowall; Editing by Daniel Wallis, Raju Gopalakrishnan and Kevin Liffey



Naidu also said the government will look at all possible theories of what led to the crash.Air India and the Indian government were looking at several aspects of the crash including issues linked to its engine thrust, flaps, and why the landing gear remained open as the plane took off and then came down,

doctors were working overtime to gather dental samples from the deceased to run identification checks and DNA profiling.Rafiq Abdul Hafiz Memon, who lost four relatives in the incident, said he was not getting any answers from authorities and was "very hassled".

"We have lost our children ... we are not understanding anything. Please help us get information about our children. Tell us when they are going to release their bodies," Memon said.Another father was upset about not being able to get the body of his son, Harshad Patel, saying he was told by authorities it will take 72 hours for DNA profiling."The authorities are trying to help but our patience is running out," he said.Most bodies in the crash were badly charred and authorities are using dental samples to run identification checks.Jaishankar Pillai, a forensic dentist, told reporters on Friday they had the dental records of 135 charred victims, which can then be matched through reference to victims' prior dental charts, radiographs or other records.Even for doctors, things are getting difficult, as the plane struck a hostel building of the B.J. Medical College, where many of the dead are undergoing identification checks."Most of us are struggling with our emotions and are mentally disturbed because of the loss of friends and colleagues," said one doctor who did not wish to be named."The loss of so many colleagues and friends in this incident is difficult."Reporting by Sudipto Ganguly and Sumit Khanna in Ahmedabad; Writing by Aditya Kalra; Editing by Stephen Coates, Raju Gopalakrishnan and Louise Heavens

Protests, Middle East - and bad weather - may rain on Trump's military parade



WASHINGTON, GNS News Agency,June 21- Nationwide protests against President Donald Trump, tensions in the Middle East amid Israel's strikes on Iran and expected rainy weather in Washington on Saturday could dampen spirits at a military parade on the U.S. Army's 250th anniversary, set to feature tanks on the streets and aircraft flying overhead.Trump, whose 79th birthday is also on Saturday, will preside over the parade.

The Reuters Tariff Watch newsletter is your daily guide to the latest global trade and tariff news. Sign up here.Week-long protests in Los Angeles against Trump's immigration crackdown have spread to multiple cities including Chicago, New York, San Antonio, Texas, and Washington. The Republican president has ordered National Guard troops and U.S. Marines to Los Angeles, a heavily Democratic city - a deployment that California Governor Gavin Newsom has challenged in court.

Anti-Trump groups are planning to hold nearly 2,000 demonstrations of varying sizes across the country to coincide with the parade. Many are taking place under the theme "No Kings," asserting that no individual is above the law.The protests, if they go as planned, would represent one of the biggest public displays of opposition to Trump since he returned to power in January.Parade goes in Washington will encounter a massive security presence, with some 18.5 miles (30 km) of 8-foot (2.4 m)-high black fencing, much of it reinforced with concrete traffic barriers, cordoning off streets and surrounding landmarks including the Washington Monument.

The celebrations will cost the U.S. Army between \$25 million and \$45 million, U.S. officials have told Reuters. That includes the parade itself as well as the cost of moving equipment and housing and feeding the troops.Critics have called the parade an authoritarian display of power that is wasteful, especially given Trump has said he wants to slash costs throughout the federal government."You're not doing it to celebrate the Army's birthday. You're doing it to stroke Donald Trump's ego," Democratic U.S. Senator Tammy Duckworth of Illinois, an Army combat veteran who lost two

Israel-Iran tensions: Israeli envoy expresses optimism about India's potential to mediate

GNS News Agency,June 21

Israel's Ambassador to India Reuven Azar on Saturday (June 14, 2025) expressed optimism about India's potential to mediate in the escalating tensions between Israel and Iran following a telephonic conversation between Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Prime Minister Narendra Modi."India has avenues for dialogue with both sides. It can indeed play a role. We are happy to have this sincere dialogue with India, which is a very good friend... We listen carefully to your concerns. I think they are legitimate," Mr. Azar said in an interview with PTI Videos.

Israel-Iran conflict LIVE: Iran launches fresh wave of attacks on IsraelThe remarks came amid heightened tensions in West Asia, with both Israel and Iran launching strikes against each other. Mr. Netanyahu called Prime Minister Modi on Friday (June 13, 2025) to brief him on Israel's actions, which the Ambassador described as defensive measures to counter an "existential threat" posed by Iran's nuclear ambitions and ballistic missile programme.

"No country in the world is interested in this kind of situation," Mr. Azar said, emphasising that Israel had "no choice" but to act decisively. He claimed that a clandestine group of Iranian officials was attempting to develop nuclear weapons, with the intent to "exterminate" Israel, as repeatedly stated by Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Khamenei."We had to remove an imminent threat and took decisive action against their nuclear installations and ballistic missiles," Mr. Azar said, noting Iran's "plans" to build a massive arsenal of ballistic missiles in the coming years."They are planning to build 10,000 ballistic missiles in the next three years, and 20,000 in the next six years.

Trump reports hundreds of millions of dollars from crypto, golf, licensing fees

GNS News Agency,June 21

U.S. President Donald Trump reported hundreds of millions of dollars in income from crypto, golf clubs and licensing ventures in a public financial disclosure report released on Friday that provided a glimpse of the vast business holdings of America's billionaire president.The annual financial disclosure form, which appeared to cover the 2024 calendar year, shows the president's push into crypto added substantially to his wealth but he also reported large fees from developments and revenues from his other businesses.

While Trump has said he has put his businesses into a trust managed by his children, the disclosures show how income from them still ultimately accrue to the president - something that has opened him to conflicts of interest. Some of his businesses in areas such as crypto, for example, benefit from U.S. policy shifts under him and have become a source of criticism.The financial disclosure was signed on June 13 and did not state the time period it covered. The details of the cryptocurrency listings, as well as other information in the disclosure, suggest it was through the end of December 2024, which would exclude most of the money raised by the family's cryptocurrency ventures.

Given the speed at which the Trump family has made deals during his ascent to the presidency, the filing is already a time capsule of sorts, capturing a period when they were just starting to get into crypto but were largely still in the world of real estate deals and golf clubs.A meme coin released earlier this year by the president -\$TRUMP - alone has earned an estimated \$320 million in fees, though it's

legs in the Iraq war, said at a hearing this month."If you want to celebrate the Army's birthday by spending \$30 million I would recommend you think about something along the lines of maybe spending that money on childcare for military families, perhaps tuition reimbursement for military families."

At least one organization, RefuseFascism.org, has a permit to hold a march in central Washington that will culminate in a rally opposite the White House. Trump has warned people against protesting at the parade itself, saying that "they're going to be met with very big force."The protests, and any response by law enforcement agencies, will form a contrasting backdrop to the day-long celebration of the U.S. Army's history, which will seek to honor different eras of military history with uniforms and military weaponry from those periods."I don't feel like a king, I have to go through hell to get stuff approved," Trump told reporters on Thursday. "We're not a king, we're not a king at all."While the Army has said the parade will take place come rain or shine, weather forecasts for Saturday evening show the potential for heavy thunderstorms in the Washington area.Defenders of the plans say the Army's 250th anniversary is a unique event that deserves an outsized celebration.The display of U.S. military hardware will take place shortly after one of the nation's closest allies, Israel, launched a barrage of strikes across Iran, which has threatened a harsh response.Military parades in the United States are rare. Other countries usually stage them to celebrate victories in battle or showcase military might.In 1991, tanks and thousands of troops paraded through Washington to celebrate the ousting of Iraqi President Saddam Hussein's forces from Kuwait in the Gulf War.Law enforcement agencies are preparing for hundreds of thousands of people to attend Saturday's parade.Thousands of agents, officers and specialists will be deployed from law enforcement agencies from across the country and drones operated by the Secret Service will keep watch overhead.The Federal Aviation Administration will close down arrivals and departures at Washington's Reagan National Airport during the peak of the celebration.While the Army has said it has no plans to recognize Trump's birthday, the president will play a major role in the celebrations.The U.S. Army has brought nearly 7,000 troops into Washington, along with 150 vehicles, including more than 25 M1 Abrams tanks, 28 Stryker armored vehicles, four Paladin self-propelled artillery vehicles, and artillery pieces including the M777 and M119.

The flyover will include Apache and Black Hawk helicopters along with Chinooks. Older aircraft like the World War Two-era B-25 bomber and P-51 Mustang will also take part.The military has taken steps to protect the streets of the capital from any potential damage caused by heavy tanks, including laying down metal plates in some areas.The Army has said it will pay for any unexpected repairs if needed and has set aside several million dollars in case of damage, although it has said it expects little impact.



They have a huge arsenal, which creates this ring of fire against Israel. They can attack us from the Southern Front, so we had no choice but to act on this nuclear threat, and we are determined to finish the job," the Ambassador emphasised.

Mr. Azar also said Israel's ongoing operations aim to ensure that Iran cannot enrich uranium, a goal Israel is determined to achieve — diplomatically or militarily. He referenced U.S. President Donald Trump's 60-day negotiation window, stating that Israel acted on the 61st day after Iran failed to comply.Iran has been cheating the international community," Mr. Azar alleged, adding that Israel will continue its operations until Iran's nuclear threat is neutralised. On the targeted killings of Iranian military leaders and nuclear scientists, Mr. Azar said the strikes aimed to dismantle a "criminal plot" to "eradicate" Israel."Those responsible for this plan of destruction have been taken out. We hope their successors will learn the lesson and stop this course of action," he said.

not publicly known how that amount has been divided between a Trump-controlled entity and its partners.

In addition to the meme coin fees, the Trump family has raked in more than \$400 million from World Liberty Financial, a decentralized finance company. The Trump family is involved, also, with a bitcoin mining operation and digital asset exchange-traded funds.In the disclosures, Trump reported \$57.35 million from token sales at World Liberty. He also reported holding 15.75 billion governance tokens in the venture.The wealth of the Republican businessman-turned-politician ranges from crypto to real estate, and a large part on paper is tied up in his stake in Trump Media & Technology Group, owner of social media platform Truth Social.The disclosure showed income from various assets including Trump's properties in Florida. Trump's three golf-focused resorts in the state - Jupiter, Doral and West Palm Beach - plus his nearby private members' club at Mar-a-Lago generated at least \$217.7 million in income, according to the filing.The disclosure also listed income of \$5 million in license fees from a development in Vietnam.Trump collected royalty money, also, from a variety of deals - \$1.3 million from the Greenwood Bible (its website describes it as "the only Bible officially endorsed by Lee Greenwood and President Trump"); \$2.8 million from Trump Watches, and \$2.5 million from Trump Sneakers and Fragrances.

Trump listed \$1.16 million in income from his NFTs - digital trading cards in his likeness while First Lady Melania Trump earned around \$216,700 from license fees her own NFT collection.

Resurgence of COVID 19 in India – what does it mean?



The SARS-CoV-2 that caused the COVID-19 pandemic did immeasurable harm to the world's population, socially, economically, psychologically. The pandemic continued in waves for about 3 years -- each wave driven by a different variant of the virus.Covid phases and health impactThe first wave in 2020 was caused by the Wuhan virus that caused serious disease with hypoxia, clotting/bleeding problems and relatively moderate mortality. In India it started in March-April, peaked in September and abated by January 2021.

The second wave in 2021 was caused by the Delta variant that spread far more rapidly, producing an even more serious disease. It started in February, peaked in April and returned to baseline by June. During those months it outran the health services and caused the greatest loss of life.Memories of our experience, falling ill or watching family members or friends getting admitted in Intensive Care Units in hospitals, our elders dying in isolation, the agonising choice to take or not to take vaccine and which vaccine, lockdowns and school closures etc are still in our minds if not in the conscious level, certainly in the subconscious. Those nightmare memories are being brought forth in recent days, with the news of a resurgence of COVID-19. Electronic media keep reporting the resurgence on a daily basis, as if another wave is imminent. Truth is, no wave can occur, as we analyse the past.The third wave was caused by the Omicron variant. It started in January 2022, peaked in February and abated in March. The pandemic ended in mid-2022, and thereafter the SARS-CoV-2, exclusively the Omicron variant, has remained everywhere in the world as 'endemic' meaning thereby: continuing and constant transmission in very small numbers. We have one more disease-causing virus in circulation than pre-pandemic. Most of us have forgotten the mildness of the third wave disease. The current resurgence is caused by the Omicron sub-variants -- and the anxiety during the first two waves is no longer necessary.

Incessant mutations are a feature of SARS-CoV-2. Most resultant variants are of no consequence but of curiosity for the molecular virologists. Some variants, as indicated by the missing alphabets (Greek) were of public health interest but not of concern. Three variants of Wuhan original -- Beta, Delta and Omicron were of concern. The variants of concern had higher transmissibility and the ability to evade immunity than their predecessors that lost out in competition. Thus, Delta eliminated previous variants, and Omicron eliminated the Delta variant.Infectiousness or transmissibility, can be measured. The average number of individuals infected by one infected person is denoted as the 'reproduction number' R. The higher the R, the more infectious the variant, and the faster and greater its spread. The original Wuhan variant had R of ~2, Delta had R of ~4, Omicron variant had R of ~8. The JN1 sub-variant of Omicron is said to have R of ~12 . The current NB.1.8.1 and XFG sub-variants must have even higher R value.Between Delta and Omicron, there was a drastic change in disease pattern. Delta caused the classic COVID-19 in its worst form. The Omicron is much more mutated than the previous variants -- think of it more as 'deviant' than variant, for two reasons: one, the unusually large number of mutations on the spike protein gene and second, its disease is just like a sore throat or upper respiratory tract disease.

The Omicron disease spares the lungs. It does not

cause hypoxia, or bleeding/clotting disorders. It does not cause loss of smell -- which is due to virus invasion of the smell apparatus, olfactory bulb. The biologic reason for the deviant behaviour is that Omicron's cell entry process is distinctly different from all other variants. Omicron infection does not cause fusion between adjacent cells -- in technical terms syncytium formation.Despite all these advantages, the virus is the same species and all the above are in relative terms. Even immunity evasion is only partial -- any immunity from previous variants certainly makes the subsequent infection less severe. However, those with severe co-morbidities or old age with immune senescence or immunosuppression due to any disease or disease treatment can develop severe complications affecting several body organs and may require hospitalisation and even intensive care. For them, mortality can be high. But counting their deaths does not reflect the reality of virtually no mortality in healthy population.Omicron also undergoes restless mutations, all denoted by English alphabets and numerals -- they are mistakenly called variants by many, while they are all sub-variants. The currently highly prevalent subvariants including NB 1.8.1 and XFG (which is a recombinant of two earlier subvariants) are all derived from Omicron JN.1 sub-variant, and all the clinical features described for Omicron infection above are valid for all of them.By August 2024 many countries stopped testing routinely for SARS-CoV-2 infection. That gave the false impression that the virus had stopped circulating. What happened recently, was that the countries that had continued testing reported the increasing trend of virus circulation, following which we also began testing -- the more we tested, the more we found.

New-born infants, about 70,000 per day in India, adding up as annual birth cohorts constitute the immunity-naïve population pool for driving the continued virus circulation. But we know next to nothing about the frequency of infections in themRe-infection despite immunity is the norm for SARS-CoV-2. Omicron and its sub-variants became progressively more infective and had greater potential for spread. The recent number of COVID-19, reported as nearly 7,000, reflects the greater volume of testing, not the true magnitude of infection or disease in the population. The Ministry of Health is monitoring the situation and has advised testing only for patients with influenza like illness (ILI) and patients admitted with severe acute respiratory illness (SARI). Because testing is selective, the reported numbers reflect more of those with significant symptoms than the true numbers of those with mild disease.It is of note that successive variants of the virus have clearly demonstrated the 'immune escape' phenomenon. This immune escape is partly because immunity from previous infection and from previous vaccination wanes with time. Greater infectiousness is also due to the property of 'immune evasion' by the more successful variants and sub-variants. During the 2022 Omicron wave, most new infections were in those who had immunity from past infections or immunisation or both.

What is the likely outcome of this upsurge in cases? The vast majority of those infected will have mild illness like a sore throat, dry cough (since lungs are not involved), fever, headache, etc. Some get mild diarrhoea too. By virtue of previous infection and or immunisation even the elderly and immunocompromised individuals also will mostly have a mild illness. A few individuals will develop pneumonia and will need hospital admission and out of these a small number will succumb. Management of these individuals should be along established lines with supportive treatment and steroids. Antiviral drugs are unlikely to be of much help.As in all endemic viral infections, every upsurge will also peak and then decline after which the community will fall back into the steady state of endemic prevalence. What was surprising was the upsurge during high summer and very hot days. Most other respiratory viruses are more active during cooler times and rainy season.The elderly and the immunocompromised individuals are well-advised to wear masks when they have to be in crowded places and during travel by bus, train or aeroplane. This precaution is necessary even at home if another family member has upper respiratory symptoms.

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

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

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

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

What is Google's defence?

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

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

What happens to Google next? U.S. Judge Amit Mehta will take time over the summer months to consider the facts of the case. A decision regarding the Google Search Remedies trial is expected from him before Labour Day (the first Monday in September), per AP.Google is waiting for the court's remedies but said it still disagrees with the original decision and believes it is "wrong."

A different approach to the caste census | Explained



The story so far: The Cabinet Committee on Political Affairs, chaired by Prime Minister Modi, has decided to conduct caste enumeration in the upcoming Census. As per Article 246 of the Constitution, the Census is a Union subject listed in the 7th schedule. The caste census must be viewed beyond binaries of "for or against" to envision a more transformative idea -- as a foundational tool for what might be called a social management approach to governance.

What were the findings from State-level caste censuses?

The Bihar caste survey (2023) found that Other Backward Classes (OBCs) and Economically Backward Classes (EBCs) together make up over 63% of the population, with EBCs alone at 36.01%. Scheduled Castes (SC) account for 19.65%, and Scheduled Tribes (ST) for 1.68%. The general category comprises only 15.52%. Additionally, over 34% of Bihar's families live on less than ₹200 per day, with nearly 44% of SC households below that line.In Telangana's 2025 survey, Backward Classes (BCs) constituted 56.33% of the population, with BC Muslims forming a substantial 10.08%. These numbers reveal a stark reality: India's marginalised communities form the majority but are significantly underrepresented in education, employment, and governance.

Data shared by the Union Minister of State for Education in Parliament reveals that only 4% of professors and 6% of associate professors in 45 Central Universities are OBCs, while 85% are from the general category. This imbalance exists despite the Central Educational Institutions (Reservation in Teachers' Cadre) Act, 2019.Yet, the policy response is hindered by the absence of reliable data. India hasn't conducted a full caste census since 1931. The 2011 Socio-Economic and Caste Census (SECC) was marred by data inconsistencies and its findings were withheld. Without up-to-date caste data, affirmative action and development policies remain speculative.

What is a social management approach? Top-down welfare models in India have failed to adequately address layered inequities of caste, gender, and class. A social management approach does the opposite: it starts with data, targets need-based interventions, and treats caste as a developmental variable rather than a stigma. If we know who needs what, and how need is shaped by historical disadvantage, we can design policies with greater equity and efficiency. Caste data becomes a

lens to understand inequity structurally, rather than as isolated cases. Tamil Nadu offers a model, using data from the Backward Classes Commission to adjust policies on reservations, scholarships, and governance. Karnataka's caste survey is being used to recalibrate reservation policies in education and jobs.A national caste census would enable such models at scale. It could inform disaggregated budgeting, where funds are allocated, not just based on geography or income but on caste-based gaps in healthcare, infrastructure, and education. It could enable diversity audits in institutions, showing who occupies power and who doesn't.It could also track how schemes like PM Awas Yojana or Skill India are reaching caste groups, ensuring that the most marginalised aren't left out.

Are there global precedents? Critics argue that a caste census deepens social divides and undermines national unity. However, the reality is that caste endures not because it is counted, but because it shapes how opportunity, and wealth are distributed. Ignoring caste does not erase it. It merely obscures structural inequality behind ignorance. A caste census does not create casteism; it reveals it. Other democracies don't shy away from identity-based data. The U.S. collects race and ethnicity data every 10 years and uses it for civil rights enforcement. South Africa and Brazil do the same by tracking race and language categories. If these nations can use such data to address inequity, so must India, home to the most enduring and hierarchical caste system in the world.

What about transparency? The value of a caste census extends beyond policymaking. It is also a vital instrument of democratic accountability. Disaggregated data enables civil society, the media, and citizens to know whether public resources are being equitably shared. A publicly accessible caste census would empower citizens to demand transparency. It could expose intra-caste inequalities and where welfare benefits are monopolised by elite sub-groups, leaving the truly disadvantaged behind.Ultimately, the caste census is not about counting caste. It is about recognising injustice and correcting it. Thus, a caste census rooted in social management would be linked to a wider agenda of social emancipation. This includes constitutional literacy, land rights, housing, labour protections, and justice for Dalit, Bahujan, and Adivasi women who face intersectional exploitation. A caste census done right could offer India a data-driven democratic transformation.

Our body's crimson tide: understanding blood disorders and the vital role of blood donation

GNS News Agency,June 21 From ancient observations to cutting-edge gene editing, the field of haematology -the study of blood is undergoing a profound transformation, offering new hope and more precise interventions for an array of conditions, both benign and malignant.Our blood is a complex mixture of four key components working in harmony. The liquid base is plasma, a yellowish fluid that transports nutrients, hormones, and clotting proteins throughout the body. Floating within it are RBCs - red blood cells, the oxygen carriers, responsible for energising every cell. Our silent defenders, the WBCs - white blood cells, form the core of our immune system, fighting off infections. Finally, tiny platelets act as first responders, rushing to the site of an injury to form clots, working hand in hand with clotting proteins to stop bleeding. Together, this intricate team ensures our bodies function and thrive.

Deep within our larger bones lies the bone marrow, the remarkable factory responsible for producing our entire blood supply. This spongy tissue is a powerhouse of stem cells, which undergo a miraculous process called hematopoiesis. These master stem cells transform to form the different components of blood such as WBCs, RBCs and platelets. This continuous production is vital, as blood cells have a limited lifespan and need constant replenishment. Essentially, the health of our very bones dictates the vitality of the river of life flowing through our veins, highlighting bone marrow's unsung role in our daily survival.An introduction to haematology

Haematology is the study of conditions affecting our blood cells and blood-forming organs. These are broadly categorised into benign and malignant diseases. Benign haematological conditions, though non-cancerous, can severely impact life. Examples include anaemias (like iron deficiency), bleeding disorders such as haemophilia, clotting disorders (thrombophilias), and inherited conditions like sickle cell disease and thalassaemia, which affect haemoglobin production.Malignant haematological diseases, or blood cancers, arise from the uncontrolled production of abnormal blood cells. The three main groups are leukemias (cancers of blood-forming tissue in bone marrow), lymphomas (cancers of the lymphatic system), and myelomas (cancer of plasma cells). Understanding this spectrum highlights the diverse challenges haematology tackles, from chronic inherited illnesses to aggressive cancers.

Blood acts as a dynamic window into the body's health, making blood tests invaluable diagnostic tools. A Complete Blood Count (CBC) provides quantitative data on red cells, white cells, and platelets, indicating infections, anaemias, or potential malignancies. Microscopic examination of a peripheral blood smear is one of the important investigations which can reveal abnormal cell morphology charac-



teristic of specific diseases; assessment of functions of vital organs such as the liver and kidneys are done by liver function tests and kidney function tests. For deeper insights, a bone marrow aspiration and biopsy allow direct examination of the blood cell "factory."Advances in the study of chromosomes such as karyotyping and FISH (Flourescent in situ hybridization)have been aiding us in risk stratification of leukemias. Recent molecular advancements like NGS (Next-Generation Sequencing) and PCR (polymerase chain reaction) have revolutionised haematological diagnostics. NGS enables rapid sequencing of DNA and RNA, identifying specific genetic mutations and abnormalities that define subtypes of blood cancers. This molecular fingerprinting aids in precise diagnosis, risk stratification, prognosis, treatment selection, and monitoring for disease relapse.

Liquid Biopsy, the analysis of tumour-derived material like circulating tumour DNA (ctDNA) in the blood, offers a minimally-invasive way to detect cancer, monitor treatment response, and identify resistance mutations without repeated invasive biopsies. These advanced diagnostics are propelling haematology towards personalised medicine, tailoring interventions based on the molecular characteristics of a patient's disease.Patients with benign diseases such as thalassaemia, sickle cell anaemia and patients undergoing chemotherapy often have high transfusion requirements of both blood and platelets.ThisWorld Blood Donor Day, June 14, as the world rallies under the theme, 'Give blood, give hope: together we save lives,' let us recognise the profound impact of a simple, yet powerful act: blood donation. In a world facing constant health challenges, the need for safe blood is a universal constant, and every drop counts.Donating blood is a noble act that extends a lifeline to those in critical need -- be it accident victims, patients undergoing major surgeries, or those battling cancer. The advantages, however, are not just for the recipient. For the donor, it serves as a mini health check-up, with screening for blood pressure, haemoglobin levels, and infectious diseases.

Thirdspace: how spaces are experienced and remade



Have you noticed how in cities, we see places like Chinatown, Afghan Street, or Bengali corners? These are not the official names of those places, but the moment you enter them, you notice how different they are from the formal city around them. They are culturally vibrant and largely built by and for communities that don't belong to the region or country where the city exists. Such spaces, rich with life and meaning but unaccounted for in maps, are best understood through the concept of Thirdspace.

Thirdspace tells us that space is not just something we live in; it's something that lives in us. Shaped by emotion, identity, power, and resistance, it urges us to see how places such as street corners or protest sites are far more than physical locations. They are lived, remembered, and reimagined. This concept was introduced by Edward Soja in his book Thirdspace: Journeys to Los Angeles and Other Real-and-Imagined Places (1996), which builds on the influential work of French philosopher Henri Lefebvre in The Production of Space (1974). Soja expands Lefebvre's idea of spatial triad into what he calls the trialectics of spatiality — a way of seeing space through three interrelated dimensions: Firstspace, Secondspace, and Thirdspace.

A city can be measured by its buildings or population density. That's one kind of spatial understanding. But if you think about who planned the city, where certain communities live, and how zoning laws shape who belongs where, you're entering another kind of understanding. Finally, if you ask people how they live, remember, or resist in those places, you will have, yet again, a different understanding of space.Firstspace (the perceived physical space) refers to the material space we can touch, measure, and map. It includes roads, buildings, parks, rivers, and railway tracks; everything you can record with data. While it seems neutral or objective, it is anything but. The physical placement of slums at city margins or the clustering of communities by religion or caste reflects histories of power and inequality. Firstspace is the focus of statistics, maps, and urban planning. And while it tells us what is there, it doesn't always explain why or for whom it was built.Secondspace (the conceived ideological space) is how space is imagined and controlled by those with power, including urban planners, governments, and developers. This space is created in blueprints, master plans, zoning laws, and design philosophies. It reflects ideological visions about what space should be. For example, a city plan may declare a neighbourhood as a "commercial zone" or mark certain areas as "unsafe." These decisions are not just technical, they reflect values, biases, and priorities. Colonial maps, gentrification projects, and housing segregation are all examples of Secondspace at work.

Thirdspace (the lived and experienced space) is where people actually live, remember, resist, and build meaning. It blends the physical (Firstspace) and the imagined (Secondspace) and goes beyond them. It's not something you can fully map or plan. Think of a government-assigned refugee colony, perhaps originally called First Main Street, where Afghan migrants live. It was not designed to be anything more than a housing zone. But over time, it trans-

forms into a cultural hub — for instance, a street market during Eid, a place of music, food, and memory. The community itself brings meaning to the place and transforms it. That transformation, that layering of emotion, identity, and politics, is Thirdspace.Space and identity

Thirdspace resists easy definition because it's always changing. It's where everyday lives play out in all its contradictions. It is also where marginalised communities, women, and migrants, assert their presence and resist dominant narratives.Thirdspace gains even more significance when we add the lens of identity, particularly race, class, and gender. Feminist thinkers like Bell Hooks, Doreen Massey, and others have shown us how space is gendered and politicised. Who is allowed in public parks after dark? Why are urban layouts often built around male mobility and safety?Bell Hooks speaks of the margin not as a place of exclusion, but as a space of resistance and imagination. Feminist perspectives stress intersectionality, urging us to see how gender, race, and class interact within lived experience. Through this lens, Thirdspace becomes a powerful way to understand not just how space is used, but who is erased or included in that usage.

Although Soja focused primarily on urban contexts, Thirdspace is not exclusive to cities. It can be found wherever people live, resist, and negotiate meaning. A village square, for instance, may serve as a physical space for gatherings (Firstspace), a symbolic centre of tradition and hierarchy (Secondspace), and a site where local customs, gender roles, generational conflicts, and collective memory intersect (Thirdspace). Here, people meet not just to conduct rituals, but also to contest them, reinterpret them, and forge new relationships.

However, Soja emphasises urban contexts because cities are not only where tensions between the three spatialities become the most visible, it is also where they are most resisted. Urban spaces are sites of intense planning, regulation, surveillance, and segregation, making them ideal grounds to study how the 'experience' of space often diverges from its physical form. Cities are also where diverse populations collide, informal economies thrive, and where protest and public culture becomes visible. These layered realities are precisely what Thirdspace seeks to capture.Think of Greenwich Village in New York. On one level, the village has an 18th-century street pattern and is designated as a historical district, which imposes strict regulations on renovation and physical alterations (Firstspace). It is also home to two major colleges, and urban planners and architects could have long imagined it as a historical and educational hub (Secondspace). Finally, with the presence of the Stonewall Inn, widely recognised as the birthplace of the LGBTQ+ rights movement, the area carries deep emotional, symbolic, and cultural significance. It is associated with hipster culture, Pride, and histories of resistance. (Thirdspace).Urban theory often leans too heavily on what can be mapped. What Thirdspace brings in is experience. It asks urban planners to understand how space is felt, not just designed. It values murals, street protests, informal markets, things that don't show up in satellite images but define the urban experience.Resisting non-places

To understand Thirdspace better, it helps to compare it with Marc Augé's idea of "non-places." Non-places are the product of supermodernity — airports, malls, highways, and hotel rooms. These are spaces designed for functionality and transience. You pass through them, but they do not become part of your identity. There is no memory or belonging. They feel sterile, interchangeable, and emotionally vacant. In an airport lounge, no one asks your name. In a hotel lobby, the furniture looks identical regardless of the hotel being in Kochi or New York. These spaces are designed for movement, not memory; they value efficiency over attachment.Soja's Thirdspace is in many ways a resistance to this flattening. It insists that even in the most alienating environments, people bring meaning. A shopping mall may be a non-place, but when local youth gather there to hang out, share music, or protest against a brand store that funds genocide, it becomes a Thirdspace. Their presence adds friction to the flow, subverts the design, and fills the space with memory, identity, and sometimes, dissent. Thus, Thirdspace not only becomes a critique of non-places but also presents itself as their potential antidote.Thirdspace remains relevant wherever space is lived, contested, and reimagined, as it allows us to see beyond binaries. In a time of migration, digitisation, and polarisation, it offers a lens to see how we build belonging, memory, and resistance, perhaps in the most unexpected of places. It reminds us that space is never neutral. It is made and remade, and that while it may be planned by the powerful, it is lived and reshaped by the people who live, remember and resist within it. And in that living, there lies the possibility of transformation.

How Sebi's new verified UPI IDs will safeguard investors from cyber frauds

The Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) is set to introduce a structured unified payment interface (UPI) address mechanism for its registered intermediaries, to tackle the rising number of unregistered entities in the stock market that are misleading investors.The move is expected to streamline the collection of funds by intermediaries from investors. Through this process, investors will be able to identify legitimate Sebi-registered market intermediaries before making payments to them. The markets regulator is also developing a new tool called 'SEBI Check' to verify the veracity of UPI IDs or bank details of registered intermediaries. The regulator has set an October 1, 2025, deadline to introduce both facilities.

What is the new verified UPI payment mechanism?

With an aim to enhance investor protection and combat unauthorised money collection in the securities market, the Sebi has announced the introduction of a structured and validated UPI address mechanism, featuring the exclusive "@valid" handle for all its registered investor-facing intermediaries.The validated UPI handle will be exclusively allocated by the National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) only for payment collection by Sebi-registered intermediaries. The NPCI is the umbrella organisation for operating retail payments and settlement systems in the country, that owns and operates the UPI platform. A mobile-based, 365x24x7 'fast payment' system, UPI enables users to send and receive money instantly using a Virtual Payment Address (VPA) set by the user itself.Under the new mechanism, the username will be a readable name chosen by the intermediary, followed by a mandatory suffix that clearly identifies their category, Sebi said. While the suffix would be '.brk' for a stock broker, it would be '.mf' for a mutual fund.The verified UPI handle will feature a unique and exclusive identifier, "@ valid", combined with the name of the self-certified syndicate bank. For example, for a registered broker ABC Ltd, having an account with XYZ bank,

the exclusive UPI ID would be: abc.brk@validXYZ.To ensure easy identification of legitimate transactions, investors will see a clear visual cue, a "thumbs-up inside a green triangle" icon, when making a payment to a registered intermediary through the new UPI handle.The Sebi said in recent years, unregistered entities have increasingly misled investors by collecting funds without authorisation, often siphoning off these amounts for personal gain. To address this growing issue of impersonation and to enhance investor confidence in the securities market, the markets regulator is launching a new UPI address structure for all its registered intermediaries who collect funds from investors.The new framework is designed to proactively curb such fraudulent activities, enabling investors to easily identify legitimate Sebi-registered market intermediaries and make payments to them securely and efficiently."This innovative mechanism is set to significantly improve the safety and accessibility of financial transactions within the securities market by providing a verified and secure payment channel," Sebi Chairman Tuhin Kantia Pandey said.

Will the new UPI ID be mandatory for all intermediaries?

The regulator has made it mandatory for all intermediaries to obtain the new UPI IDs. The intermediaries are also required to make investors aware of the new handle and mandatorily offer it as one of the payment options to them.

Is it compulsory for investors to use the new UPI handle only?

For investors, the use of a structured UPI handle will remain optional. Investors can choose their preferred mode of payment, such as UPI, Immediate Payment Service (IMPS), National Electronic Funds Transfer (NEFT), Real Time Gross Settlement (RTGS), or cheques. If an investor opts to use UPI for the payment to registered intermediaries, then they have to do so using only the new UPI IDs allotted to registered intermediaries.

Why Israel struck Iran, what it targeted



In what is its most ambitious military operation in recent years, Israel launched a series of air strikes against Iran on Friday, targeting nuclear sites, missile facilities and other military infrastructure. The attack killed some of the country's key military and civilian personnel as well.These strikes came after the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) Board of Governors on Thursday passed a resolution declaring Iran as being non-compliant with its non-proliferation obligations — the first such resolution in two decades. The resolution came on the back of a recent IAEA investigation that found Iran was conducting "secret nuclear activities" at three locations.

Explaining Israel's "pre-emptive strikes", Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said Iran had "taken steps that it has never taken before... to weaponise enriched uranium," and "if not stopped, Iran could produce a nuclear weapon in a very short time," perhaps even "within a few months."Israel has always considered a nuclear Iran to be an existential threat; preventing Tehran from developing an atomic weapon has been Netanyahu's signature platform for decades. Notably, this latest development comes while Tehran and Washington are negotiating a deal that would prevent Iran from developing atomic weapons in exchange for sanctions relief.

What did Israel target?

In its attack on Friday early morning, Israel claims to have deployed 200 aircraft — around a third of its active fleet — to hit more than 100 targets across Iran, including both strategic infrastructure and key personnel.Natanz nuclear facility: This is Iran's main uranium enrichment facility, where the country produces most of its nuclear fuel. Located in the central province of Isfahan, the Natanz facility is "the beating heart of the Iranian nuclear programme," analysts say.Reviewing satellite images taken before and after Friday's attack, The New York Times reported Israeli airstrikes had caused severe damage to the facility, and that "several buildings and critical energy infrastructure either destroyed or heavily damaged". It is still unclear whether these strikes damaged the all-important centrifuge halls, where uranium is enriched, that are buried deep under the Persian desert and protected by metres of reinforced concrete.

The IAEA on Friday afternoon said Israel had not yet struck Iran's other major nuclear enrichment plant at Fordow in the northern province of Qom. This facility, unlike Natanz, is entirely underground, and much harder to hit, according to analysts. One expert told The NYT, "If you don't get Fordow... you haven't eliminated [Iran's] ability to produce weapons-grade material." On Friday evening, however, Iranian media reported explosions at Fordow.Key personnel: Israeli strikes in Tehran took out Iran's top military leadership. Among those killed were Maj Gen Mohammad Bagheri, chief of staff of the armed forces, and Gen Hossein

Salami, chief of the Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps, arguably the most powerful institution in the country.While Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei has already announced replacements for the two top commanders, these deaths, along with those of more than a dozen others, leave a vacuum in Iran's military leadership ahead of what may be a protracted regional conflict.Israel also killed top nuclear scientists, including Fereydoun Abbasi, the former head of Iran's atomic agency, and Mohammad Mehdi Tehrani. This is not the first time Israel has gone after Iranian nuclear scientists. It is, however, the first time that it has done so through conventional military means and not covert operations.

Another significant casualty on Friday early morning, especially in the light of ongoing Iran-US nuclear talks, was Ali Shamkhani, one of Iran's top politicians who was appointed by Khamenei to oversee negotiations with Washington. Shamkhani's killing could severely jeopardise the possibility of a deal in the near future.Military infrastructure: Israel also targeted a number of military sites across Iran. These include a nuclear research centre and two military bases in Tabriz in northern Iran; the missile development and production facilities in Bid Kaneh, on the southern edge of Tehran; a missile base in Kermanshah in central Iran; and multiple military bases in and around Tehran.Note that this is not an exhaustive list, and Israel has maintained that its attack is "ongoing". Friday evening saw a fresh wave of strikes on Tabriz and Tehran.For Iran, this is possibly the gravest threat ever to the Islamic regime. In a letter to the UN Security Council, Iran Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi said Israel had "now crossed every red line," and that it would "deeply regret this reckless aggression".

But as things stand, Israel has painted a rather sorry picture of Iran's military strength, raising serious questions on both its defensive and retaliatory capabilities.While Iran did send more than 100 drones towards Israel on Friday, there has been no reported casualty or damage thus far. Some analysts say Israeli strikes against Iran's missile facilities may have seriously hurt its ability to strike back.The biggest question now is how Tehran will strike back. Put simply, Iran is caught between a rock and a hard place. It can, as it has done in the past, activate its proxies and even launch more drone and missile attacks. But Israeli attacks over the years, and rather muted responses from Tehran, have repeatedly exposed Iran's limitations in this regard.While Israel claims that the Islamic regime in Iran poses an "existential threat" to the Jewish nation, the opposite might be more true. At the end of the day, Tel Aviv stands with steady support from Washington, which establishes a fundamental asymmetry between itself and Iran on the battlefield.US President Donald Trump on Friday said Israel's "next already planned attacks" could be "even more brutal," and warned that Tehran "must make a deal, before there is nothing left."

Exposomics for better environmental health

The focus for World Environment Day in 2025 (June 5) is on ending plastic pollution. Micro-plastics represent one of the many thousands of chemical, physical and biological hazards that lurk in the air, water and living spaces for which we have neither the sensory capabilities nor sensing technologies to measure exposure and assess health risks. Thus, reducing the environmental disease burden continues to be a daunting challenge for public health.In India, rapid economic growth is increasing the scale and the complexity of environmental exposures and the interdependencies between the living environment and lifestyles. With India already accounting for nearly 25% of the global environmental disease burden, there is a need to develop newer paradigms for environmental management that rest on integrated health risk assessments.These must include all environmental factors into the study of disease development. The piece-meal approaches that define our current framing on environment or health indicators are likely to exaggerate environmental health inequities and result in spiralling health costs. We must embrace new and cutting-edge scientific developments in the field of "exposomics" to gain a more complete picture of disease etiologies over the life course and develop holistic prevention strategies. Strategic investments in long-term environmental health surveillance that integrate novel environmental and biomonitoring efforts with digital health and data science platforms are critical.Environmental disease burden

The World Health Organization (WHO) began estimating the environmental disease burden in 2000, which is the basis for the modern estimation approach being adopted in the Global Burden of Disease, Injuries, and Risk Factor (GBD) study. Each cycle of the GBD identifies risk factors with the greatest attributable health burden. In the latest cycle (2021) that included 88 risk factors, environmental and occupational (OEH) risk factors in the GBD were responsible for 18.9% (12.8 million) of global deaths and 14.4% of all disability-adjusted life years (DALYs), led by ambient PM2.5 air pollution (4.2% DALYs, 4.7 million deaths) and household air pollution from the use of solid fuels for cooking (3.9% DALYs, 3.1 million deaths).In India, nearly three million deaths and 100 million deaths are attributable to occupational and environmental health (OEH) risks. OEH risk factors in India are also estimated to account for more than 50% of the attributable burden for non-communicable diseases including ischemic heart disease, stroke, chronic obstructive lung disease, lung cancer, asthma and, more recently, diabetes and chronic kidney disease. Risk factors such as lead exposures can have grave developmental health impacts for children under five, with India accounting for up to 154 million or 20% of the total estimated IQ points lost globally in children under five.What are we miss-

ing? The GBD results provide a strong and robust body of evidence to initiate actions for cleaner air, safer water and better sanitation. However, the current environmental burden of disease addresses only a limited number (around 11) of categories of environmental risk factors as there is a paucity of human exposure data. Several environmental risk factors that can contribute to significant health burdens are currently not included in the GBD. These include various chemical exposures, risks from complex mixtures such as micro-plastics and solid waste and physical hazards such as environmental noise. More importantly, environmental risk factors interact in complex ways with metabolic (high blood pressure or high fasting plasma glucose) and behavioural risk factors (smoking and unhealthy diets) as well as underlying genetic susceptibility and upstream health determinants (such as socio-economic status) to produce a health impact within populations. Risk estimates are often derived for single risk factors; while confounding is often well adjusted in long-term cohort studies, complex mixtures and interactions over a life course have not been adequately explored.Finally, climate change can magnify hazards posed by multiple environmental risk factors, such as heat, air pollution, vector-borne diseases, storms and flooding, and wildfires. Climate change may reduce crop yields, reduce agricultural worker productivity, disrupt food security and affect food supply chains. Depression, anxiety and other mental health outcomes, driven by both ecological concerns and direct health impacts of climate-sensitive environmental risk factors such as fine particulate matter, are also important to consider. Several of these risk factors can occur together, resulting in compound events and synergistic effects. These hazards can further amplify health impacts among populations with inadequate access to health systems or healthy food systems. Methods and data are not yet available to support inclusion of these important risk factors in the global burden of disease assessments.Thus, the current environmental burden of disease estimates are not only a conservative underestimates but also do not provide an adequate means of prioritising against competing risk factors to develop holistic, scalable preventive health strategies.The global human genome project (1990-2003) revolutionised our ability to explore the genetic origins of disease. However, it also revealed the limited predictive power of individual genetic variation for many common diseases. Genetic factors for example, contribute to less than half of the risk of heart disease, which is a leading source of mortality.The success in mapping the human genome has fostered the complementary concept of the "exposome". The exposome is defined as the measure of all the exposures of an individual in a lifetime and how those exposures relate to health. tments in long-term environmental health surveillance that integrfactors;

As the world burns more, the Arctic biome is refusing more carbon



Multiple states in the U.S. were recently in the grip of tornadoes, wildfires, and dust storms. The fires that scorched parts of Texas and Oklahoma burnt through almost 300 homes, reliving the horrors a similar blaze inflicted on Los Angeles in January this year. The fires that raged across Eaton and Palisades in particular claimed at least 28 lives, destroyed more than 14,000 structures, and forced people to evacuate en masse.

The inferno engulfed at least 16,000 hectares of land, destroying various natural ecosystems, per state agency Cal Fire. In fact, Cal Fire said it was among the most destructive fires in California history. Almost a month later, across the Pacific Ocean, another wildfire swept through the forests near Ofunato city in Japan. According to media reports, the fire had started burning in the mountainous region surrounding the city on February 26. It claimed the life of at least one person, damaged close to 210 buildings, and forced more than 4,200 residents in the area to evacuate. In all, the fire covered nearly 2,900 hectares of land, rendering it one of the largest fires Japan has suffered in the last five decades.

All these fires also released large quantities of carbon into the atmosphere. According to the Copernicus Air Monitoring Service (CAMS) of the European Union, wildfires released 800,000 tonnes of carbon in January 2025 alone and that this was nearly four-times the amount wildfires released in the same period a decade ago. CAMS also examined the fires' radiative power — i.e. the amount of heat they radiated, measured in watts — as recorded by NASA's Terra and Aqua satellites (which also track farm fires in India in winter). It found that this power exceeded the long-term average power between 2003 and 2024 by one order of magnitude. According to the latest India State of Forest Report published on December 21, 2024, Uttarakhand, Odisha and Chhattisgarh recorded the most fires in that year. Uttarakhand alone recorded 5,315 forest fires between November 2022 and June 2023. However, the report also said the number of fire 'hotspots' in the country seems to be dropping: from 2.23 lakh in 2021-2022 and 2.12 lakh in 2022-2023 to 2.03 lakh in 2023-2024.

At the same time, India has been experiencing some of its highest land temperatures in recent years. In 2023, researchers at IIT-Kharagpur and the Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology, Pune, reported that in India's northwest, northeast, and central regions, land temperature is rising 0.1°-0.3° C per decade in the pre-monsoon season and 0.2°-0.4° C per decade in the post-monsoon season. Heat waves have also been found to be occurring earlier in the year, moving slower, and lasting longer. Together with prolonged dry spells, they create conditions ripe for wildfires. Suryaprabha Sadasivan, senior vice-president of consulting firm Chase India, wrote in The Hindoon February 12 that forest fires in India emit around 69 million tonnes of

carbon dioxide every year. The intensity and frequency of wildfires raise the question: are the earth's natural carbon sinks able to absorb all the carbon being emitted?

The planet's oceans, forests, and soil are well-known carbon sinks. The Arctic Boreal Zone (ABZ) is a particularly important one: for many centuries now, its tundra, coniferous forests, and wetlands around the Arctic Circle have absorbed carbon and sequestered it in the zone's permafrost. Its coniferous forest is the world's largest land-based biome. But according to a new study published in Nature Climate Change, the increasing ferocity of wildfires means that more than 30% of the ABZ has now stopped capturing carbon and is instead releasing it.

In the study, an international team of researchers analysed data from 200 monitoring sites worldwide between 1990 and 2020 and tracked year-round changes in the atmospheric concentration of carbon. Their analysis found that while the ABZ was actively absorbing carbon from the atmosphere from 2001-2020, fully one-third of the region has been releasing carbon dioxide since. "While we found many northern ecosystems are still acting as carbon dioxide sinks, source regions and fires are now cancelling out much of that net uptake and reversing long-standing trends," Anna Virkkala, a research scientist at Woodwell Climate Research Center in the US and an author of the study, said in a statement. The researchers were also able to specify the areas in the ABZ that had become carbon sources: while Alaska accounted for 44% of the 'new' emissions, northern Europe and Siberia accounted for 25% and 13%, respectively. The study paper also stated that the carbon emissions from the longer, non-summer months in the ABZ had surpassed the amount of carbon dioxide absorbed during the summer months (June to August). Finally, the team was able to estimate that the ABZ first began to transform from a carbon sink to a carbon source before 1990 itself and that it was helped along by the Eastern Siberia fires in Russia in 2003 and the Timmins wildfire in Canada in 2012. According to the paper, the carbon dioxide released in these two years far exceeded the amount the ABZ alone was able to absorb. One important reason for the ABZ releasing more carbon dioxide than what it can absorb is the thawing of tundra permafrost. As global warming — whose effects have been more pronounced in cooler regions — dries out the soil and changes the type of plants that grow, the average temperature of the top soil rises and organic materials in the soil decompose, releasing carbon dioxide into the atmosphere. The consequences of these changes creates a dangerous feedback loop. According to the study, as wildfires become more common and more intense, they burn through the natural carbon reservoirs that have historically helped regulate the earth's climate.

The carbon released from these fires further fuels global warming, which in turn creates conditions for more frequent and more intense wildfires. And so on. The study also corroborated the findings of the 2024 Arctic Report Card issued by the US National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA). This document stated that frequent wildfires are turning the Arctic tundra into a source of carbon by forcing it to absorb record levels of pollution due to burning fossil fuels. Alaska Biological Research senior scientist Gerald Frost, who also co-authored the Arctic Report Card, told the NOAA, "Many of the Arctic's vital signs that we track are either setting or flirting with record-high or record-low values nearly every year. This is an indication that recent extreme years are the result of long-term, persistent changes, and not the result of variability in the climate system."

Farmers to skip middlemen, sell directly to consumers in Bengaluru



"The main intention is to bail out farmers from price-crash situations by ensuring remunerative prices while consumers get the benefit of quality produce at affordable prices

In an unique move to help farmers in an unequal agricultural market, the Karnataka Rajya Raitha Sangha has taken up an initiative to facilitate sale of farm produce directly to consumers in Bengaluru on an experimental basis. The first such experiment will commence with a three-day santhe (shandy) at Munivenkatayya Memorial Open Air Theatre in Rajarajeshwarinagar in Bengaluru where farmers will sell their produce directly to consumers without the intervention of any middlemen or traders from April 12 to 14. Farmers from anywhere in Karnataka can participate in the santhe if they register themselves with the KRRS in advance. The organisers are planning to give priority for the first 100 enrolments, as this is the first effort. Apart from vegetables, the farmers are also getting foodgrains, jaggery and oil to sell at the santhe. "We want to spread this initiative to all areas of Bengaluru which is a major market. We want to do it with co-operation from consumers and residents' welfare associations. If interested consumers and residents' groups contact us, we will arrange for holding such santhes on a regular basis in various parts of Bengaluru," says KRRS leader Chukki Nanjundaswamy, whose idea is to further develop this farmer-consumer forum.

"The main intention is to bail out farmers from price-crash situations by ensuring remunerative prices while consumers get the benefit of quality produce at affordable prices," Ms. Chukki told. This initiative is being taken up as a 'farmers' struggle', christened nera maaraatada mulaka namma horata (our struggle through direct marketing). "The

farm market is distorted as it neither assures justifiable prices to farmers, nor does it benefit consumers," she said. "This has pushed farmers into a crisis. About 30 farmers are committing suicide a day in India. In fact, about 85 lakh people have shun agriculture in the country between 2001 and 2011, as per the census report while the latest data is not yet available," she added. A file photo of Chukki Nanjundaswamy, daughter of KRRS founder M.D. Nanjundaswamy, with Rakesh Tikait (right), Yudhvir Singh (3rd from right), and other farmer leaders in Bengaluru. She expressed concern that nothing much had changed though efforts were going on for several years to ensure remunerative prices for farm produce through legal sanctity for Minimum Support Prices. "In such a situation, we have been left with no option, but to explore the possibility of creating a direct farmer-to-consumer markets by ourselves. In fact, it's an effort to awaken the conscience of consumers and appeal to them to make it a habit to buy directly from farmers so that they can contribute to fighting agrarian crisis, and save farmers," Ms. Chukki said, while pointing out that Bengaluru had a sizeable population that had migrated from rural areas and knows the problems of farmers. "Consumers who can afford can also help farmers in a bigger way by buying the agri produce for needy people. We will distribute such produce among needy people in slum areas," she said. Request for promotion Prominent personalities, including films actors, writers and intellectuals, were being requested to promote this initiative in the interest of farmers through videos.

Will the new garbage tax give a push to wet waste composting?



Mountains of muck, those stinky black spots of mixed garbage, are rising across the city again. But even as the Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) claims to tackle them with a steep 36% garbage tax, a workable way out remains largely ignored: Wet waste composting. Localised ward-level composting with a multi-stakeholder approach could potentially solve half the problem, and the time is now.

Bengaluru generates an estimated 6,000 Metric Tonnes (MT) of solid waste every day, and almost 2,800 MT is wet waste. The lack of a city-wide, well-structured composting mechanism has meant that a big chunk of the wet waste gets mixed up and eventually ends up in landfills. Can the success stories from many apartment complexes and a recent public-private project involving the Bengaluru Metro Rail Corporation Limited (BMRL) be replicated and scaled up? Dubbed as the Solid Waste Management (SWM) user fee, the BBMP's garbage tax is bound to generate an additional annual revenue of ₹750 crore. The bulk of this money will go for the collection, transport, processing and disposal of waste. But SWM experts ask why the same money can't instead be used to buy compost bins for all the three million households in the city and tackle the mega problem at source? Part of it, they say, could also build a robust network of ward-level composting centres.

Ideally, hyper local composting with active involvement and monitoring by ward committees should have had a working system by now. But this has been a non-starter without an elected BBMP Council and corporators. The best bet now could be emulating the composting success models, now up and running in many apartments. Big complexes that generate more than 150kgs of wet waste daily are composting through internal converters and using it as manure for gardens. The soil-less compost garden set up by BMRL in the median space between Metro pillars along a pilot stretch in the city. Big government corporations could show the way too. The Bengaluru Metro Rail Corporation Limited (BMRL) has launched one such initiative by introducing soil-less, compost-based gardens in the median space between the Namma Metro pillars. The project, a public-private initiative, involves Pelican Kenterra and Wipro Foundation. Instead of soil mined from fertile farmlands and mountains, the method utilises reject compost and garden waste from commercial establishments and residential communities. Under the PPP project, a trial stretch of 100 metres has been installed by Kenterra near the Manjunath Nagar Metro Station. The medians between five Metro pillars were filled with over 20 MT of compost converted to soil-less gardening material. To fill the trial stretch, about 600 cubic metres of natural compost and garden waste were sourced from the Wipro forest area in Sarjapur. The median space was then planted with ornamental plants. An additional five km of Metro medians will now get the same compost gardening treatment between HSR Layout and Bellandur.

The technology to convert biodegradable waste into soil-less planting material had won the Swachh Technology Challenge. Here's an explanation by the start-up: "All biodegradable matter, even the toughest of it, coconut shell,

will eventually degrade to create a soil-less planting media into which plants can be simply inserted. No soil is required. The technology involves using microbial inoculums for degrading the lingo-cellulolytic matrix of plants and the protein, fat, and carbohydrate matrix of the animal residue into a medium with low electrical conductivity. Plants will grow as in soil in this medium. "These out-of-the-box solutions need to be scaled up to make a bigger impact. But at the ward-level, barring a few bio-methanisation plants and lane composters such as in HSR Layout, decentralised composting is insignificant compared to the huge amount of waste generated, says Dr. Shanthi Tummala, a founding member of the HSR Citizen's Forum and a member of the Solid Waste Management Round Table (SWMRT).

A good number of apartments have a composting system in place, some activated by eco-conscious residents and some following the mandated rule for bulk generators. The lane composting initiative in HSR Layout, funded by CSR initiatives, has been successful. "The whole lane wastes are being processed by those composters. But all these are pilot projects, which the government should scale up," she says. Glimpses from HSR layout SwachaGraha Kalika Kendra, a learning centre for Solid Waste Management. There is no dearth of funds, says Dr. Shanthi, while seeking more transparency from the government in how the additional revenue through the SWM user fee will be utilized. "We really appreciate this fee because every citizen should be responsible for the waste they generate. But after paying the user fee, what change will the citizens see?" she wonders. Paying citizens demand transparency and accountability, and wonder whether the BBMP will set up a monitoring system to track segregation at source and whether the collection is regular. "Besides, what will be the incentive for people who are consciously composting? How is the exemption planned? Is there a plan? Unfortunately, there is no strategy shown, nothing is being discussed with the citizens. They don't invite eco-conscious citizens to share their ideas. They can't make decisions inside four walls. People on the ground should be involved."

SWMRT wants the government to utilize part of the SWM user fee to set up a bio-methanisation plant at least at the constituency level. As she elaborates, "The additional funds should be used to ensure a dry waste collection centre in each of the 243 wards with proper infrastructure and ensure that it functions. If these are set up on a war-footing, the majority of the waste going to the landfills will be cut down." At the forefront of the composting campaign in the city, environment changemaker and founder, Beautiful Bharat, Odette Katrak has ensured that no wet waste gets out of her 37-flat apartment complex in Domlur. The 15-20 kgs of wet waste generated is composted within the complex for the apartment garden, and the excess compost is used to enrich the avenue trees and soil in the layout.

Odette, who conducts monthly cleanup drives, draws attention to a related problem: "Many people put extra cooked food into the compost system because they don't want to keep it till the next day. Why compost good food, when you can give it to someone else?" she asks. The worst case, says Odette, is food waste dumped in plastic covers on the roadside. "We see it every day in every part of the city. That rotting waste in plastic will generate methane and they are all collected in tractors and dumped in landfills. It is a very huge contributor to climate change." Leaf composting is a proven eco-sensitive way to replenish trees. But Odette cites leaf-burning as an issue that needs serious attention. "In Domlur, we used to have a leaf composter unit set up through a corporate CSR initiative. When it stopped, there was heavy burning of dry leaves. The pourakarmikas would sweep and put the leaf pile in a corner. Someone comes and lights it up, leading to air pollution and emanating carbon monoxide due to incomplete combustion. These are very harmful, and can cause lung cancer and other problems. Heart patients and asthma patients are at higher risk." Under its green initiative, the BBMP is now in the process of setting up 100 leaf compost units in many of the 1,280 parks under its jurisdiction. On-site composting of the fallen dry leaves would be used for plant and tree maintenance within the parks.

What purpose would increasing transaction limits on UPI serve?

The story so far: The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) on Monday, permitted banks and other relevant stakeholders to increase the upper limit on UPI transactions based on "evolving user needs". The revision has been sanctioned only for person-to-merchant (P2M) transactions, and not person-to-person (P2P) transactions. Banks would continue to hold their discretion on deciding their individual limits within the framework to be put out by the payment and settlement systems operator National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI).

What caps do we have at present?

Currently, an individual cannot transact more than ₹1 lakh through UPI. Though this applies to both P2P and P2M transactions, the latter is endowed with certain exceptions. These entail an enhanced cap of ₹2 lakh for specific transactions relating to capital markets, insurance, tax collections and foreign inward remittances. This is in addition to an upper ceiling of ₹5 lakh for facilitating participation in initial public offerings (IPOs) and retail direct schemes alongside education and healthcare. According to the BSE, utilising UPI in public issue process was to bring in "comfort, ease of use and reduce the listing time for public issues". For perspective on UPI in capital markets, markets regulator Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) observed in a consultation paper (published January this year) that individual transactions below ₹1 lakh account for 92.9% of the total transactions. Furthermore, transactions between ₹1 lakh to less than ₹2 lakh account for 3.9% of the transactions and those between ₹2 lakh to ₹3 lakh constitute 1.3%. On a day-to-day basis, the three slabs represented 91.5%, 4.6% and 1.6% of the total transactions.

Although what is more interesting to note is how the dynamic shapes up in the larger payment ecosystem. An evaluation of NPCI data for March pointed at P2M transactions representing 62.7% of the total transactions made through UPI. However, in terms of value, it represented only 27.1% of the overall pie. Thus, potentially reflecting an unbalanced paradigm because of excess volume that is not translating to proportionate values. As a matter of fact, potentially observing somewhat similar paradigms in the consultation paper, SEBI had sought that the upper limit for transactions in the capital market be increased to ₹5 lakh/day.

How would the revision help?

Reeju Datta, co-founder of payments facilitating app Cashfree Payments told The Hindu that the measure would "dramatically" push up the amount of money processed via UPI. This would be because higher-value transactions would



In an announcement relating to developmental and regulatory policies on Monday, RBI proposed that NPCI engage with banks and other relevant stakeholders of the UPI ecosystem to revise such limits based on "evolving user needs".

now get to contribute much more exponentially. "We can expect about 3-4x growth by this May. Maybe not much in the number of transactions but value," Mr. Datta opined.

Are we also looking at certain specific use cases?

Neha Singh, CEO & Co-founder at research and analytics company Tracxn held that when padded with adequate security measures it could help with facilitating seamless settlement of payments to vendors, making high value purchases (in one go) and instant transfer of funds for personal emergencies to trusted parties, among other things. According to Ms. Singh, the revision would "significantly" help further the scope of UPI payments. She observed the banking regulator increasing limits last year for specific sectors and e-mandates for recurring payments, which often involve high-value transfers, have improved the ease of transaction in these sectors. Mr. Datta further pointed to the higher ceiling being of help to drive up credit on UPI which also involves higher value transactions. Lastly, the revision could also potentially bode well for employing the payments interface on foreign soil. For perspective, at present, UPI is accepted in seven countries, they are: Nepal, Singapore, Mauritius, France, Bhutan, Sri Lanka and UAE.

Renewed Iran–Israel conflict threatens Red Sea shipping route recovery, impact India trade



Just as global shipping lines and traders had started to breathe a sigh of relief from elevated freight rates, with vessels returning to the crucial Red Sea route from the longer Cape of Good Hope passage, a conflict between two major West Asian powers — Iran and Israel —has reignited fears of surging oil prices and more trade disruptions.The escalating tensions between Iran and Israel are also sending shockwaves through global stock markets, with India’s benchmark Sensex closing 573 points lower on Friday.

Signs of a sustained escalation emerged after Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said strikes targeting military and nuclear sites across Iran would continue “for as many days as it takes”. This follows Israeli airstrikes that killed at least three senior Iranian military officers, including Hossein Salami, head of Iran’s elite Revolutionary Guard. In response, Iran termed the attacks a “declaration of war” and launched around 100 drones towards Israel in the early hours of June 13, many of which were intercepted, according to Israeli authorities.

Adding to tensions, US President Donald Trump stated that further Israeli strikes could be “even more brutal”. Experts warn that Iran may respond by closing the strategic Strait of Hormuz — a key passage through which 20–25 per cent of global oil supply transits, as well as a critical corridor for LNG shipments from Qatar and the UAE. Qatar, notably, is among the top LNG suppliers to India.Israeli security forces inspect destroyed houses that were struck by a missile fired from Iran, in Rishon Lezion on Saturday Israeli security forces inspect destroyed houses that were struck by a missile fired from Iran, in Rishon Lezion on Saturday.The renewed instability could pose deeper macroeconomic challenges for India, extending beyond trade,

particularly as the country’s reliance on oil imports continues to rise. While India was compelled to halt oil imports from Iran following US sanctions in 2019, Goldman Sachs estimates that Iranian supply could fall by 1.75 million barrels per day (b/d) for six months before gradually recovering.

“Assuming OPEC+ compensates for half the peak shortfall from spare capacity, Brent could rise above \$90 per barrel before retreating to the \$60s by 2026 as supply recovers,” the investment bank noted.A fall in prices of fruits, pulses, and cereals had helped lower India’s headline retail inflation to a 75-month low of 2.82 per cent in May 2025. This easing inflationary trend had prompted the Reserve Bank of India’s Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) to cut the policy repo rate by a larger-than-expected 50 basis points. However, the RBI cautioned that “monetary policy is left with very limited space to support growth”.S&P Global noted that, so far, both Iran and Israel have avoided directly targeting energy infrastructure. However, Israel has temporarily shut its Leviathan gas field — a key supplier to Egypt and Jordan — as a precaution. Iran, meanwhile, reported no damage to its oil refineries or storage depots in the initial attacks.Iran possesses approximately 2.2 million b/d of crude refining capacity and an additional 600,000 b/d of condensate splitter capacity. In May, it produced about 4 million b/d of crude and condensate. According to S&P Global, Iran’s crude exports could fall below 1.5 million b/d this month.Federation of Indian Export Organisations (FIEO) President S C Raihan had said in May that conditions in the Red Sea were improving, with ships resuming their regular routes.

Exporters believed the risk of a wider conflict remained contained — as long as major powers like Israel and Iran stayed out of direct confrontation.Now, with traders’ worst fears materialising, vessels may be forced to continue using the Cape of Good Hope route. This detour means sustained upward pressure on freight rates. The Red Sea crisis had already caused a spike in shipping costs due to voyage times increasing by 10–14 days. Longer voyages also tightened vessel availability, exerting inflationary pressure on freight rates.The crisis also hit liquefied natural gas (LNG) flows through the Suez Canal, which dropped to 4.15 million tonnes in 2024 — down sharply from 32.36 million tonnes in 2023 and 34.94 million tonnes in 2022, according to Kpler data. Meanwhile, LNG volumes via the Cape of Good Hope rose more than five-fold, from 11.76 million tonnes in 2022 to 59.37 million tonnes in 2024.

On airworthiness: UN’s ICAO rated India above global average, US aviation regulator gave Category 1 status

India is the third-largest domestic aviation market after the US and China, and is also the fastest-growing major aviation market globally.India is the third-largest domestic aviation market after the US and China, and is also the fastest-growing major aviation market globally. India was rated well above the global average in terms of its operations and airworthiness by the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) when the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) was last audited in November 2022, with the overall Effective Implementation score being raised to 85.65 per cent from 69.95 per cent in 2018, indicating an improvement in the country’s aviation safety ranking.

The Effective Implementation score of the ICAO, an agency of the United Nations responsible for regulating and establishing standards for civil aviation globally, includes various categories such as legislation, organisation, licensing, operations, airworthiness, accident investigation, air navigation services, and aerodromes. As per the last audit, India scored higher than the global average in each of the eight categories that are covered under ICAO’s Universal Safety Oversight Audit Programme (USOAP).

The assessment of major agencies assumes importance as investigations begin into the crash of Air India’s AI-171 on Thursday in Ahmedabad that led to the death of 241 persons aboard the plan in what is the deadliest aviation accident in more than a decade. The accident also led to casualties on the ground as the plane crashed into a medical college building in the vicinity of the Ahmedabad airport.

India scored particularly higher than the global average by the ICAO when it came to operations, with the global average at 72.28 per cent and India at 94.02 per cent. This was even higher than the likes of the US (86.51 per cent) and China (90 per cent), as per their 2024 audits. India also scored higher than the US and China in terms of airworthiness: 97.06 per cent versus 89.13 per cent and 94.83 per cent, respectively. To be sure, the agency has different auditing schedules for different countries, and while India’s last audit was in 2022, the audits for US and China were conducted in 2024.India’s Effective Implementation score (Source: International Civil Aviation Organization India’s Effective Implementation score (Source: International Civil Aviation Organization)India is the third-largest domestic aviation market after the US and China, and is



also the fastest-growing major aviation market globally.

Later, the US Federal Aviation Administration (FAA)—the foremost aviation regulator globally—retained India’s International Aviation Safety Assessment category as Category 1. As per the FAA’s assessment programme, the DGCA was audited in October 2021 in the areas of aircraft operations, airworthiness, and personnel licensing.“Based on the positive outcomes of the assessment and follow-ups, the FAA informed DGCA on 12th April 2023 that India meets the international standards for aviation safety oversight of the Chicago Convention & its Annexes and continues to retain FAA IASA Category 1 status which was the last assessed in July 2018. The FAA has appreciated the DGCA stating that DGCA has demonstrated a commitment to ensuring the effective safety oversight of India’s aviation system,” the Ministry of Civil Aviation had said in April 2023.A Category 1 status with the FAA allows air carriers of that country to operate and expand their services to destinations in the US and codeshare with American air carriers.The probe into the Air India plane crash is being undertaken by the Aircraft Accident Investigation Bureau, with the investigation to be done in line with protocols set by the ICAO. Aiding the process will be the US National Transportation Safety Board on account of the aircraft that came down being made by American firm Boeing. The UK’s Air Accidents Investigation Branch will also have expert status in the safety investigation on account of the British citizens being on board the aircraft. In addition to these national agencies, Boeing and aircraft engine manufacturer GE are also expected to help in the investigation and provide information about the aircraft as required by the ICAO’s protocols.

Trump approves Nippon Steel’s \$14.9 billion purchase of US Steel

US President Donald Trump approved Nippon Steel’s \$14.9 billion bid for US Steel on Friday, capping a tumultuous 18-month effort by the companies that survived union opposition and two national security reviews. Trump signed an executive order saying the tie-up could move forward if the companies sign an agreement with the Treasury Department resolving national security concerns posed by the deal. The companies then announced they had signed the agreement, fulfilling the conditions of Trump’s directive and effectively garnering approval for the merger.

“We look forward to putting our commitments into action to make American steelmaking and manufacturing great again,” the companies said in the statement, thanking Trump.They added the agreement includes \$11 billion in new investments to be made by 2028 as well as governance, production and trade commitments. Nippon Steel will buy a 100% stake in US Steel, a spokesperson for the Japanese company in Tokyo said on Saturday.The steelmakers provided no detail on the “golden share” they pledged to issue to the US government, raising questions about the extent of US control. US Senator David McCormick of Pennsylvania, where US Steel is headquartered, said last month the golden share would give the government veto power over key decisions relating to the American steel icon.Reuters has reported that Nippon Steel

would invest an additional \$3 billion for a new mill after 2028. The takeover will set up the ailing US firm to receive the critical investment, allowing Nippon Steel to capitalise on a host of American infrastructure projects while its foreign competitors face steel tariffs of 50%. The Japanese firm also avoids the \$565 million in breakup fees it would have had to pay if the companies had failed to secure approvals.

For Nippon Steel, the world’s fourth-biggest steelmaker, securing a foothold in the US is key to its global growth strategy. The US steel market, including high-grade steel, Nippon Steel’s specialty, is growing amid rising global trade tensions.Still, some Nippon Steel investors are concerned about short-term financial pressure due to the scale of the additional investment commitment.The Japanese government, rushing to try to secure a trade deal with the US by the time Trump and Prime Minister Shigeru Ishiba meet at the Group of Seven summit starting on Sunday, applauded the Nippon–US Steel agreement.“The government of Japan welcomes the US government’s decision, as we believe this investment will enhance innovation capabilities in the US and Japanese steel industries and further strengthen the close partnership between our two countries,” Economy, Trade and Industry Minister Yoji Muto said in a statement on Saturday.Friday’s announcement was hardly guaranteed,

Air crash victim’s daughter learnt to fly again after 10 years: How to manage fear of flying



ahmedabad plane crash, air india, plane crash, plane crash ahmedabad, air india crash, air india plane crash, ahmedabad, air india flight crash, plane crash in ahmedabad, plane crash news, ahmedabad flight crash, ahmedabad news, ahmedabad plane crash today, air india news, plane crash today, air india flight, flight crash, ai171, air india crash today, latest news, ahmedabad flight, ahmedabad airport, live news, ahmedabad crash, air india plane crash today, ahmedabad to london flight, air india ahmedabad, air india share price, air india plane, ahmedabad plane crash, airindia, gujarat plane crash, meghaninagar, breaking news, ahmedabad news today, airplane crash, flight crash news So many among us are already flooding social media with resolutions not to fly in a certain kind of aircraft or to a certain destination. (File photo)

Experiencing or witnessing an airline disaster can profoundly impact any individual, often causing flight phobia, also known as aviophobia or aerophobia. So many among us are already flooding social media with resolutions not to fly in a certain kind of aircraft or to a certain destination. So imagine what it does to crash survivors themselves and their families. I had a woman patient who had lost her father in an air crash in 2010, who developed such anxieties and stopped flying for 10 years!During that period, she had declined work-related travel opportunities, family vacations and events. She reported having panic attacks at the very mention of the word ‘flight.’ She would tremble, sweat, have nausea and dizziness when confronted with flight-related stimuli (e.g., seeing an airplane, hearing about travel, booking a ticket). It was only when she was unable to attend her beloved niece’s wedding in Dubai recently that she met us.

We began with simple conversations. I helped her challenge irrational thoughts and beliefs about flying and replace these with more realistic and balanced perspec-

Magnesium pills: Are you taking the right ones for sleep?

When one of his patients ended up having bad stomach cramps, diarrhoea and dehydration, Dr Balakrishna G K, HOD & Sr Consultant Internal Medicine, Gleneagles BGS Hospital, Bengaluru, was stumped. Till he found that he had taken magnesium citrate — commonly used in hospitals to flush out the bowels before procedures. “He had taken it thinking it would help him sleep since he had read that magnesium supplements helped people sleep better. Each supplement has a different compound for a specific purpose,” he says.Magnesium is suddenly everywhere — promoted as a fix for sleep troubles, stress, brain fog, and muscle cramps. “But what many people don’t realise is that magnesium isn’t a one-size-fits-all solution. There are different forms of it, each with distinct purposes, and using the wrong one can create more problems than it solves,” says Dr Balakrishna.

Which magnesium supplement is good for sleep?

Magnesium glycinate is something we often recommend when someone with a magnesium deficiency is dealing with stress or struggling to sleep. It has a gentle, calming effect and doesn’t usually upset the stomach, which makes it easier to take over time. But people should know it’s not a sleeping pill. At best, it can help the body unwind, but it won’t replace the need for proper sleep hygiene or medical intervention when necessary. In fact, the reason some people feel it ‘works’ is because they start pairing it with a better wind-down routine. That’s more behavioural than pharmacological.

Which supplement should not be ingested?

Another form, magnesium sulfate — or Epsom salt — is meant only for external use in baths to soothe sore muscles. It’s not meant to be ingested.Magnesium L-threonate, which has been hyped for its cognitive benefits, is still being researched — and we simply don’t have enough data yet to call it effective.

Why the confusion about magnesium supplements?

Many supplement bottles don’t mention which form or compound is inside. Often, products simply say ‘Magne-

tives. I showed her figures to convince her that while she had unfortunately been at the receiving end of an outlier incident, air travel was statistically very safe. Apart from anxiety medication, we put her through deep breathing exercises. Techniques like the 4-7-8 method (inhale for 4, hold for 7, exhale for 8) can help regulate the nervous system.But what really worked for her was maintaining what we call thought records, where we examined evidence both for and against her beliefs. This helped her develop more balanced and realistic thoughts.

In these sessions, we collaborated with her to rank and categorise her feared situations related to flying, from least to most anxiety-provoking (e.g., looking at pictures of planes, watching videos of flights, driving past an airport, entering an airport, sitting on a parked plane, a short flight). She was then told to vividly imagine flying scenarios while practising relaxation techniques, in a gradual and systematic manner (e.g. to imagine herself visiting an airport and observing planes, sitting in an airport lounge, boarding a stationary aircraft and lastly progressing to a very short, real flight, like a round trip to a nearby city).

Once she was somewhat habituated and her anxiety decreased, we put her on Virtual Reality Exposure Therapy (VRET), where the person uses VR headsets to simulate various stages of flying (take-off, turbulence, and landing) in a controlled environment. This allows individuals to practise coping skills without the immediate risk of a real flight.Then we asked her to focus on a specific memory of the disaster while simultaneously experiencing bilateral stimulation, which can involve eye movements, hand-tapping or alternating sounds. This stimulation helps the brain process the memory in a way that reduces its emotional impact. This is called Eye Movement Desensitisation and Reprocessing (EMDR).It’s essential to validate that fear after such an event is a completely normal and understandable human response. Limiting exposure to news and sensationalized reports of the disaster can prevent reinforcing negative thoughts and anxiety. Learning about aircraft mechanics, turbulence and aviation safety statistics can demystify flying and reduce irrational fears.After prolonged counselling, my patient has just begun to fly again. But she follows a few practical tips. She chooses seats over the wings (for less turbulence) or aisle seats (for more space). Limiting caffeine, alcohol, and sugary foods before and during a flight can help manage her residual anxiety. She now shares her fears with a support group of aircraft trauma survivors and can provide emotional comfort.



sium 400 mg’ without revealing the compound — and in many cases, that’s magnesium oxide. This is one of the cheapest forms available and frequently used in commercial supplements. But it also has poor bioavailability, which means the body absorbs only a small fraction of what’s on the label. So people think they’re correcting a deficiency, when in reality, they may not be absorbing enough to make a difference.Magnesium from food is almost never harmful — the body has a natural way of regulating how much it absorbs. But supplements can easily overshoot the mark, especially if taken without medical supervision. Nuts, seeds, whole grains, legumes, and leafy greens are excellent dietary sources and should always be the first line of replenishment. The recommended daily dosage for adults is between 310-420 mg per day.If someone has kidney issues, magnesium supplements aren’t something to take lightly. The kidneys play a big role in clearing excess magnesium from the body. When they’re not functioning well, magnesium can quietly build up in the system without any early red flags — and that can become risky before anyone even knows something’s wrong.There’s also a drug interaction angle that often gets missed. Magnesium can interfere with the absorption of thyroid medications, certain antibiotics, and even some blood pressure pills. Supplements can be helpful — but only when the form, dose, and purpose are aligned with actual needs.

Are steroids, protein powders building muscle but damaging your hip bone? What young gym goers need to know

Can arbitrary use of gym steroids and protein powders damage the hip bone permanently? Orthopaedic experts are seeing hip bone damage and degeneration of the kind associated with the elderly among young people in their 20s, who may be picking up performance enhancers from gyms.Recently, the Maharashtra FDA also launched statewide checks on protein powders after several brands were found to be spiked with performance-enhancing steroids, many of which are freely available online or at gyms without proper labelling or approvals.According to Dr Gaurav Prakash Bhardwaj, Director, Sports Injury, Joint Preservation and Replacement Surgery, PSRI hospital, “Steroid use is one of the most well-documented causes of Avascular Necrosis (AVN), a condition where bone tissue dies because of lack of blood supply. When taken in high doses or over a long period, especially without medical need, steroids can interfere with the blood supply to the bone.”

What kind of hip-related complaints are you seeing among young patients?

There has been a noticeable rise in hip-related complaints among young individuals, especially those in their 20s and early 30s. They report persistent pain in the hip joint, difficulty walking, or stiffness, all linked to unsupervised gym workouts and supplement use. Abuse of steroids can also impact liver and cardiovascular health.

How often are young patients diagnosed with AVN?

Earlier, AVN was considered relatively rare in this

group, but in recent years, we are seeing around 3 to 5 cases per month in some urban hospitals alone. This number may vary depending on the location, but overall, there is a clear upward trend. Many patients are unaware that their symptoms could point to a serious condition until the damage becomes severe. Medication can slow down degeneration, surgery is the last resort.

How does alcohol and steroid use contribute to AVN among young adults?

Steroid use is one of the most well-documented causes of AVN. When taken in high doses or over a long period, especially without medical need, steroids can build up fat levels in the blood and bone marrow, obstructing blood vessels and interfering with blood supply to the bone. This eventually leads to bone tissue death and collapse of the hip joint. Similarly, excessive alcohol intake damages blood vessels and can also reduce blood flow to the hip, triggering AVN.

Why do young people depend on performance-enhancing drugs?

The most affected age group is between 20 and 35 years. These are mostly fitness-conscious individuals who engage in intense workouts and are influenced by social media trends or body-building goals. Unfortunately, they are using steroids or unregulated protein supplements without medical supervision. We should regulate the supplement market, build gym hygiene with fitness trainers and insist on basic bone screening of gym goers.

South Africa clinch World Test Championship, beat Australia by five wickets



GNS News Agency, June 21

South Africa's Aiden Markram celebrates with Temba Bavuma after scoring a century in the World Test Championship final against Australia at Lord's cricket ground in London. (AP Photo)South Africa's Aiden Markram celebrates with Temba Bavuma after scoring a century in the World Test Championship final against Australia at Lord's cricket ground in London. South Africa managed to pull off a famous victory by winning the World Test Championship title at the iconic Lord's cricket ground on Saturday. Temba Bavuma's men crossed the line with five wickets to spare against Australia. Aiden Markram almost saw South Africa's chase home with a calm and reassuring 136 before departing with South Africa needing just six runs to win. Both teams

had gone to bed on Friday with South Africa on 213/2 in the 2nd innings, the target of 282 very much in reach. But they lost talismanic captain Temba Bavuma's wicket early on for 66 runs. South Africa had opted against retiring him hurt on Day 3 of the Test after he was struck by a hamstring injury. Bavuma was on six runs when the injury occurred, but added 60 runs to that before walking off after being dismissed.

Talking after the game, Kagiso Rabada said: "Can't describe what this means in words. I'm extremely happy. Throughout the season we planned really well. People said we were not playing good opposition. That's rubbish. In the final we had to be on a game to beat Australia. Last four days felt like a home game."

Batting first, Australia managed to post 212 runs on the board in the first innings, with Beau Webster top-scoring with 72 and Steve Smith adding another 66. Kagiso Rabada had claimed five wickets in the first innings, with Marco Jansen adding three more. South Africa mustered the worst reply it could, folding up for a paltry total of 138 with David Bedingham top-scoring with 45 while skipper Temba Bavuma managed 36. In their second innings, Australia encountered their own slump which saw them touching 73 runs for the loss of seven wickets. That's when Alex Carey (43) and Mitchell Starc (58) added some runs for their bowling to defend in the final innings. Eventually, though, it proved to be too little.

Cricket's new fielding law change: What is the boundary rule amended by MCC that will come into effect next week?



News Agency, June 21

In a significant rule to buck the trend of fielders using their acrobatics to prevent boundaries and have a second attempt at a catch near the ropes, the Marylebone Cricket Club (MCC), custodian of the Laws of Cricket, has amended the boundary-fielding rules, which will be put into effect by the ICC next year. The MCC has chosen to amend the fielding rule after growing concerns over the fairness of catches taken beyond the boundary ropes. While a catch was previously deemed illegal if the fielder came in contact with both the ground and the ball at the same time beyond the ropes, irrespective of the number of times the played may have hopped to keep the ball in play, the new rule limits fielders to one jump behind the boundary. What is the new bunny hop rule

According to reports, the MCC has considered rewriting the rules after suggestions from ICC's cricket committee, referring specifically to a Big Bash League catch from Australia pacer Michael Neser in 2023. Attempting to complete a catch while going well past the fence, Neser hopped twice in the air to keep the ball in play before parrying it back inside the ropes to complete a catch. "MCC has devised a new wording where the 'bunny hop' wholly beyond the boundary is removed, but these catches where the

fielder pushes the ball up from inside the boundary, steps outside and then dives back in to catch the ball, are permitted." The MCC has changed the law to make catches like this 'bunny hop' one from Michael Neser illegal. In short: If the fielder's first touch takes them outside the boundary, their "second" touch must take them back inside the field of play. Under the current Law 19.5.2, an effort beyond the ropes is deemed legal if the fielder's last contact with the ground before first touching the ball was within the boundary and they do not touch the ball and the ground outside simultaneously. The MCC has changed the law to make catches like this 'bunny hop' one from Michael Neser illegal. In short: If the fielder's first touch takes them outside the boundary, their "second" touch must take them back inside the field of play. The MCC added: "Our solution has been to limit any fielder who has gone outside the boundary to touching the ball while airborne only once, and then, having done so, to be wholly grounded within the boundary for the rest of the duration of that delivery."

The updated law will also bar fielders from repeatedly touch the ball airborne while assisting a teammate during relay catches, which will now require all players to be in the field of play during the catch. It reads, "A fielder who is not in contact with the ground is considered to be grounded beyond the boundary if, prior to their first contact with the ball, their final contact with the ground was not entirely within the boundary." It continues, "If a fielder's first contact with the ball does not contravene 19.5.2, that fielder may then jump from outside the boundary in order to make contact with the ball whilst airborne. After making contact with the ball once airborne, all subsequent contact with the ground by that fielder, until the ball becomes dead, must be within the field of play." While the laws will be put into effect immediately at the start of the next ICC World Test Championship cycle, starting June 17 during the Sri Lanka-Bangladesh Test, the MCC will formally initiate the rule during its next cycle in October 2026.

'All of us are experienced to know when you must switch on and switch off': Prasidh Krishna ahead of England series

GNS News Agency, June 21

Prasidh Krishna India England Prasidh is also of the opinion that the game time in UK before the big Test series will benefit the team immensely, as players from different franchises and state sides converge for a common cause with the Indian team. India's Prasidh Krishna said that it is important for players to know when to switch on as per the requirements of the team as he gets set to prepare of India's all-important 5-match Test tour of England, set to start on June 20. "You have to make sure you are focussed when your chance is coming. But you can't really be focussed for a long time, especially when you are sitting outside, so you make sure you have a bit of fun. When you know you can sense situation, you make sure you support your team at particular situations, making sure you are being switched on because anything can happen in the game, that's the beauty of cricket in itself. I think all of us are experienced to know when you must switch on and switch off," Prasidh told BCCI TV. Prasidh who has had his fair share of injury problems, which even necessitated surgery, came back to the highest level of cricket with a bang when he snapped up the Purple Cap in the recently-concluded IPL.

Prasidh is also of the opinion that the game time in UK before the big Test series will benefit the team immensely, as players from different franchises and state sides converge for a common cause with the Indian team. "It's really



important for all of us to get this game time... because some of them are coming from the 'A' game. Getting some time on field is really important. That's what has happened today as well. Looks like a good, nice, hard pitch. Bowlers have been in the game all throughout, have been bowling some really good spells. Batsmen also showed some character. It's always good when you are competing against each other as well. "All of us are excited and enjoying what's happening... All of us are getting together after a while, so a lot of memories, a lot of cricket each one has played with different teams, coming here, have spent a lot of time before... just try and make sure you keep the environment light," he said after the opening day's play between India vs India A intra-squad game on Friday.

'He dwarfed Australia's total': Aiden Markram's 'excellent' technique reminds Aakash Chopra of SA legend Jacques Kallis

GNS News Agency, June 21

Often posed with criticisms for not fulfilling the talent the world saw in him, South Africa opener Aiden Markram finally made amends on Friday with a stoic century in a historic ICC World Test Championship final chase against Australia at Lord's. Faced with a stern 282-run target, South Africa rode on Markram's flawless century, making him the first South Africa batter to hit a century in an ICC final and third batter in WTC finals history after Steve Smith and Travis Head. The former Proteas captain made it all the more special, with his riposte coming after a first-innings duck at the hand of Australia pacer Mitchell Starc, with South Africa ceding a 74-run first-innings lead to Australia.

Former India opener lauded Markram's effort while also likening his solid technique to South Africa legend Jacques Kallis. "He is the only South African batter to score a hundred in an ICC men's final. He became the third centurion in WTC final history. He is the first to score a hundred in the fourth innings," Chopra said on his YouTube channel. "Let me put my hand up. I had said that the decision to bowl first after winning the toss wasn't a good one because there would be fourth-innings pressure. 282 runs are a lot, but he dwarfed that total. His technical foundation is excellent. He reminds us a little of Jacques Kallis," he added. Coming off his best IPL season for the Lucknow Super Giants, Chopra said that Markram had to unlearn the tempo that let him



smash 445 runs with fifties and a 148-plus strike rate.

"What would have been the difficulties for Aiden Markram? One, he was playing only T20 cricket for the last two months. So he had to unlearn his T20 habits and then focus on Test cricket. That's a difficult job," Chopra said. "Secondly, he got out for zero in the first innings. That was also a problem. Wickets have fallen here with the new ball. If you see the first three innings, wickets had fallen with the new ball in every inning. He ensured that he came with a positive mindset," Chopra observed. On Saturday, Markram will resume batting on 102 alongside skipper Temba Bavuma (62 not out) as South Africa stand 69 runs away from their first ICC title in 27 years.

India's rising rugby stars gear up for GMR Premier League debut in Mumbai

Hyderabad: The GMR Rugby Premier League, which kicks off in Mumbai on June 15, with the final scheduled on June 29, presents India's most talented rugby players a chance to rub shoulders with some of the legends in the sport. Here are the profiles of some of India's potential stars in the League. Mohit Khatri – Bengaluru Bravehearts

The most expensive player at the GMR RPL Season 1 Player Auction, Mohit is one of India's best players in rugby, and was appointed as captain of the national team in 2024. Hailing from Kundli in Sonapat district of Haryana, he has captained the men's team at the Asia Rugby Sevens Trophy (ARST) 2024 held in Nepal and helped Haryana's rugby team win three gold medals at the National Games. He was also part of the Indian team who went through Olympic qualifiers in Japan in 2023. Prince Khatri – Hyderabad Heroes

Among the most experienced Indian rugby players in the GMR RPL, Prince Khatri made his national team debut in 2012. He's been a part of the Indian team for the Asia Rugby Sevens starting from 2014 for a total of eight times and the Asia Rugby 15s Championship for a total of eight times starting in 2012. A former India captain as well, Prince has plied his trade at an international level including the Delhi Hurricanes, South African Club All-Stars, Hong Kong Scot-

tish Club and Team India FCC from 2013 until very recently in 2024 at the Borneo 7s Malaysia (Delhi Hurricanes). That apart Prince has been a part of the Haryana team that has won 4 consecutive gold medals at the National Games, and is also an eight-time Senior National Rugby Sevens Champion with Haryana. Ganesh Majhi – Mumbai Dreamers

Captain of the India U20 rugby team in 2023, Ganesh Majhi hails from the Bonda tribe in Malkangiri, Odisha, and his selection is a source of pride for the tribal community. Ganesh's selection for the GMR RPL was considered a historic moment for Kalinga Institute of Social Sciences, who have been supporting the sport for close to two decades now. After making a mark in the age-group teams, Ganesh has successfully transitioned to the senior team set-up as well, and will be turning out for the Mumbai Dreamers in Season 1 of the GMR RPL. Much like Ganesh, one of Odisha's best rugby players is Asis Sabar, who will be representing his home franchise – Kalinga Black Tigers. Born in 2004, Asis also hails from Kalinga Institute of Social Sciences. Asis Sabar, a UG 2nd year Arts student from the Sabar tribe (Kalahandi), was secured by the Kalinga Black Tigers at the player Auction. One of the mainstays of the Indian rugby sevens team, Deepak Punia, who hails from Haryana started playing the sport from the age of 15.

Fairytale-spoilers Australia can't meddle with the feel-good Temba Bavuma story

News Agency, June 21

Australia, for once, failed to stop a charming fairy tale from unfolding. They couldn't stop a diminutive black cricketer from taking South Africa across a giant hurdle they have failed to clear since their return to international cricket in the post-apartheid era. The team with a history of spoiling many parties and pouring water on planned victory parades was dealing with the trauma they have so regularly inflicted on their rivals. But on Day 4 of the World Test Championship final, South Africa recorded a famous 5-wicket win and the Aussies ended up as the world's most popular runners-up ever. South Africa became the second team this century to beat the mighty Aussies in an ICC final, giving them ownership of the sparkling silver mace, the symbol of global Test supremacy.

Giving credit where it is due, historically, the Aussies have been single-handedly responsible for denying the cricket many feel-good bedtime stories in different languages and dialects. That changed at Lord's on Saturday.

In years to come, kids in South African townships will be told the story of their country's first-ever full-time black captain Temba Bavuma, whose name, in his native Xhosa, means Hope. It can't be anybody but a soothsayer who came up with such an apt name for the 5'4" cricketing super hero. In years to come, kids in South African townships will be told the story of their country's first-ever full-time black captain Bavuma, whose name, in his native Xhosa, means Hope. In years to come, kids in South African townships will be told the story of their country's first-ever full-time black captain Bavuma, whose name, in his native Xhosa, means Hope. (AP) What Germany is to football, Australia is to cricket. Puskas's Hungary, Cruyff's Total Footballers, England's golden generation, Maradona and Messi's Argentina, South Korea and Brazil at home – the world has often wondered how generations of German footballers are born with the knack of adding anti-climatic twists to perfectly flowing Cinderella tales. Indian cricket fans, grudgingly, remember the Aussies for shattering many dreams. The most recent one was at the Narendra Modi stadium in Ahmedabad. In the 2023 World Cup final, Rohit Sharma's team was clearly the most consistent in the tournament. The hosts played an entertaining brand of cricket that made them the side that even the neutrals supported.

The Aussies, on the other hand, hobbled through the tournament. They first won against Afghanistan, another underdog people's favourite side, by several strokes of luck and later overturned India's apple cart. Old-timers recall how this wasn't the first time. Twenty years back, in the 2003 World Cup final, they did the same. The dream run of Sourav Ganguly's Fab Four too was spoiled by Ricky Ponting's men. Ganguly, Dravid, Kumble – the stalwarts of the game – would finish their careers with an ICC trophy. The world wasn't fair. There are other teams who suffered similar fate. Akram's Pakistan, Jayawardene's Sri Lanka, McCullum's New Zealand – to name a few – saw the Aussies too rarely missed the chance to prick those beautifully floating bubbles over the cricketing skies. The mighty cricketing nation is reputed to write its own scripts where the hare overruns the tortoise and Goliath pins down David. But at Lord's, the famous Aussie efficiency failed to deliver. This time it seems they had failed to make the sporting literature poorer. For a nation still dealing with apartheid era trauma, Temba returning home with its first major ICC trophy would mean so much to so many. A well-balanced mixed team, with no overwhelming intrigue around it, would have delighted the founding fathers of the born-again post-apartheid era South Africa.

The sight of Markram and Bavuma – a white former captain and a black present skipper – guiding the team through a tricky chase would have gladdened the divided society used to hearing whispers of racial tensions in the sporting arena. Bavuma's men have done much more for the country's two big goals – inclusivity and reconciliation – than what most government initiatives. A title triumph in the game's toughest format will also sky-rocketed the ambitions of the young cricketers growing up in Langa, the black township near Cape Town where Bavuma grew. Not too far back, this used to be a ghetto with non-existent basic amenities. After Nelson Mandela's release from prison in 1990 and the subsequent multi-racial election in 1994, Langa saw change. The erstwhile marginalised space with match-box mud huts now has high-rise buildings with satellite discs perched on most balconies.

Langa hasn't forgotten its past but it has certainly moved on. At the exact place where 69 black anti-apar-



heid protesters were killed by police bullets in 1960 is the Sharpeville massacre memorial. During a visit to Langa during India's 2018 tour to South Africa, one could feel the reverence among the locals for the martyrs and an optimism about the new life they gifted them. But Langa was bitter about the outside world's attitude towards their cricket and cricketers. That was the time, Bavuma had been dropped for the India Test in his own backyard – Newlands, Cape Town.

Among those at the stadium disappointed by the playing XI selection was Cagew Ezra. He was 65 but looked barely 50. He had been tasked by the Western Province Cricket to develop cricket in black townships. Unofficially, he had kept an eye on Langa's bright young cricketers for ages. He was at the non-striker end, when Bavuma, just 13, came up with his coming-of-age match-winning knock for Langa CC. That day Ezra, a Black, knew Bavuma was special and he would take him under his wings. Passing cricketing wisdom to the next generation happens to be the age-old Langa tradition that Bavuma benefitted from. These timely tutorials by multiple experts shooting the breeze around Langa would make Bavuma change opinions and perceptions in South Africa. He would go on to prove that Black cricketers didn't take up the sport just to bowl at white and coloured players. Bavuma showed that players from townships can bat too. He would become the first black cricketer to score a Test hundred for South Africa and also get their first big ICC event high. "Temba is a big role model because every kid feels that I will get there one day," Ezra would say. Bavuma's big test as a leader came up in the 2021 World T20 tournament where his close friend Quinton de Kock didn't take the knee, the symbolic support for the Black Lives Matter movement. This was a ticking time-bomb, a PR disaster waiting to happen. The world called de Kock's stand insensitive, but Bavuma didn't rush to pass judgement nor was he tongue-tied. "My beliefs, the way that I see things, is shaped by my own experience and background, and so is the other person's. If there is a disagreement in terms of beliefs, in terms of views, that's why we have those hard conversations. Through those conversations, we will be able to get the comfort to accept the other person's decision. I can't force anyone to see things the way I do, neither can they force me to," he would say. That day Bavuma rose in stature, from a shrewd captain he became a statesman. On Saturday, he ticked that box too. His was too good a story to have a tragic end.

Sreeja, Yashansh star as Jaipur Patriots beat Dabang Delhi to reach final

Ahmedabad: India's Commonwealth Games gold medalist Sreeja Akula maintained her unbeaten run while rising star Yashansh Malik stunned Sathiyann Gnanasekaran as Jaipur Patriots reached the Grand Finale of the Ultimate Table Tennis (UTT) Season 6 with a thrilling 8-7 win over Dabang Delhi TTC. Yashansh pulled off the biggest upset of the night with a 2-1 win over Delhi skipper Sathiyann, while Sreeja wrapped up the victory with a narrow victory against Diya Chitale in the final game of the tie. Jaipur Patriots will now play the winner of the second semifinal between Dempo Goa Challengers and U Mumba TT in the final on June 15. Jaipur Patriots drew first blood in the semi-final, as Kanak Jha turned the tables on Izaac Quek with a 2-1 win, avenging his opening-day defeat.

‘They said Vidhu Vinod Chopra bribed me with Rs 8 crore to not make OMG’: Director Umesh Shukla opens up on PK comparisons



Back when Rajkumar Hirani’s PK hit the theatres, there was considerable buzz around its striking resemblance to OMG: Oh My God!, the sleeper hit comedy directed by Umesh Shukla that released about a year earlier. While OMG was adapted from a theatre play written and directed by Shukla himself, PK was an original screenplay penned by Hirani and his long-time collaborator Abhijat Joshi. Now, years later, Umesh Shukla has finally addressed the comparisons and longstanding plagiarism rumours in a candid interview with Friday Talkies. Speaking about the conceptual similarity between the two films, Shukla said: “I think they might’ve had a similar idea in mind. If PK had released before my film, people might have said that mine resembled PK.”

He also pointed out that his play had been running on stage long before the movie adaptation, and that many from the PK team were familiar with it. “Rajkumar Hirani, Vidhu Vinod Chopra, and writer Abhijat Joshi had all seen my play.

WWE Smackdown: John Cena gets called ‘balding b****’ as Randy Orton, Cody Rhodes and CM Punk set their eyes on his title

WWE Smackdown: It is all-out ‘war’ on the 17-time world champion John Cena. The wrestler, who is currently on his farewell tour in the WWE and will be retiring from in-ring performances in December, was challenged by every big name in the roster for his undisputed WWE title. Verbal battles, sneak attacks, and the King of the Ring tournament – this episode of Smackdown had it all. John Cena walked in front of a sold-out Kentucky crowd as half the crowd supported him, while the other half was against him. Cena, who turned ‘heel’ (negative character) after the last Elimination Chamber, started explaining his plan that has been in motion for over a year. He explained how he joined the Royal Rumble, and even though he didn’t win, he used his seniority in the company to get himself a spot in the Chamber. He was listing out the flurry of opponents he had beaten on his way when Rhodes walked out to make a statement of his own.

Rhodes warned Cena, “I am not a part of your plan; you’re a part of mine,” and declared that he was coming for Cena’s championship. Meanwhile Orton walked in to the ring to address his problems with Cena. Cena beat Orton at Backlash, and Orton pointed out the fact that if he hadn’t been interrupted, he would have beaten Cena for the title.

Although this already superstar-heavy segment did not need anyone else, LA Knight made an appearance and told all three men (Orton, Cena and Rhodes) that he is willing to go through all of them to become the undisputed WWE champion. He said, “I will take down a viper (Orton), a nightmare (Rhodes), and a ‘genius’ balding b**** (John Cena) to

Kishore Kumar said he was ‘never in love’ with Madhubala: ‘Doctors told her you can’t have sex, children’

Actors Madhubala and Dilip Kumar were deeply in love with each other until her father created a wedge between them and they eventually parted ways. A couple of years later, she married singer Kishore Kumar and they stayed together until her passing in 1969. Their marriage came as a shock to many, as no one really knew about their brewing romance. Madhubala got increasingly sick as time went on, and it has been said that Kishore left her at her father’s house when she was coping with ill health. In an earlier interview with The Illustrated Weekly of India, he said that he knew that Madhubala was “very sick” when he married her, but he was committed to the promise he’d made to her when they got married. He said that he watched her “die before my own eyes” and he was told by the doctor to “humour her all the time.” He shared, “I knew she was very sick even before I married her. But a promise is a promise. So I kept my word and brought her home as my wife, even though I knew she was dying from a congenital heart problem. For nine long years, I nursed her. I watched her die before my own eyes. You can never understand what this means until you live through this yourself. She was such a beautiful woman and she died so painfully. She would rave and rant and scream in frustration. How can such an active person spend nine long years bed-ridden? And I had to humour her all the time. That’s what the doctor asked me to. That’s what I did till her very last breath. I would laugh with her. I would cry with her.” However, in another interview with Filmfare, Kishore said that he was “never in love” with Madhubala and shared that she was the one who proposed to him. “To me, she was my friend Dilip Kumar’s girlfriend and I used to act as a messenger for the two. It was she who proposed marriage to me and even insisted on it. Incidentally, even when Ruma (Kishore’s first wife) was with me Madhu used to joke, ‘Never ever leave him, else I would take your place,’” he said. In another chat with Filmfare, Madhubala’s sister Madhur Bhushan said that soon after Kishore and Madhubala’s wedding, he flew her to London, where the doctors declared that “her heart was finished and that she wouldn’t live beyond two years.” Her sister also alleged that Kishore left Madhubala at their house, and recalled, “Kishore bhaiyya left her at our home.

So, when someone works on a similar subject, there’s bound to be some reflection. If you’re making a love story, and someone says ‘I love you’ in that film, well, of course they will, it’s a love story.” Over the years, speculation has swirled that Shukla was paid off by the PK team, especially Aamir Khan and Vidhu Vinod Chopra, to shelve OMG, considering the thematic similarities. Shukla finally addressed those claims head-on: “At that time, there were even rumours that Vidhu Vinod Chopra gave me Rs 8 crore to not make the film. But that was just gossip. Nothing of the sort ever happened. All of them, be it Rajkumar Hirani, Abhijat Joshi, Chopra, or even Aamir Khan, are too talented and dignified to do something so petty, like offering money.”

PK was widely compared to OMG soon after its release, fueling conspiracy theories that Hirani had paid Shukla to stall his project. In his defence, Hirani had firmly denied such claims in a statement to a leading daily: “Please, please call Umesh Shukla and ask him, or call Paresh. This is absurd, How can someone say something like this?” Even Aamir Khan weighed in, calling the reports baseless: “It’s all lies... fabricated.

You should be very careful about what you believe.” In earlier interviews, both Rajkumar Hirani and Abhijat Joshi had clarified that the original screenplay of PK, conceived in the late 2000s, was markedly different. However, they later revamped it after realising it bore similarities to Christopher Nolan’s Inception, which had just released. Ironically, by the time they completed filming and began editing, OMG: Oh My God! had hit the screens, and they again noticed a few thematic overlaps. Nonetheless, they stayed the course and released their film. Despite the controversy, PK went on to become a massive box office hit and is now considered one of the highest-grossing Hindi films of all time.



become the champion.” At this point Cena had heard enough from his challengers and he decided to walk out and just as he was about to disappear to the backstage, Ron ‘Truth’ Killings (R-Truth’s alter ego) attacked him from the behind. Killings felt betrayed after Cena, his long-time hero, attacked him after Backlash, an event where he helped him secure the win over Orton. Later that night, Punk also warned Cena that he was coming for his title, and Ron Killings again attacked him and put him in Cena’s own submission hold STF. As Night of Champions closes, the number of people gunning for the title is increasing, and the number of people who have a problem with Cena is rising even faster. Punk will have to beat Cena at the Night of Champions to win the WWE title, and it will be an uphill task, as the new Cena does not care about rules or what the audience thinks of him and will do whatever it takes to hold on to the title.



Actors Madhubala and Dilip Kumar were deeply in love with each other until her father created a wedge between them and they eventually parted ways. A couple of years later, she married singer Kishore Kumar and they stayed together until her passing in 1969. Their marriage came as a shock to many, as no one really knew about their brewing romance. Madhubala got increasingly sick as time went on, and it has been said that Kishore left her at her father’s house when she was coping with ill health.

He said that she was sick and needed care while he had to travel, work, sing and hence wouldn’t be able to give her time. He said, I tried my best, I took her to London. But the doctors have said she won’t survive. What’s my fault?” She said that the doctors told Madhubala that she could not have sex, and could not have children, which contributed to Kishore’s decision. “We’re not saying that he was wrong. Aapa was told by the doctors you cannot have sex, you cannot have children... But yet a woman needs emotional support no matter what,” she said. According to her, Kishore only visited Madhubala once in three months. She recalled, “He’d say, ‘If I come, you’ll cry and it will not be good for your heart. You’ll go into depression. You should rest.’ She was young, jealousy was natural. Perhaps, a feeling of being abandoned killed her.” Madhubala died at 36 in 1969.

Sushant Singh Rajput promised to show the stars to his co-actors, carried a telescope to Chambal: ‘He’s up there right by his favourite moon’



Sushant Singh Rajput was one of the most loved actors of his generation in the Hindi film industry. He rose to fame with his television show Pavitra Rishta but his films like MS Dhoni: The Untold Story, Sonchiriya brought him a lot of critical acclaim. While he was undoubtedly a celebrated actor, he also excelled at academics as he got the seventh rank at AIEEE exams conducted nationwide in 2003. While he became an actor, he had a lot of passion for astronomy and loved watching the stars.

In an interview with Hindustan Times, Sushant Singh Rajput had shared, “Engineering wasn’t my choice. I wanted to be an astronaut, and later, an Air Force pilot. I remember tearing up my Top Gun poster when my parents told me that was not going to happen. Apparently, I was going to be an engineer. Maybe the drama I did that day should’ve given everyone a clue! But truly, I was gutted...” In his early days in the entertainment industry, he worked as a background dancer and was seen dancing behind Hrithik Roshan in the song “Dhoom Again” in Dhoom 2. While he relentlessly pursued his passion as an actor, his love for astronomy never subsided.

After Sushant Singh Rajput’s death on June 14, 2020. His Chhichhore co-star Shraddha Kapoor took her Instagram handle to share a long note about her bond with the Pavitra Rishta actor. Among the many things, she wrote how he used to be curious about everything around him. “The conversations we had at shoot about the cosmos, different philosophies, the moments we spent together, were filled with magical wonderment! During a lovely musical and poetry filled gettogether at his home (he loved music and poetry), he showed me the moon from his telescope and I was so speechless that I could see it’s exquisite beauty up close!” She further revealed his love for astronomy, and shared, “Our Chhichhore gang went to his beautiful home in Pavn, where we were awestruck together with the peace and calm of the nature around us—he loved nature! He saw things through a kaleidoscopic lens and wanted to share that with everyone around him. He was mesmerised by the simplest things and would muse on them in a genius way.” Similarly, Jacqueline Fernandez, who starred opposite him in the film Drive shared her memories with the star

Guns and Roses: Life and Death of Sidhu Moose Wala

BBC’s The Killing Call is a documentary series exploring the death of Sidhu Moose Wala. BBC’s The Killing Call is a documentary series exploring the death of Sidhu Moose Wala. The meteoric rise of Punjabi folk singer and rapper Shubhdeep Singh Sidhu aka Sidhu Moose Wala — from village Moosa in Punjab’s Mansa, his ascent as a Punjabi artiste of note in Canada to becoming a full-fledged phenomenon back home — was cut short when he was gunned down in his car three years ago. He was 28, at the peak of his career, and adored by fans for his unique sound, which incorporated elements of hip-hop into traditional Punjabi folk and lyrics that addressed social and political themes, as well as issues of identity.

While it was evident even back then that Sidhu’s killing was a result of rivalry between two gangs, with gangster Goldy Brar of the notorious Lawrence Bishnoi gang even taking responsibility for the murder, the new, two-part BBC documentary The Killing Call takes a deep dive into Punjab’s underbelly to find more. And it ends up ably connecting the dots between gangsters, Punjab’s militant past, its politics over the years, the music industry and the tunes that stem from the idea of justice, ferocity and a certain righteousness in the same space, which when combined can be a volatile blend.

The result: the documentary ultimately presents a plausible case for explaining why Sidhu Moose Wala, a man of contradictions, was killed. It also tries to answer some gnawing questions: Was Sidhu simply a victim? Or was his closeness to various rival gangs and portraying himself as a gangster in his videos also a reason that resulted in that fateful evening in May? These questions have bothered fans, the police, investigative journalists and perhaps even Sidhu’s parents, who have been seeking a ban on the documentary. His father, Balkaur Singh, has alleged that it could tarnish the slain singer’s legacy and impact the ongoing investigation, besides infringing on the family’s privacy. The journey that producer Ishleen Kaur takes in The Killing Call, which was released by the BBC on YouTube, to get to the bottom of the matter, is quite unsettling and at times a hair-raising watch: footage of killings happening in broad day light, men roaming around freely with weaponry of the highest quality, the extortions, the music industry’s links with gangs — it’s all there. Except there are no conversations with other pop musicians and local labels, even anonymously, on the same. Through interviews with DJ Bobby Friction, Sidhu’s friends, collaborators like Byg Byrd, managers, police officers and senior journalists, the documentary makes clear that Sidhu’s ‘musical gangster’ image — where he posed with guns and sang of them but would still chide the government for not banning them — was embedded in a world where real violence was just one gibe away. A friend, who speaks anonymously, mentions that Sidhu was really troubled in his last days due to threats he was getting.

But the film’s most chilling moment is the interview with Brar, who is on the run in Canada. It’s a bold get. His icy composure when he talks of Sidhu’s murder as vengeance or when the actual killers call Bishnoi in jail to inform him about the job done is bone-chilling. Vendetta can take people to dark places. “In his arrogance, he made some

in a conversation with India Today. She said, “I looked at him as this genius. He was always telling me which books to read. He would say, ‘Oh Jacky, you don’t know this. Wait, let me introduce you to this author, let me introduce you to this science.” In a conversation with IANS, Sushant’s Sonchiriya co-star Manoj Bajpayee said, “What I automatically recall about Sushant is how much interest he had about everything in life. He was always curious to learn about everything — the unknown, space, about quantum physics, about acting, about filmmaking.” In another podcast with Mid-Day, Manoj shared the Kai Po Che star was a “voracious reader” with a “fantastic mind.”

When his film Kedarnath turned 4 in 2022, his co-star Sara Ali Khan penned a long note in his memory. Writing about Sushant, Sara shared on her Instagram, “I would do anything to back to August 2017, learn so much from Sushant about music, films, books, life, acting, stars and the sky, witness every sunrise, sunset and moonrise.” She added, “And as the full moon shines bright tonight, I know Sushant is up there right by his favourite moon, shining like the bright star he always was and always will be. From Kedarnath to Andromeda.” His Sonchiriya co-star Bhumi Pednekar too had shared a long note after his death. In her note, she shared, “The first time we met, you told me you would show me the stars. In my head, I wondered—ya whatever, what a cheese ball. Little did I know you meant every word you said. With a smile full of pride you showed it to us. The massive big black hole, your best friend, your telescope. I was like, wait, what really, you got this here!” She added, “You took us to the moon and back, I remember the moon being red then. You showed us Saturn, Jupiter, and a million stars. You challenged me to write with my left hand and narrate versus backwards. You challenged me to races and quizzes and it drove me nuts. You spoke of Faraday, Chatelet and tried explaining me Newton’s theories through Art. You genius will live on with all the work you have done and through that telescope I will spot you again.” Veteran actor Ashutosh Rana, who was also a part of the critically acclaimed film Sonchiriya, recalled in an interview with Bombay Times that Sushant had carried a telescope with him to Chambal during the shoot of Sonchiriya. Sushant Singh Rajput was a member of the International Lunar Lands Registry (ILLR), which is a crowd funded program that aims to gather data necessary for human exploration and development of the lunar surface without hampering its natural beauty. His love for astronomy was such that he even bought some land on the moon. In a moving tribute for the actor, US-based astrophysicist and scientist Dr Karan Jani had shared little-known side about the actor a day after his death in 2020. In a long post, Karan shared, “I had the rare privilege to witness the other side of Sushant — that of a profoundly curious human being who had an impressive reading habit.” He added, “His social media bio read, ‘Photon in a double-slit’. He was indeed like that, living with a duality. With one being a Bollywood star with millions of followers while the other being an honest seeker finding a meaning in this universe. Our 2017 discovery of neutron star collision was the closest to him. It was his dream to one day visit the LIGO observations in the U.S.”



mistakes that could not be forgiven... When decency falls on deaf ears, it is the gunshot that gets heard,” says Brar, implying “gangland justice”. That the documentary makers have peeled all the layers all over again, stumbled upon uncomfortable truths, to tell a story of an artiste caught between the spotlight and the shadows, is impressive. A must-watch.

'Balika Vadhu' star Avika Gor gets engaged; shares dreamy pics from her roka ceremony

Mumbai: Actress Avika Gor has officially begun a new chapter in her life — she is now rokaified. The actress took to Instagram on Wednesday to share two heart-warming pictures from her roka ceremony, delighting fans with the news of her engagement.

In the caption, Avika detailed how the moment unfolded. She wrote, “He asked, I smiled, I cried (in that order), and screamed the easiest YES of my life! I’m full filmy—background score, slow-mo dreams, mascara running and all. He’s logic, calm, and ‘let’s carry a first-aid kit just in case’.” She continued, “I manifest drama. He manages it. And somehow, we just fit. So when he asked, the heroine in me took over — arms in the air, tears in my eyes, and zero network in my brain. Because real love? It may not always be perfect. But, it. Is. Magical.” Meanwhile, the actress also voiced her support for the Indian Armed Forces and expressed deep sorrow for the victims of the recent terror attack in Pahalgam. In a heartfelt statement, she emphasised the importance of unity and resilience in the face of terrorism and praised Operation Sindoor as a necessary and bold step. Sharing her thoughts, Avika said, “As an Indian, my heart goes out to the victims of the Pahalgam incident and their families. I stand with our armed forces and every citizen who believes in justice and peace. Operation Sindoor is a bold message that terrorism will not go unanswered. We must stay united, resilient, and hopeful for a future where such actions are no longer necessary.”