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A million-dollar adviser for cash-strapped Telangana — Revanth's Tony Blair gamble

The recent signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the Telangana government, led by Chief Minister Revanth Reddy, and the Tony Blair Institute for Global Change (TBIGC) has sparked controversy. The institute, headed by former British Prime Minister Tony Blair, is known for offering strategic advisory services to governments across the world. Telangana's finances in freefall under Congress rule; revenues plummet, debts balloon, borrowing turns reckless. However, the collaboration raises eyebrows due to TBIGC's financial record — reportedly generating USD 121 million through its advisory operations. This prompts many to question whether such an expensive partnership is appropriate for a State currently facing financial distress as claimed by the Congress government.

Chief Minister Revanth Reddy has cited Telangana's financial distress in various public meetings. That no one believes him and the party high command in Delhi refuses to give him appointments is another matter. What is more puzzling is that, despite the "bankrupt" condition of the State, his government has gone ahead and signed the MoU with an international adviser known for charging exorbitant fees. One wonders how a 'cash-strapped' State can afford to engage with such a high-profile institution. Meanwhile, the Revanth Reddy government has been on a price-hiking spree: the cost of sand has risen from Rs 1,200 per tonne during the BRS regime to now Rs 2,000. Alcohol prices, Metro Rail and bus pass fares have also increased. Yet, the Congress government continues to delay the implementation of 6 Guarantees, Declarations and 420 promises. The choice of TBIGC also receives concerns about the Revanth Reddy government's

Teach For India Opens Applications For 2026 Fellowship. A Unique Chance To 'Lead With Love' Across Classrooms in India

TEACHFORINDIA

Hyderabad: Teach For India, a non-profit championing educational equity, today announced the opening of applications for its 2026 Fellowship program. Fellows will have the opportunity to transform the lives of children and cultivate future leaders with compassion and dedication. Applications for the 2026 Teach For India cohort open July 1, 2025.

The Teach For India Fellowship is a transformative two-year, full-time paid program. It brings together exceptional individuals from diverse backgrounds, attracting Fellows from over 500 universities and colleges and 300 companies across India. The selection process is rigorous, attracting some of the nation's most brilliant and promising young leaders. Chosen Fellows commit to serving as full-time teachers in affordable private schools or English-medium government schools. Here, they'll guide students through the complexities of India's inequities, directly addressing the root causes of educational disadvantage. Beyond the classroom, the Fellowship cultivates crucial leadership skills, including empathy, active listening, and relationship-building, fostering significant professional growth.

Currently, our community boasts over 1000 Fellows, all united by a shared vision: to build a more compassionate and equitable India through education. What truly sets the Teach For India Fellowship apart is the unparalleled opportunity to drive significant change within the existing educational landscape. About Teach For India: Teach For India is a nationwide movement working to ensure that every child in India receives an excellent education. Rooted in the belief that meaningful change begins with strong leadership, the organisation envisions an India free of poverty and filled with love where education is the driving force behind transformation. Over the next decade, Teach For India aims to build a movement of 50,000 leaders who will work collectively to impact the lives of 1 in 10 children from low-income communities.

Konda Surekha launches 50-day student campaign for environment protection

Hyderabad, June 24 : Aimed at creating awareness among students about the environment protection, Minister for Forests, Environmental and Endowments Konda Surekha unveiled a poster for the 'National Student Paryavaran Competition 2025 (NSPC)' at her residence here on Tuesday. This poster launch marks the commencement of a 50-day environmental awareness campaign in Telangana. In this competition, students will kick off activities by planting trees; each child will be responsible for planting and nurturing one tree, taking a pledge to protect it, and tying a rakhi to the tree as part of the Vriksha Rakshabandhan. Trees can be planted in honour of elders or freedom fighters.

Students will also learn waste segregation by separating wet, dry, plastic, and e-waste at home and school. Activities like Zero Waste Lunch, compost pits, and a Swachhata Corner in classrooms will be promoted. Children will be encouraged to reduce plastic use, recycle old items, and participate in Recycle Stores and Swap Shops. To save water, students will take a Water Pledge, learn to fix leaks, practice drip irrigation, reuse water, and maintain rain-water harvesting pits. Each student will monitor one water tap. On the occasion, the Minister emphasised the need for students to adopt eco-friendly habits and play an active role in protecting the environment. She urged all students to actively participate and make the state a leader in environmental education by focusing on trees, waste and water management.

Colgate's Oral Health Movement - 4.5 Million Screened, Interesting Insights Uncovered, Drives Dental Visits Across India



Hyderabad: Colgate-Palmolive (India) Limited has been on a mission to revolutionize India's Oral Care for over eight decades, with a deep commitment to improving the nation's Oral Health. While almost 100% of households in India are using toothpaste, the adoption of optimal Oral Care behaviour continues to present an opportunity. While nearly every Indian household uses toothpaste, the opportunity to adopt optimal oral care behavior remains significant. It's about cultivating simple, inexpensive daily habits with profound, long-term health benefits.

With 90%* of Indians facing dental issues and only 9% visiting a dentist regularly, it was imperative to start a dialogue and create meaningful action around this critical issue. To bridge the awareness gap that exists between current behaviour and ideal, Colgate launched the Oral Health Movement in November 2024 - An initiative that leveraged cutting-edge technology to empower millions of Indians, enabling them to screen their oral health from their mobile phones and access free dental check-ups through a network of 50,000 dentists in partnership with the Indian Dental Association (IDA). *Dental camp study by Kantar in 2019

As part of the Colgate Oral Health Movement, over

4.5 million Indians screened their Oral Health across the length and breadth of the country with participation from 18,000+ pin codes covering more than 700 districts. Further, 1/6th of them visited a dentist post-screening (IDA data), thereby reflecting how the Movement successfully nudged Indians towards further action. Additionally, the nationwide Movement has delivered actionable intelligence on India's Oral Health, highlighting key areas that require urgent attention and intervention. The findings will shape the future of Oral Care initiatives in the country. Based on user participation in Colgate's Oral Health Movement, India's average Oral Health score is 2.6 out of 5.0.

The Oral Health Score provides a powerful, personalized insight into an individual's oral health by assessing the risk of cavities, gum issues, and stains. A common thread among Indians achieving higher oral health scores was their adherence to specific healthy practices. These included brushing teeth twice a day, moderating consumption of caffeine and sugary beverages, eating a healthy and nutritious diet, and avoiding tobacco. Here's a glimpse of India's oral health landscape:

41% of individuals face a high risk of cavities, 44% are prone to gum issues and 14% report stains.

72% of Indians are at high risk for at least one oral health concern while 4% are at the risk of all three (cavities, gum problems, teeth stains)

Only 10% of 4.5 million Indians screened, got a dental health score of 5/5.

The trends also vary across age groups and regions: More than 60% of Indians above the age of 50 are at a high risk of gum-related issues

Eastern India reported the higher incidence of tooth stains, largely linked to tobacco usage

Cavities were more common in Kerala, Jharkhand, and Rajasthan, where over 50% of participants in were found at high risk. A heightened vulnerability to cavities within two key demographics: 50% of children aged 3–12 years and 72% of older adults aged over 64 years of age. These groups require particular attention and targeted preventive care. Out of the 4.5 million respondents, 24% received the lowest score of 1

5 Exciting Ways to Use Balsamic Vinegar in Indian Meals This Week

Hyderabad: Indian food is all about bold spices, vibrant colours, and unforgettable flavours. But sometimes, a little twist can take your favourite dishes to a whole new level. Enter balsamic vinegar—a kitchen staple in Italy, but a bit of hidden gem in Indian kitchens. It's sweet-tangy flavour works surprisingly well with our spices and ingredients, adding a modern touch to classic recipes. Ready to shake things up? Here are five easy and exciting ways to use balsamic vinegar in your Indian meals this week:



Balsamic Chaat Salad

Give your regular chaat a gourmet makeover! Toss together boiled chickpeas, chopped onions, tomatoes, cucumber, coriander, and pomegranate seeds. Add a splash of balsamic vinegar, a squeeze of lemon, chaat masala, and a pinch of black salt.

The balsamic vinegar adds a rich, tangy kick that makes the whole salad pop with flavour.

Balsamic Paneer Tikka

Take your paneer tikka game up a notch. Marinate paneer cubes in yogurt, ginger-garlic paste, red chilli powder, garam masala, and just a hint of balsamic vinegar. Grill or bake until golden and slightly charred.

The vinegar helps tenderize the paneer and adds a subtle sweetness that perfectly balances the spices.

Roasted Veggies with Balsamic Glaze

Roast your favourite Indian veggies — think carrots, cauliflower, and bell peppers - with olive oil, salt, pepper, and a drizzle of balsamic vinegar. Roast until caramelised and golden. The Balsamic brings out the natural sweetness of veggies and gives your everyday sabzi a restaurant-style upgrade.

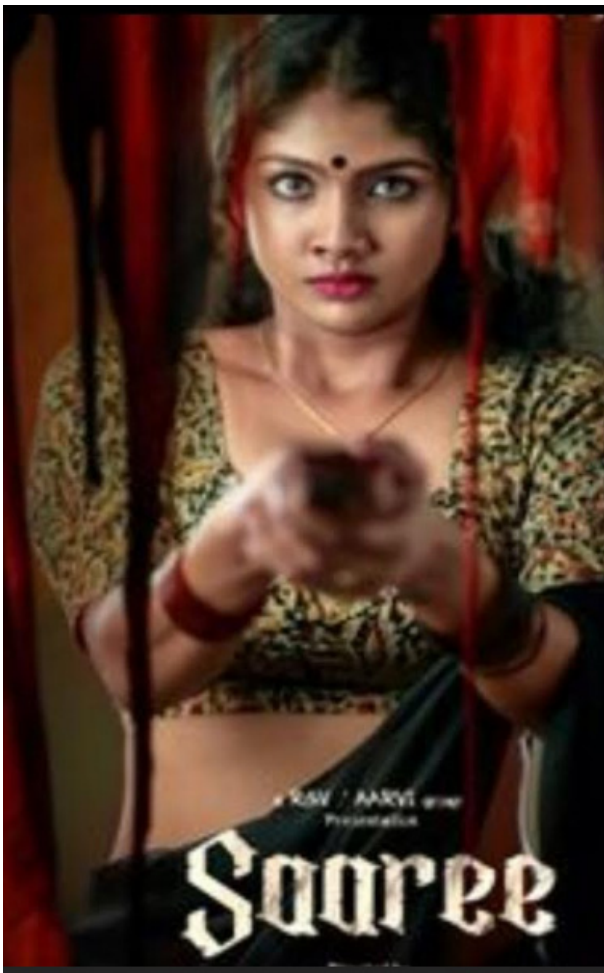
Balsamic Fruit Raita

For a raita with a twist, mix diced apples, bananas, and pomegranate with thick curd. Stir in a little balsamic vinegar, roasted cumin powder, and a touch of honey. The vinegar cuts through the richness of the curd, making the raita bright and refreshing — perfect alongside spicy mains.

Balsamic Drizzle on Tandoori Pizza

Make a homemade pizza with a base of tandoori chicken or paneer, onions, and capsicum. Once it's out of the oven, finish with a drizzle of balsamic vinegar reduction (just simmer balsamic vinegar till thick). This tangy-sweet glaze pairs beautifully with the smoky, spicy toppings and takes your pizza to the next level.

Obsession Turns Sinister in Ram Gopal Varma's psychological thriller 'Saaree', Set to premiere exclusively on Lionsgate Play



Hyderabad: A vacation with friends. A stranger in a saree. A glance that spirals into madness. Inspired by real life events, Saaree is a psychological thriller that forces viewers to confront a deeply unsettling question: how well do you really know the people we interact with online? What begins as an online infatuation, morphs into relentless stalking, emotional manipulation, and a harrowing loss of control. Saaree follows the story of Kittu, played by Satya Yadu, a photographer who becomes obsessed with a woman played by Aaradhya Devi, whom he sees in a saree, an image that consumes him completely. As admiration twists into control, and rejection triggers rage, his obsession begins to threaten everything around her.

Written and Presented by Ram Gopal Varma and directed by Giri Krishna Kamal, Saaree isn't just a film — it's an alarming look at obsession, infatuation and its terrifying consequences in the digital age. Streaming exclusively on Lionsgate Play from June 27th, this nerve wracking psychological thriller dives into the terrifying side of unchecked desire. The film will be available in Telugu, Hindi, Tamil, and Malayalam. Speaking about Saaree, filmmaker Ram Gopal Varma shared, "Saaree isn't just fiction - it's rooted in the terrifying reality of actual digital stalking that is becoming increasingly common today. Today, relationships form faster online than in real life, often without truly knowing who's on the other side. With Saaree, I wanted to go beyond the surface and show how something as seemingly harmless as a social media interaction or a glance can spiral into a full-blown emotional nightmare. What starts as affection can quickly become control, and control disguised as love is far more terrifying than hate. The experience of making this film was intense because it forced me to sit with some uncomfortable truths." He continues, saying, "In the film, the saree becomes more than just a garment, it's a symbol of how desire and illusion are projected onto women, regardless of what they wear. Even something as traditional as a saree can be objectified."

Philips Launches New Smart TVs in India on Flipkart



Hyderabad: Philips, a global pioneer in consumer electronics and trusted innovation, unveils its latest smart television offering in India — Philips Mirage Series (PFT6130). Designed to deliver an elevated entertainment experience that combines powerful visual performance, eye comfort, and smart technology, the Mirage Series is available in 32" and 43" screen sizes on Flipkart.

The Mirage Series PFT6130 introduces 3DR Technology, a breakthrough in display performance that enhances light energy efficiency within the TV panel. This technology ensures every frame is brighter, sharper, and more vivid, with deeper blacks and improved contrast. Viewers can expect a theatre-like experience in their living rooms, making it ideal for binge-watchers, movie buffs, and gaming enthusiasts alike. A standout feature of the Smart TV is its commitment to eye comfort. Equipped with Eye Care Technology, the television offers a flicker-free display that minimizes strain and fatigue during extended viewing. Additionally, the Intelligent Brightness Adjustment or Night Mode automatically adapts the screen's brightness based on ambient lighting, offering a more relaxed viewing experience, particularly in low-light conditions. The Mirage PFT6130 Series features Dolby Audio for crystal-clear dialogue and immersive surround sound, coupled with 20W speaker output and Intelligent Volume Control. These enhancements ensure consistent and cinematic sound quality, making every scene come alive—whether it's a dramatic film, live sports, or music. Visually, the Mirage Series PFT6130 is designed to impress with its boundless screen and ultra-slim bezel, offering a modern, immersive aesthetic that seamlessly fits into any home décor. The HDR10 and HLG support further elevate the viewing experience, delivering a wider colour gamut, enhanced contrast, and life-like details across dark and bright scenes. Whether you're streaming the latest 4K HDR content or catching up on live TV, the Mirage Series promises an ultra-realistic visual treat. Running on the latest Google TV OS, the television brings a content-first interface with smooth navigation and a highly personalized user experience. Viewers can access many apps, including YouTube, Netflix, Prime Video, and JIO + Hotstar. With built-in Google Assistant, users can use voice commands to search, control smart devices, and access information hands-free. The CC Cast (Chromecast Built-in) feature further enhances convenience by allowing effortless casting from smartphones and tablets directly to the TV.

Telangana aspires to become a global sports hub: Sridhar Babu



Hyderabad, June 24 Telangana is on a mission to emerge as a "Global Sports Hub," said Minister for IT and Industries Duddilla Sridhar Babu. Speaking at a programme after inaugurating the SLV Pro Badminton Stadium at Samathanagar, Nizampet, here on Tuesday, the Minister affirmed that this vision is central to the people-centric governance being led by Chief Minister Revanth Reddy.

"As part of our commitment to making Telangana shine on the global stage, especially at the 2036 Olympics. We have introduced a comprehensive new sports policy. There was a time when cricket dominated the public imagination. Today, that landscape is evolving. Parents and children alike are embracing diverse sports, and mindsets are shifting accordingly," he said. Minister Sridhar Babu said, "Hyderabad was once synonymous with biryani. Now, it's equally recognised for badminton."

He praised the legacy of world-class athletes like Pullela Gopichand, Saina Nehwal, PV Sindhu, Chirag Shetty and Satwiksairaj, all of whom began their journey in Telangana. "Inspired by these champions, many young children are now choosing badminton as a serious career path, representing India at national and international levels. Gopichand's contributions have been instrumental in making Hyderabad the badminton capital of India."

Underscoring the government's strong focus on sports, the Minister announced the establishment of the Young India Sports University, targeted for launch in 2026. "We are also working to create sports grounds across every village panchayat and mandal headquarters. Soon, Telangana will host a FIFA-certified girls' football academy at Gachibowli." He further added, "Plans are underway to establish dedicated sports schools in each of the ten erstwhile districts of the state. Our efforts are aimed at identifying and nurturing talent from the grassroots. We are committed to creating opportunities, infrastructure, and mentorship for young athletes to thrive." As President of the Badminton Association of Telangana, Sridhar Babu also emphasised the association's ongoing efforts to take badminton beyond Hyderabad into rural areas. He urged parents to encourage their children to pursue any sport they are passionate about, and to support them in developing their potential. The event was also attended by MLA Arikepudi Gandhi, MLC Deshapathi Srinivas and other dignitaries.

SIT records MP Eatala Rajender statement in phone tapping case

Hyderabad, June 24 : The SIT officials today recorded the statements of BJP leaders Eatala Rajender and Premender Reddy in the phone tapping case. It was found that the phones of both of them were tapped by the previous BRS government during the 2023 November elections. The SIT officials have found that 4,000 phones had been tapped so far. Eatala Rajender appeared before the SIT at the Jubilee Hills police station in the phone tapping case. The SIT officials recorded Eatala's statement.

Eatala alleged that he was the first victim in the phone tapping case. He also alleged that his family members, drivers and gunmen's phones were also tapped by the BRS party led state government. The SIT found that he was subjected to the phone tapping before and after the Huzurabad by-election. Kukatpally MLA Madhavaram Krishna Rao filed a complaint with the SIT officials. He said that in the complaint that his phone conversations were secretly tapped from 2020 to 2024. Telangana TDP Organizing Secretary Vejjandla Kishore Babu complained to the SIT that the KCR government had tapped his phone in a conspiracy. Kishore Babu gave evidence on the phone tapping to the SIT officials. MP Eatala Rajender said that the phone tapping case was progressing at a snail's pace. He accused all the officials of acting as KCR's puppets. He was furious that former SIB chief Prabhakar Rao violated the rules and worked for KCR.

Prabhakar Rao is not an IPS officer. However, he was appointed as the SIIB chief. A retired officer was appointed illegally. Guidelines were flouted. Phone tapping is against

democracy. The Phones of judges, ministers, and party leaders were tapped. Previously, the entire intelligence wing was with KCR," he claimed. He said that it would take a year and a half to form a commission of inquiry into the phone tapping case. He criticized the existence of a corrupt agreement between BRS and Congress. He alleged that the phones of prominent people from all walks of life were tapped in the KCR government. He said that no one has the right to obstruct the right to freedom guaranteed by the Constitution. Rajender said that it was cruel for the KCR government to tap the phones of the leaders instead of anti-social forces. Senior BJP leader Premender Reddy told the SIT officials that his two phones were tapped during the assembly elections.

He said that it was shameful for the previous KCR government to indulge in the phone tapping. He also said that it was cruel to listen to the personal matters of political leaders, journalists and film personalities' phone calls. He criticized that the phone tapping was done to hurt the BJP. Premender Reddy demanded that the Congress government should conduct a full investigation into the phone tapping scam. Premender Reddy revealed that there were thousands of victims in the phone tapping case but only a few people were being called as witnesses. He demanded that the government conduct a CBI investigation to find out the real culprits in the phone tapping case. He alleged that the Congress government may also be involved in the phone tapping issue. Premender Reddy revealed that the BJP lost in many places in the Telangana elections due to the phone tapping scam.

MLC Kalvakuntla Kavitha seeks support from Left parties for rail roko program



Hyderabad, June 24 Telangana Jagruti President and BRS Party MLC Kalvakuntla Kavitha has requested the Left parties to support the rail roko program to be organized on July 17 demanding 42 percent reservation for BCs in education, jobs and local bodies. Kavitha met separately with CPM state secretary John Wesley in the city and the party central committee members Sadhineni Venkateswara Rao, JV Chalapathi Rao and state secretariat member K. Govardhan at the New Democracy state office Marks Bhavan in Adikmet. Speaking on the occasion, she said that for the increase in the BC reservations and the implementation of the Kamareddy BC Declaration, many democratic movements had been organized under the auspices of the Telangana Jagruti and United Phule Front for a year. She also said that the Congress government, had introduced

a bill for the BC reservations in education and jobs in the Assembly and Council and another bill for increasing reservations in the local bodies and got it approved. She said that even though it has been three months since the bills were sent to the Center, CM Revanth Reddy had not put any pressure on the Center to implement them prompting them to give a call for the rail roko program on July 17. Kavitha said that they had been agitating for the implementation of the Kamareddy BC Declaration for two years. She said that even though the bills were passed in the Assembly and Council in obedience to their agitations, no effort was made to give them legality.

She alleged that CM Revanth Reddy, who has done half a century in going to Delhi, had not even once pressured Prime Minister Modi for the approval of the BC bills. She said that the Congress government was doing immense injustice to the BCs. She also said that the only way to get the Centre to approve the BC bill was through a movement like the rail roko program. She said that they would organize the rail roko program along with like-minded parties and public organizations that would come together with them. Congress Mother statues will be sent to Gandhi Bhavan.

Reacting to the decision of the state government to install Telangana Talli statue in all district collectorates she said that after coming to power, they would send those statues to Gandhi Bhavan with respect. She reminded that it was not right to change the Telangana Mother's statue, which is the symbol of the Telangana movement.

Vanamahotsavam to be taken up with a targeted approach: Konda Surekha

Hyderabad, June 24 Minister for Environment, Forests and Endowments Konda Surekha has emphasised the need for a focused and well-coordinated strategy to implement the Vanamahotsavam programme effectively across the Telangana State. Speaking during a video conference chaired by Chief Secretary K. Ramakrishna Rao with District Collectors from the Secretariat here on Tuesday, the Minister highlighted the importance of identifying vacant government and community lands to carry out large-scale plantations.

She stressed that a target-based approach must be adopted and every department should actively participate in making the plantation drive a success. The Minister said that identifying suitable land in advance would ensure smooth execution of plantation activities, especially during the monsoon season. Konda Surekha directed District Collectors to immediately convene District Level Monitoring and Consultative Committee meetings, in coordination with all line departments, to chalk out the Vanamahotsavam

action plan. She also underlined the need for quality seedlings to be prepared beforehand, with priority given to planting fruit-bearing species that benefit both the environment and local communities. In addition to plantation activities, the Minister instructed district officials to regularly monitor the survival rate of planted saplings, and to ensure post-plantation care, including watering and protection measures.

The video conference also discussed a comprehensive review of several ongoing state programmes, including the Vanamahotsavam, Indiramma Housing scheme, fertilizer availability, oil palm expansion, Bhu Bharathi digitisation initiative, seasonal disease preparedness, TB Mukh Bharat Mission and infrastructure development for new medical colleges.

Principal Secretary (EFS&T) Nadeem Ahmed, Secretary (Health & Family Welfare) Christina Z Chongthu, Secretary (Revenue) Lokesh Kumar, PCCF and other senior officials were also present in the meeting.

No party other than Congress has truly thought about farmers: Bhatti



Hyderabad, June 24 : Deputy Chief Minister Bhatti Vikramarka has criticised the previous BRS government for providing only partial financial assistance under the "Rythu Bandhu" scheme while withdrawing most other support measures. Addressing the Rythu Bharosa Vijayotsava Sabha near the Secretariat on Tuesday, he said no political party in India—other than the Congress—has genuinely thought about or loved farmers. He highlighted that it was the Congress party which built multi-purpose irrigation projects for farming and provided free electricity to farmers. It has taken steps to ensure Minimum Support Price (MSP) for crops, mandated banks to compulsorily give loans to farmers and also launched historic programs like the Green Revolution to double crop yields, Bhatti Vikramarka reminded. The Deputy Chief Minister emphasised that only Congress governments have undertaken such transformative initiatives for agriculture, unlike any other governments. "No party has embraced farmers with the kind of love and commitment that Congress has," he said. "Agriculture means Congress," he reiterated. Recalling the dreams of former Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi,

who envisioned taking India into the 21st century and creating wonders, Bhatti Vikramarka said it was heartening to see farmers celebrating today—a true tribute to Rajiv Gandhi's vision. He further noted that in just three months since coming to power, the Congress government has already waived Rs.21,000 crores in farm loans—an act unmatched by any other government in the country. He added that the government is also providing Rs.12,000 annually to landless and poor agricultural laborers directly into their bank accounts. The Deputy Chief Minister accused the previous BRS government of merely offering token amounts under "Rythu Bandhu" while stopping zero-interest and low-interest loans, subsidies for drip and sprinkler systems, bonuses for harvested crops, MSP payments, and compensation for crop loss.

PAC termed Congress governance as Golden Period in Telangana: Bhatti

Hyderabad, June 24 Deputy Chief Minister Bhatti Vikramarka stated that the Political Affairs Committee (PAC) of the Congress Party has expressed satisfaction over the transformative decisions taken over the past year by the Indiramma-led Congress Government under the leadership of Chief Minister Revanth Reddy. Speaking to the media at Gandhi Bhavan here on Tuesday after attending the PAC meeting, the Deputy Chief Minister said the PAC termed the Congress governance as a Golden Period in Telangana and appreciated the farmer-friendly and welfare schemes which are unprecedented in the country.

Empowering students from classroom to career Launch of "A+ Production House" by MANUU & SCDS

Hyderabad, June 24 The Samana College of Design Studies (SCDS), Maulana Azad National Urdu University (MANUU) launched "A+ Production House", a platform designed to integrate academic learning with real-world industry exposure. Prof. Syed Ainal Hasan, Vice-Chancellor and Prof. Ishtiaque Ahmed, Registrar officially inaugurated the production house amidst much enthusiasm and applause. Speaking on the occasion, the Vice-Chancellor stated "Earn while you learn, is not just a slogan for MANUU and SCDS, it is a living reality. This initiative stands as a shining example of what true skill based education should look like".

Prof. Abdul Wahid, Dean, School of Technology said this is not merely a production house, it is a platform where designers can bring their dream to life. It opens the door for students to enter the professional world with confidence and creativity. The Chairperson of SCDS, Ms. Samana Hussain emphasized the uniqueness of the initiative. This is the first of its kind in India - a University backed production house aimed not only at training students but also helping them sustain in the market. This platform transform students from learners to entrepreneurs, said SCDS Chairperson. With this launch, SCDS and MANUU take a bold step in shaping the future of creative education in India.

CS holds VC with district collectors

Hyderabad, June 24 Chief Secretary K Ramakrishna Rao today held a video conference with the district collectors and reviewed the progress of Vana Mahotsavam, Indiramma housing scheme, availability of fertilizers, Oil Palm Expansion, Bhu Bharathi, seasonal illness, TB Mukh Bharath and Medical Colleges requirements etc. The Officials from Revenue, Housing, Health, Agriculture and Forest department attended the video conference.

Speaking on the occasion, CS exhorted the collectors to think innovatively to make a lasting impact in the lives of the people. He said that there was a tremendous scope for the Collectors to take up the development and welfare programmes of the government in their districts, which will go a long way in the upliftment of the poor and downtrodden. He informed that hereafter video conference would be held on every Tuesday.

The Chief Secretary asked the collectors to review the progress of the Indiramma houses and issue sanction proceedings and added that they should also ensure that all the sanctioned houses be grounded immediately. On Vanamahotsavam program, the collectors were told to conduct the district monitoring consultative committee meeting and effectively review in the district with the concerned departments. He emphasized the need to ensure good quality seedlings were kept ready for planting with a special focus on plantation of fruit bearing species. The collectors were also told to take stock of the survival of plants as well. state Minister for Environment and Forests Konda Surekha suggested a targeted approach to take up the plan-

tation by involving all departments. Vacant lands in the districts should be identified to take up plantation in a big way, she added.

Secretary of the Agriculture department Raghunandan Rao told the district collectors that sufficient quantities of fertilizer stocks were available and added that the collectors have to ensure that no panic buying or hoarding should take place anywhere in the state. The special officers should visit the fertilizer dealers in their respective districts and take stock of the situation, he said. On oil palm, he asked the collectors to identify large areas in their districts to take up the oil palm plantation. The Chief Secretary informed that more than 8 lakh applications were received during the revenue sadassus held across the state. He asked the collectors to personally monitor the applications and take steps to dispose them with a humane approach.

The CS asked the collectors to be alert on the spread of transmissible illnesses and vector borne diseases due to the onset of the monsoon season. On TB Mukh Bharath Abhiyan, he asked the district collectors to prepare plan of action and also conduct convergence meeting involving DMHOs, Hospital Superintendents, Red Cross and Indian Medical Association. Chief Secretary asked the District Collectors to take stock of the requirements of Medical Colleges especially from HR perspective and take appropriate steps. Principal Secretary EFS&T Nadeem Ahmed, Secretary H&FW Christina Z Chongthu, Secretary Revenue Lokesh Kumar, PCCF and other senior officials were present.

Congress distances itself from Tharoor's comments on Modi

GNS News Agency, June 24

Lok Sabha member from Thiruvananthapuram Shashi Tharoor's opinion about Prime Minister Narendra Modi's "energy and dynamism becoming a prime asset for India on global stage" is his personal view and doesn't reflect the party's view, the Congress said on Tuesday, even as it reiterated that the Narendra Modi government's foreign policy has completely "fallen flat". "That may be his [Mr. Tharoor's] opinion but that is not the Congress party's view. It is not the Congress view since we have presented our views with evidence and proof," Supriya Shrinete, who heads the Congress' social media department, told reporters. In an opinion piece published in The Hinduan Monday, Mr. Tharoor, who had headed a parliamentary group for global outreach after the Pahalgam terror attack, lauded Mr. Modi's approach. Addressing a press conference here, Ms. Shrinete said the reality of India's foreign policy was that the U.S. had issued a travel advisory of Level 2 and advised its women, especially, not to travel alone to India, citing various cases of rapes.

"It also goes on to say that various kinds of crimes, incidents of violence and terror attacks can happen in India. It very categorically mentions that American officials will need permission from the government before their travel to India... This kind of advisory is being issued for India, which will have far-reaching impact on our standing," she said. Ms. Shrinete said such an advisory "maligins" the country and urged the government to register its protest and take up the matter at the highest level. "However, nothing of this kind of advisory has been issued for Pakistan, which is a terror country, housing terrorists such as Masood Azhar,



Hafiz Saeed, Dawood Ibrahim, etc., they are being provided protection by Pakistan. On the contrary, an advisory is being issued against us while Pakistan's Army Chief Asim Munir is being invited to enjoy a meal with U.S. President Donald Trump, who has, in turn, hyphenated India and Pakistan," she added. The Congress leader said it was highly objectionable that the Indian Prime Minister and Pakistan's Army Chief were being hyphenated. "From enforceable hugs to 'Howdy Modi', 'Namaste Trump', and 'Ab Ki Baar Trump Sarkaar', to going to the U.S. uninvited. He has done everything possible, and look at what America is doing to us," she said. "At a time when we need large nations of the world to stand with us, America is issuing travel advisories against us and citing incidents that pertain to the rest of the world. But this really maligins us, and what is the government doing about it? Absolutely nothing. Pin drop silence like always," Ms. Shrinete added.

Defence Ministry clears 2,000 crore contracts under emergency procurement for counter-terror operations



GNS News Agency, June 24

In a significant move to strengthen the Indian Army's operational readiness in counter-terrorism (CT) operations, the Ministry of Defence has concluded 13 contracts under the Emergency Procurement (EP) mechanism. These contracts, amounting to ₹1,981.90 crore, have been finalised against an overall sanctioned outlay of ₹2,000 crore for the Indian Army. Executed through fast-track procedures under the EP mandate, the procurement aims to enhance situational awareness, lethality, mobility, and protection for troops deployed in CT environments. The acquisitions were completed within compressed timelines to ensure rapid capability augmentation. Key equipment being procured includes Integrated Drone Detection and Interdiction Systems (IDDIS), Low Level Lightweight Radars (LLLR), Very Short Range Air Defence Systems (VSHORADS), Launchers and Missiles, Remotely Piloted Aerial Vehicles (RPVs), Loitering Munitions, including Vertical Take-Off and Landing (VTOL) systems, Various categories of drones, Bullet Proof Jackets (BPJs), Ballistic Helmets, Quick Reaction Fighting Vehicles (QRFVs) – Heavy and Medium, Night Sights for Rifles. These procurements reflect the Ministry's

commitment to equipping the Indian Army with modern, mission-critical, and completely indigenous systems to meet emerging security challenges. The EP route continues to be a key enabler in bridging urgent capability gaps and ensuring timely induction of vital operational equipment.

A dream to create Andhra Pradesh's own Silicon Valley in Amaravati

More than 25 years ago, N. Chandrababu Naidu, the Chief Minister of the unified State of Andhra Pradesh, had a dream to transform Hyderabad into a global city, which he could, by establishing the landmarkHITEC City, which made the city famous. Cyberabad, the bustling township which theHITEC city evolved into over the years, is today home to many IT and IT-Enabled Services (ITES) companies. That was the time when he spearheaded the IT revolution with some valuable contributions from a host of luminaries, notably Bill Gates, under whose stewardship Microsoft India Development Centre (MSIDC) was set up in Hyderabad. MSIDC was Microsoft's largest software development centre outside its headquarters in Redmond, Washington. As the Chief Minister of the successor State of Andhra Pradesh now, Mr. Naidu plans to develop a Quantum Valley (QV) in Amaravati, on the lines of Silicon Valley, aimed at leading the State in quantum technologies and Artificial Intelligence (AI). The idea is to make Andhra a preferred destination for an assortment of IT, Electronics, Communications and related companies specialising in cutting-edge technologies.

‘Can’t dilute issue or protect wrongdoers’: Bombay HC orders probe into 2012 New Year’s Eve ‘party’ at Mankhurd children’s home



GNS News Agency, June 24

Bombay HCThe court ordered the Commissioner for Persons With Disabilities to initiate an inquiry into the alleged incident within six weeks and forward the findings to the Maharashtra government Observing that the authorities cannot protect wrongdoers or keep an issue pending for a decade, the Bombay High Court on Monday ordered a probe into an alleged party hosted on New Year’s Eve in 2012 at a home for mentally deficient children (MDC) in suburban Mumbai’s Mankhurd, consisting of 265 inmates.

The court ordered the Commissioner for Persons With Disabilities to initiate an inquiry into the alleged incident within six weeks and forward the findings to the Maharashtra government which shall take appropriate action against the errant people within three months. The bench of Chief Justice Alok Aradhe and Justice Sandeep V Marne disposed of a Public Interest Litigation (PIL) filed in 2014 by activist Sangeeta Puneekar, which had highlighted the “shocking state of affairs”, citing news reports of an alleged party hosted by donors at the MDC homes. According to a news report, champagne was popped, cash was showered on bar dancers, and alcohol was served at the party on December 31, 2012.

The institution is run by the Children’s Aid Society, a 100 per cent aided NGO. The petitioner claimed that complaints were lodged by the MDC home authorities regarding the New Year’s Eve party and a probe was conducted by a panel comprising the Child Welfare Committee (CWC) chairman, Divisional Deputy Commissioner-Konkan, and an officer of the Women and Child Development Department. However, despite the inquiry, no action was taken against the concerned persons, the petitioner argued. After the lawyer representing the respondent authorities sought time to take instructions from officials and further response to the plea, Chief Justice Aradhe orally remarked, “The petition cannot be kept pending for 10 years. Effect of the incident cannot be diluted and you cannot be protecting wrong doers. What action have you taken in 11 years? You do not know. It has to be taken.” When the lawyer responded that the respondents will find out, the bench stated, “We are allowing the petition. It took 11 years? You should be ashamed of your officers. And now you have the guts to say that will find out? So that we should continue the matter for another 25 years? Do you know the effect of keeping the petition pending?” It noted in the order, “We are surprised to note that despite the inquiry being conducted in the alleged incident, till today no action has been taken against the delinquents. The counsel for the respondent was unable to point out that any action was taken against the delinquent. No useful purpose will be served by keeping the petition pending.”

The bench ordered a probe followed by “suitable action” by the state government and seeking its compliance report, disposed of the PIL. In April, while hearing a batch of pleas including that of Puneekar, the high court had questioned the state government as to why all 94 MDC homes in Maharashtra were not operational. The court has, meanwhile, kept pending other pleas on the issue to be heard in due course.

Mumbai’s island city records 100 mm of rainfall as monsoon makes a comeback

GNS News Agency, June 24

Mumbai’s island city recorded three-digit rainfall figures in the last 24 hours as the monsoon made a comeback after a dry spell of nearly three weeks. According to the India Meteorological Department (IMD), Mumbai’s coastal observatory at Colaba recorded 100.4 mm of rainfall during the 24-hour cycle that ended at 8.30 am Monday, while the Santacruz observatory recorded 86 mm of rainfall during this same period. The weather bureau has placed Mumbai and its neighbouring districts of Thane and Palghar under a yellow alert till 8.30 am on Tuesday, indicating moderate to heavy rainfall is likely to continue. Meanwhile, the Raigad district has been kept under a red alert during this period.

The officials in the weather bureau have attributed the current spell of rainfall to a cyclonic circulation system and a trough. “Currently, an upper air cyclonic circulation system lies over central Bay of Bengal off north coastal Andhra Pradesh, while yet another upper air cyclonic system, which was over Marathwada, lies above South Madhya Maharashtra that has led to the intense rainfall in the last 24 hours,” a weather bureau official told The Indian Express. “A monsoon trough has also developed mainly over the Konkan districts of coastal Maharashtra, as a result of which the island city has seen heavier rainfall compared to the suburbs during the past 24 hours,” the official added.



The IMD data further shows that since the monsoon arrival on May 26, the Colaba and Santacruz observatories have recorded 261.5 mm and 204.6 mm of rainfall each, so far. Mumbai this year has seen an early monsoon onset on May 26 – the earliest in 75 years. Usually, the southwest monsoon arrives any time between June 8 to 15 every year, and the average rainfall recorded in June stands at 537 mm. Overall, the city records an average of 2,319 mm of rain between June and September, which are labelled as monsoon months for the year. Meanwhile, data furnished by the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation’s (BMC’s) automatic weather system shows that the island city has recorded 98 mm of rainfall, followed by 75 mm and 58 mm of rain in the western and eastern suburbs.

15-year-old male gaur dies at Delhi Zoo, played key role in breeding efforts

GNS News Agency, June 24

GaurThe Indian gaur, also known as the Indian bison, is the largest extant bovine species and is classified as Vulnerable on the International Union for Conservation of Nature’s (IUCN) Red List.

A 15-year-old male Indian gaur which played a critical role in the breeding programme at the National Zoological Park (NZP) in Delhi died Sunday morning due to age-related issues, officials informed. The gaur had been kept under special care inside a holding cell over the past few days as its health condition began to decline. The animal was brought to Delhi Zoo from the Mysuru Zoo in 2014 as part of a conservation exchange and went on to become a dominant breeding bull in the enclosure.

“It had been under observation and veterinary care for the past few days. Unfortunately, it passed away this morning due to senility,” said Dr Sanjeet Kumar, director, Delhi Zoo. “The gaur was one of our most significant contributors to the captive breeding programme. More than 75 per cent of the 15 gaurs currently housed in NZP are its direct progeny.” Zoo authorities have said that samples from the deceased animal will be sent to the Indian Veterinary Research Institute (IVRI) for further investigation to rule out any underlying health issue.

The Indian gaur, also known as the Indian bison, is the largest extant bovine species and is classified as Vulnerable on the International Union for Conservation of Nature’s



(IUCN) Red List. Dr Kumar said the zoo will continue to prioritise the health and genetic diversity of the gaur population through its conservation and breeding practices. Meanwhile, the Delhi Zoo has proposed a new adoption scheme that will allow visitors to adopt animals for periods as short as a day. The plan, currently awaiting approval, aims to replace the zoo’s existing year-long adoption model with more flexible options, including monthly, quarterly, half-yearly, and daily terms, according to officials. “At present, the adoption is only available for a one-year term and involves a formal stamp paper agreement. We are proposing changes that would allow people to adopt animals for a shorter duration, from a single day to a few months,” Dr Kumar said earlier.



Kheda, Ahmedabad, Botad, Mehsana, Vadodara, Bharuch, Aravalli, Junagadh, Anand, Mahisagar, Gandhinagar, and Bhavnagar districts.

Rapido, Uber, Ola pause bike taxi operations in Karnataka following HC order



GNS News Agency, June 24

rapidoState Transport Minister has emphasised that the government is not inclined towards drafting a bike taxi policy and that white-board two wheelers cannot be used for commercial purposes. Following the Karnataka High Court’s recent order suspending the services of bike taxis, aggregator Rapido, Uber and Ola ceased operations in the state Monday. In a notification to its customers on the app, Rapido said, “Starting June 16, 2025, our Bike Taxi services in Karnataka will be paused in compliance with recent High Court orders. While we deeply believe in the value bike taxis bring to daily commuters, we respect the law and will fully abide by the directive.”

It added, “We remain committed to the communities we serve and hopeful for a future where convenient, affordable mobility is accessible to all. We are navigating the way forward with the government to bring your favourite bike taxis back on the road soon.” With the ban kicking in, pending formation of rules under section 93 of the Motor Vehicles Act, commuters are already feeling the pinch, with some complaining about having to shell out more money to hire autorickshaws. Akash Kollur, lamented on X, “I was paying a maximum amount of Rs 55 for a bike taxi from Thippasandra to Indiranagar everyday to my office. Currently, I need to pay Rs 85 for autorickshaw. Hiring offline autorickshaws will be like IPL auction in Bengaluru.”

The ban comes after a division bench of the Karnataka High Court refused to stay a single bench’s April 2 order that directed all bike taxi operators to suspend operations within six weeks which was later extended by a few more

weeks. Acting Chief Justice V Kameswar Rao observed on June 13 that an interim relief could have been given to aggregators, provided the state government considered drafting a bike taxi policy. “However, in this case, the state government has clearly made a policy decision (of not being interested to frame a bike taxi policy),” he noted. State Transport Minister Ramalinga Reddy has emphasised that the government is not inclined towards drafting a bike taxi policy and that white-board two wheelers cannot be used for commercial purposes. Several bike taxi operators and industry bodies like National Association of Software and Service Companies (Nasscom) and Internet and Mobile Association of India (IAMAI) requested the state government to roll back the ban and called for a comprehensive bike taxi policy to aid the lakhs of drivers dependent on such operations. On Sunday, Namma Bike Taxi Association wrote a letter to Chief Minister Siddaramaiah and Leader of Opposition in Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi expressing concerns over the livelihood of lakhs of gig workers engaging in bike taxi operations. The association, in its letter, stated, “Over 1,00,000 gig workers in Bengaluru and across Karnataka are losing our right to earn and feed our families because of a blanket ban on bike taxi services. Some of us work all 7 days, covering 10-12 hours a day, just to feed our families. We ride in the hot sun, heavy rain, and traffic to keep the city moving.”

It further stated, “Passengers also suffer. Many use bike taxis for quick, low-cost rides. These are the only affordable rides for thousands, especially where buses are few. We do nearly 8 crore trips in a year. Who will help these riders now?” Meanwhile, Rapido had earlier argued that a blanket ban in the absence of regulation would directly impact the livelihoods of over 6 lakh people across Karnataka. The company also submitted that it had disbursed over Rs 700 crore to captains and paid over Rs 100 crore in GST contributions across categories in Bengaluru over the last years. Rapido had stated that over 75 per cent of bike taxi riders use the platform as their chief source of livelihood, earning an average of Rs 35,000 per month. The company also said that two-wheeler contract carriage had been legal since the inception of the Motor Vehicle Act 1988, with an advisory to this effect issued by the Centre reiterating this position in law.

Sewage in taps and garbage on streets: Sec 49-C cries for help

GNS News Agency, June 24

Residents of Sector 49-C, Housing Board Colony, Chandigarh, are battling a civic crisis as sewage water contaminates their drinking supply, garbage heaps continue to grow, and municipal authorities fail to intervene meaningfully. Allotted between 2010 and 2011, the housing board flats for economically weaker sections (EWS) are just over a decade old, but the infrastructure is already crumbling. For the past two to three months, residents have complained of sewage mixing with their tap water — resulting in illness and distress. Despite submitting multiple complaints and photographic proof, authorities carried out only a single round of water testing. Water quality improved briefly but deteriorated again soon after.

“The smell here is unbearable and makes us feel sick,” said Parmeela Devi, a resident. “We’ve complained to everyone, but nothing has changed. Sewage keeps mixing with our drinking water.” She added that her children have suffered from fevers, stomach infections, and dengue, with stagnant sewage becoming a breeding ground for mosquitoes. When officials did visit, she said, “they dug up the broken pipe and then told us to replace it ourselves. We can’t really afford it”.

The colony’s iron pipelines, prone to rust and breakage, are at the root of the issue. But garbage disposal has added to the crisis. A vacant plot near the Valley of Animal Park, close to the colony, is being used as an illegal dumping ground by Municipal Corporation (MC) contractors. According to residents, when they objected, the trash was merely buried under mud. Public dustbins have also been removed, and garbage is now collected only once a week. “They took away our dustbins, and now garbage is piling up everywhere,” said Vikas, another resident. “When we complained about the illegal dumping by the MC, they just quietly covered the trash with mud. It’s making our colony dirty and unhealthy.”

Sewage manholes, residents say, are never cleaned properly. “The stench from the leaking sewage makes it impossible to live here,” said Surjeet Kumar. Mandeep



Sharma, who parks behind his building, added, “We file water complaints every day, but nothing changes. Water keeps leaking, and parking is a mess.” A local vendor painted a grim picture: “Moss has started growing in the stagnant sewage water, and the stench is as bad as if hundreds of dead chickens were dumped here”. Frustrated by inaction, some residents have started cleaning gutters themselves. “We have no choice but to do it ourselves,” said one member of a couple clearing a blocked drain outside their home. Vikas pointed to a fresh concern: “MC workers cleaned the gutters once, but then dumped the waste right outside the school boundary.” With broken pipes and blocked drains all around, he warned, “We need immediate action to improve our water systems.”

Area councillor Rajinder Sharma blamed faulty housing board construction, saying sewage and drinking water pipelines were laid parallel and are prone to cross-contamination when cracks appear. He claimed manholes fall under the MC’s jurisdiction, while residents must maintain chambers outside their homes. He also denied allegations of illegal dumping by the MC. But residents remain unconvinced, saying the MC’s actions are inconsistent and inadequate. With the monsoon approaching, they fear the situation will worsen and urge urgent intervention to prevent the outbreak of waterborne diseases.

Mohali police nabs ‘most wanted’ fugitive after 8-round gun battle



GNS News Agency, June 24

A hot pursuit on Lakhnour Road erupted into gunfire Sunday night when CIA Kharar officers cornered Sandeep Kumar, the fugitive named in seven serious cases, including the 26 May Phase-1 murder SSP Harmandeep Hans said the encounter began around 8 pm, directly opposite the Mohali SSP headquarters. “Kumar fired four shots at our team and drove into the roadside thicket. We returned fire eight rounds in total and hit him in the leg. No police personnel were injured.” SSP Hans said, “Police believe Kumar had come to supply narcotics.” A .32-bore pistol and live cartridges were recovered; the .315-bore weapon used in May’s homicide is still missing. Paramedics moved Kumar to Mohali Civil Hospital, where he remains under guard. Hans added that Kumar already faces charges of murder, rape, POCSO offences, kidnapping, arms violations and drug trafficking. His alleged getaway rider in May’s killing, Bablu, was captured in Badauna, Uttar Pradesh, earlier this week. Because Kumar opened fire on officers, a fresh FIR at Sohana Police Station now lists Sections 109, 132, 221 of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita alongside the Arms Act. “Given the gravity of the case, special teams were formed under SP Investigations and SP Operations,” Hans

said. “We tracked Kumar’s movements for days and finally pinned him down. The hunt for his associates and additional weapons continues.” Investigators describe Kumar as a habitual offender previously arrested in Phase-1 and Balongi (Punjab) and Swarghat (Himachal Pradesh) on counts ranging from theft and kidnapping to drug smuggling. SSP Harmandeep Hans said Saturday’s operation struck “a major blow to organised crime in the region”.

Police arrest accused within 24 hrs of stealing disabled man’s phone, cheating him of Rs 1.07 lakh

GNS News Agency, June 24

ahmedabad policeThe accused was identified as Rahul, son of Rambabu, a resident of Ramgarh, District Panchkula. Police in Panchkula have claimed to have arrested a man for stealing a mobile phone from a differently-abled man and fraudulently transferring Rs 1,07,800 from his bank account through UPI. The accused was identified as Rahul, son of Rambabu, a resident of Ramgarh, District Panchkula. The complaint was lodged on June 13, by Mehboob Khan (34), a resident of Ramgarh under the jurisdiction of Chandimandir Police Station. Mehboob, who is differently-abled and minimally educated, works at a clothing store to support his family. On April 19, his mobile phone went missing, following which he promptly reported the loss to the police and got a duplicate SIM card issued. However, during a subsequent visit to his bank, he discovered that a total of Rs 1,07,800 had been withdrawn from his account via multiple UPI transactions without his knowledge.

Madhya Pradesh Minister Vijay Shah’s remarks against Col Sofiya Qureshi: An FIR and an angry High Court



GNS News Agency, June 24

On May 14, the Madhya Pradesh High Court directed the State Police to register a First Information Report (FIR) against Cabinet Minister Vijay Shah for making allegedly inflammatory remarks against Indian Army officer, Colonel Sofiya Qureshi. Agghast at the Minister’s remarks, the Court directed the police to register an FIR against him for offences under Sections 152, 196(1)(b) and 197(1)(c) of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, which are related to acts endangering national unity and promoting enmity between groups.

Though a criminal case was registered against Mr. Shah on the same date at Raikunda village under the Manpur police station limits in Indore (Rural) district, the Court questioned the manner in which the FIR was written. It said that the FIR was “deficient in material particulars of the actions which constitute each of the specific offences” and could be “quashed on a later date”. The Court, therefore, not only directed the police to consider the entire order of May 14 to be read as part of the FIR for all processes, but also decided to monitor the probe so that the police act fairly in accordance with the law without being influenced by any extraneous pressures.While the law relating to the quashing of an FIR is well settled, so is the law relating to the registration of a cognisable offence. Section 171(1) of the BNS states that “every information relating to the commission of a cognisable offence”, if given orally, will be written, and if communicated electronically, will be taken on record by the officer in charge of a police station. So, information pertaining to commission of a cognisable offence must be written in the FIR.

It is common for the police to reproduce the main complaint in the FIR if the complaint is given in writing. Even in a case where preliminary enquiry is conducted into a complaint which does not contain elements of a cognisable offence, the original complaint is reproduced in the FIR along with result of the enquiry. Therefore, though such an FIR may run into pages, the essential elements of an offence are not missed out.It is also prudent to write elements of the cognisable offence in the FIR, which form the basis for application of various sections of the law, because this gives the accused an opportunity to seek bail and apply for other protections under the law.

Common molecule offers clue to making old muscles young again

GNS News Agency, June 24

As we age, it gets harder to recover from a fall, injury or even a tough workout because the body’s muscle-repair system starts to falter. Muscle stem cells (MuSCs), the in-house repair crew, stop dividing and rebuilding tissue, losing their ability to respond to damage.A study in Cell Stem Cell on June 12 suggested this decline may be reversible. The key isn’t some futuristic therapy but a molecule already used in hospitals today.

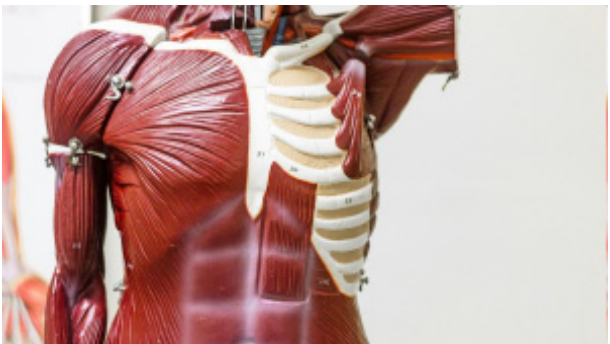
Researchers found that five daily injections of prostaglandin E2 (PGE2), a compound involved in inflammation and used clinically to induce labour, restored muscle stem cell function in aged mice. After treatment, older mice regained the ability to regenerate damaged muscle: their muscle fibres grew larger, muscle mass increased, and strength improved by about 20% compared to their untreated peers.The findings are important because PGE2 is naturally produced in the body, particularly after injury. It signals MuSCs to start repairs in young muscle, but in older tissue this signal fades, leaving stem cells inactive even when needed.After PGE2 treatment, aged stem cells “woke up”, resumed dividing, participated in tissue repair, and helped restore the animals’ muscle strength. Remarkably, these effects lasted at least two weeks beyond the treatment window, suggesting more than just a temporary boost.

Even more strikingly, the outcome held true outside the body. When aged stem cells were treated with PGE2 for just 48 hours in the lab and transplanted into injured muscle, they formed new tissue at levels comparable to young stem cells. Imaging showed that these treated cells engrafted robustly, persisted for weeks, and even expanded in response to subsequent injury — evidence that PGE2 acted directly on the cells themselves, not just their environment.To understand how, the team examined mo-

There are many instances where the FIR has been found wanting in the ingredients of a cognisable offence and as a result, relief was provided by the constitutional courts. In Vinod Dua v. Union of India (2021), the Supreme Court, exercising its powers under Article 32 of the Constitution, quashed the FIR holding that “all the offences set out in the FIR are not made out”. In Arnab Goswami v. the State of Maharashtra (2020), it granted bail to the appellant on the premise that “a prima facie evaluation of the FIR does not establish the ingredients of the offence of abetment of suicide”.The law relating to the quashing of an FIR is well settled. It is intrinsically entwined with the law relating to the writing of an FIR. High Courts can exercise their inherent powers under Section 528 of the BNS to quash an FIR, to prevent abuse of the process of any Court, or otherwise to secure the ends of justice. However, such powers are to be exercised sparingly and with caution.

The Supreme Court, in State of Haryana v. Bhajan Lal (1992), laid down certain guidelines on the circumstances where a High Court can exercise its inherent powers. The first two guidelines under which an FIR can be quashed are relevant to this case. The first guideline says the inherent powers to quash an FIR can be exercised “where the allegations made in the FIR or the complaint, even if they are taken at face value and accepted in their entirety, do not prima facie constitute any offence or make out a case against the accused”. As per the second guideline, an FIR can be quashed “where the allegations in the FIR and other material, if any, accompanying the FIR do not disclose a cognisable offence, justifying an investigation by police officers under Section 156(1) of the Code except under an order of a Magistrate within the purview of Section 155(2) of the Code.” The Code refers to the erstwhile Criminal Procedure Code, and Section 155 pertains to a non-cognisable offence. Other situations include the allegations made in the FIR along with the evidence collected not disclosing the cognisable offence, the FIR disclosing only a non-cognisable offence, the allegations being absurd and inherently improbable, the offences with express legal bar given in the Code or the Act concerned, and criminal cases manifested with mala fide intentions.In the case under consideration by the M.P. High Court, while referring to the links of the video of the Minister’s speech, the FIR states that the “full order dated 14.05.2025 is enclosed”. Thus, if the FIR is challenged for want of sufficient material disclosing commission of a cognisable offence, the enclosed order of the Court cannot be lost sight of.

As per the settled law, the FIR can be quashed only if the Court finds the material deficit after considering the FIR and the enclosed material (the court order in this case) in its entirety.Though it would have been prudent for the police to include relevant parts of the alleged speech which constitute offences mentioned in the FIR, the FIR if read in entirety, is not deficit in the required material. Therefore, the High Court’s harsh comments against the police seem unwarranted and premature.



lecular changes inside the cells. PGE2 reopened regions of the genome that had become inaccessible with age. It also dialed down a stress-related pathway called AP-1, which becomes overactive in aging MuSCs. The molecule reset the cells’ internal programmes, allowing them to act more like their younger selves.

The study adds to an ongoing shift in how scientists think about ageing. For years, researchers believed age-related decline in muscle repair was driven mainly by the environment around stem cells, such as inflammation or scar tissue. But this work adds to evidence that stem cells themselves carry reversible, internal changes, opening the door to therapies that rejuvenate cells directly.The relevance goes far beyond the lab. Sarcopenia affects millions and contributes to frailty, slow recovery, and hospital readmissions in older adults. There are no approved therapies that restore MuSC function. The new study suggests a brief intervention could one day support healing in such situations.More research is required before this therapy can be tested in humans. But by showing that stem cell aging isn’t irreversible, this study also opens a new frontier.

Will Smith says he turned down ‘Inception’ because he didn’t understand the story

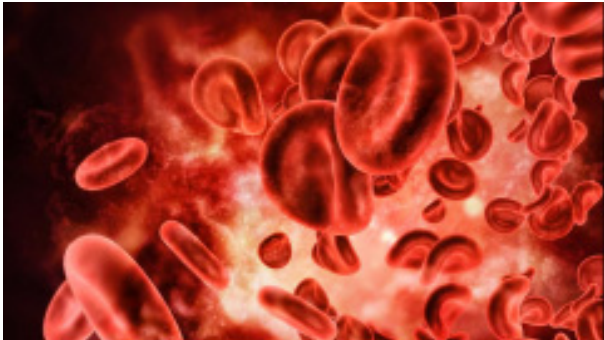
Los Angeles: Star Will Smith took everyone by surprise by sharing that he turned down the lead role of filmmaker Christopher Nolan’s “Inception” because he didn’t “understand the plot”.Smith shared the anecdote during a recent interview with radio station Kiss Xtra (via HuffPost). Hollywood star Leonardo DiCaprio ended up headlining the cerebral action thriller instead, reports variety.com.

“I don’t think I’ve ever said it publicly but I am going to say it because we are opening up to one another,” Smith said.He added: “Chris Nolan brought me ‘Inception’ first and I didn’t get it. I’ve never said that out loud. Now that I think about it, it’s those movies that go into those alternate realities... they don’t pitch well. But I am hurt by those, too.”Nolan’s blockbuster opened in theaters and went on to gross \$839 million at the worldwide box office.Sources revealed at the time that Brad Pitt was actually Nolan’s first choice but he did not commit to the project. Smith was up next, now revealing he didn’t understand the plot. DiCaprio signed on after and ended up with one of his biggest hit movies.While Smith knows rejecting “Inception” was a career blunder, it wasn’t as painful in retrospect as his decision to turn down Neo in “The Matrix.” The part went to Keanu Reeves, which gave him an iconic action franchise.Smith said during the radio interview: “It hurts too bad to talk about.” Smith posted a YouTube video in 2019 explaining why he turned down “The Matrix.”The main rea-



son was because he didn’t connect to the Wachowski siblings’ pitch, which he said was more about their intended directing style and not about the actual story.Smith re-told the pitch as follows: “We’re thinking like... imagine you’re in a fight. You, like, jump. Imagine if you could stop jumping in the middle of the jump. But then, people could see around you 360 degrees while you stop jumping. We’re going to invent these cameras and then people can see the whole jump when you stop in the middle of the jump.”Then there was “Django Unchained,” which Quentin Tarantino offered to him before ultimately going with Jamie Foxx in the title role.

Rising cases of COVID-19 bring to fore associated threat of deep vein thrombosis



India has registered a rise in COVID-19 cases beginning from last week of May this year. As of June 16, the country has 7,264 active cases. The World Health Organisation in its recent report (week of May 19 to 25 2025) that SARS-CoV-2 activity was generally low globally, though elevations have been reported in a few countries in Central America and the Caribbean, Tropical South America, South West and Northern Europe, Western Asia, Southern Asia, South-East Asia, and Eastern Asia.While doctors have stressed that there is no need to panic as a majority of the cases are mild and do not require hospitalisation, this spike in cases, has brought to the fore once again, several associated health risks including deep vein thrombosis (DVT) - both during and after infection.

“This risk of DVT remains elevated even after recovery from Covid-19, with the risk ratio increasing up to 70 days post-infection,” said Anil Bansal, member, Delhi Medical Association (DMA). The risk is particularly high in the first week after diagnosis. While the risk decreases in subsequent weeks, it remains elevated for several weeks post-infection, he added.Deep vein thrombosis (DVT) occurs when a clot forms in one of the deep veins of the body. This usually occurs in the leg. DVT can be dangerous, as the blood clot can break free and travel through the bloodstream. If the blood clot gets lodged in the lung and blocks blood flow, it can lead to pulmonary embolism, which can be life threatening.

Venous thromboembolism (VTE) occurs with deep vein thrombosis (DVT) and pulmonary embolism (PE). It can result in significant mortality, morbidity, and healthcare costs. Approximately 30% of patients with symptomatic VTE manifest with PE, and others with DVT. The incidence of DVT in India in the general population is about 1.79 per thousand. More than 50% of post-surgical procedure patients are at risk of developing VTE. The prevailing notion that the incidence of VTE in Asians is less than that in the Western population has been disproved by recent reports.

Previously, a taskforce report by the National Academy of Medical Sciences (India), Delhi on Venous Thromboembolism had noted that in view of the ageing population of India and the increasing burden of non-communicable diseases along with infectious diseases affecting healthcare service delivery, there is a dire need to understand the early impact on the incidence and burden of deep venous thrombosis (DVT) and pulmonary embolism (PE) in India.Increasing age, being male, trauma, surgery, prolonged hospitalisation, malignancy, neurologic disease, central venous catheter, prior superficial vein thrombosis, and varicose veins have been identified as some of the major risk factors for developing VTE. In women, oral contraceptive pill use, pregnancy, and hormone replacement therapy are established as independent risk factors. Some of the important risk factors for surgical patients developing VTE are age, type of surgery, length of procedure, and duration of immobilisation.The task force stated that appropriate prevention and management of VTE was vital but in India, lack

of trained human resources (healthcare professionals); inadequate laboratory diagnostic support; inadequate availability of pharmaceutical supplies; lack of awareness in the community; need for suitable research along with equitable distribution of facilities for the management of VTE – hamper 100 per cent safety of patients.

Aabid Amin Bhatt, medical director, Ujala Cygnus Group of Hospitals explained that COVID-19 and its link with a higher chance of VTE, including DVT and PE, is now well established.“This link comes from the virus’s ability to cause a strong inflammatory reaction, often called a cytokine storm, which can disrupt the usual way blood clots. Research has found that patients, particularly those in the hospital with severe COVID-19, have a hypercoagulable state, meaning their blood is more likely to clot. The virus also directly harms the endothelial cells that line blood vessels, which further increases the risk of clots forming,” said Dr. Bhat. He added that recent research indicates that even after recovery, individuals who had COVID-19 may remain at an elevated risk for thrombotic events for several months.This has prompted ongoing updates to clinical guidelines recommending thromboprophylaxis (blood thinning treatment) during hospitalisation and, in some cases, even post-discharge. The medical community now regards COVID-19 not just as a respiratory illness, but also as a systemic vascular disease with serious implications for blood clotting and cardiovascular health, he said.Abhishek Bansal, senior consultant and chief interventional radiologist, Aakash Healthcare said that a very high percentage of patients admitted with severe COVID-19 infections were observed to be affected by this condition. “This was noted to be primarily because they had been hospitalised in the ICU for extended periods. Any duration of immobilisation or prolonged bed rest was noted to increase the risk of developing DVT or pulmonary embolism,” he said.Dr. Bansal stressed that COVID-19 vaccines demonstrated that they are highly efficacious in preventing the occurrence of DVT and pulmonary embolism. “At the same time, some concerns had been raised about the vaccines themselves potentially causing DVT in a few individuals. However, it has been clearly documented that this risk is extremely low—estimated at approximately one in 10 lakh (one million) patients. Even in such rare cases, the condition is generally mild. It has been emphasised that if the individual had instead suffered from an actual COVID-19 infection, the risk of developing DVT or pulmonary embolism would have been substantially higher,” he said.

“Anticoagulant medicine have now been added as a standard treatment protocol of Covid-19 and many deaths have been prevented after we established the relationship between the two medical conditions,” noted. Surinder Kumar Gupta, associate director, pulmonology, Paras Health, Panchkula.“The most prevalent variant, LP.8.1, accounted for 27% of all submitted sequences in the week ending on 25 May 2025 which is a decrease from 32% in the week ending on 27 April 2025. NB.1.8.1 accounted for 21% of all submitted sequences in the week ending on 25 May 2025, a significant increase from 9% in the week ending on 27 April 2025,” it said in the recently released data.WHO added that during this reporting period, all other variants showed a stable or decreasing trend.

“Available evidence suggests that JN.1, XEC, LP.8.1, and NB.1.8.1 do not pose additional public health risks relative to other currently circulating SARS-CoV-2 variants,” it said.At the regional level, LP.8.1 decreased in the Americas and the Western Pacific Region, but slightly increased in the European Region. XEC decreased in all regions with sufficient data. NB.1.8.1 increased in the Americas, Europe, and the Western Pacific Region, but decreased in South-East Asia.

What are flue gas desulphurisation units? | Explained

The story so far: On June 4, The Hindu reported that a committee of experts, chaired by Principal Scientific Advisor (PSA) Ajay Sood, has recommended that India do away with a decade-long policy of mandating Flue Gas Desulphurisation (FGD) units in all coal-fired thermal power plants Flue gas is emitted as a byproduct of combustion of fossil fuels. It mainly contains pollutants such as carbon dioxide (CO2), sulphur dioxide (SO2), nitrogen oxides, particulate matter, etc. FGD units specifically target the SO2 emissions in flue gas. SO2 is an acidic gas, and is usually treated with a basic compound in the FGD unit to neutralise the pollutant. There are three common types of FGD systems around the world — dry sorbent injection, wet limestone treatment, and using sea water to remove SO2. The dry sorbent injection method involves adding a powdered sorbent like limestone to the flue gas, where it reacts with SO2. The resultant compound can be removed by using an electrostatic precipitator, or a fabric filter. The wet limestone treatment method also uses limestone to remove SO2, but instead of using it in a powdered form, it uses a limestone slurry. Passing SO2 through this slurry results in the formation of gypsum, which is a stable compound and has wide applications in industries like construction. This is the commonly used technology, and has very high efficiency.Sea water treatment is used in plants located near coastal areas. Sea water first absorbs SO2 from flue gas, and then the water is treated to make it suitable to be discharged back into the sea.

Why are SO2 emissions bad?

SO2 is one of the major greenhouse gases that cause global warming, and can cause respiratory problems in humans. Sulphur dioxide can also lead to the formation of other oxides of sulphur in the atmosphere, which can in turn react with other compounds to form particulate matter. “It has been established in several modelling studies that 15% of India’s ambient PM2.5 is attributable to coal. A significant share of this (80%) is in turn attributable to secondary particulate matter formed from the SO2 that is released when coal is burned. FGDs are absolutely necessary to mitigate this route to PM2.5 formation,” Karthik Ganesan, Fellow and Director - Strategic Partnerships, Council on Energy, Environment and Water told The Hindu.

What’s status of FGD units in India?

In 2015, the Union Environment Ministry issued a policy that mandated all 537 coal-fired TPPs in India to install FGD units to reduce SO2 emissions. The first deadline for this was 2018, but merely a handful of the plants met the deadline. As of April 2025, compliance had been pushed to 2027, 2028, and 2029, respectively, depending on the category of the thermal power plant. It takes around two years to install an FGD unit.According to a government press release dated August 1, 2024, FGD units have been installed in only 39 out of 537 coal-fired TPPs in India. On December 30, 2024, the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC) issued a notification, pushing back the deadline for complying with SO2 emission norms by three years without specifying any reasons. In April 2025, a study com-

missioned by the PSA’s office concluded that the Environment Ministry should roll back its 2015 policy mandating all of India’s TPPs to install FGD units.

Why are FGD units contentious?

Installing FGD units is a costly affair. According to the Central Electricity Authority, FGD costs approximately ₹1.2 crore per MW to install. As of April 2025, India’s installed coal capacity stood at 2,19,338 MW, which is more than 46% of the country’s total electricity installed capacity. This is expected to rise in the coming years. In his statement at a June 10 press conference, Union Power Minister Manohar Lal Khattar said, “About 97,000 MW of power will be added, and implementing FGD means an additional expense of ₹97,000 crore. We have to consider this carefully. Neither should health be harmed, nor people face increased tariffs, nor warming increase.”

However, some researchers like Shruti Sharma, Lead, Affordable Energy, at the International Institute for Sustainable Development, Bengaluru, believe that even though “skipping FGD units may appear to offer short-term savings, it risks undermining India’s clean air targets and public health commitments”. “FGDs can add up to ₹0.72 per kWh to electricity tariffs — a cost that reflects the price of cleaner air. Importantly, over 80% of this increase in tariffs is due to the FGD technology’s fixed costs, and variable cost increase is in all cases less than ₹0.1 per kWh. This limits the risk of volatile or unexpected costs and makes it easier for utilities and regulators to plan and manage the impact,” she said. It’s also tricky to gauge how FGDs make an impact on air quality, since it depends on the proximity of towns to power plants. “The contribution to PM2.5 in Delhi, for example, is not that significant from coal-based power plants but given the levels that Delhi experiences, many sources have to be addressed, and stationary sources are easier to target,” Mr. Ganesan said.

Is there an alternative to FGD?

According to experts, no. “There is no alternative to FGDs itself to remove SO2 that is released from the burning of coal. Washing of coal does not remove the sulphur that is embedded within the physical structure of the coal. India’s coal consumption is likely to rise over the course of this decade and many plants that will remain without FGDs are likely to be older and inefficient ones run by the state-owned electricity generation companies. There is an urgent need to get these also compliant without delaying any further,” Mr. Ganesan said.“While FGD installation raises power tariffs modestly, it also significantly reduces the broader social costs of pollution. Cleaner air lowers household and government spending on healthcare, improves worker productivity, and reduces the economic toll of pollution-related illness. Ultimately, it’s a question of whether we pay a little more upfront for cleaner technology — or continue paying far more through medical bills, lost income, and reduced quality of life,” Ms. Sharma said.Removing FGD mandates will not only spike SO2 concentrations especially in northern .

Why India must uphold stringent standards in cosmetics



Menstrual health literacy: Empowering women through education



Take, for example, the standard for toilet soaps. The Indian Standard (IS) 2888 specifies that toilet soaps must contain a minimum of 76% Total Fatty Matter (TFM) for Grade 1, with lower grades requiring at least 70% and 60% TFM respectively, which guarantees that consumers receive high-quality products that meet safety and performance benchmarks. Unfortunately, some foreign manufacturers, under the guise of promoting global innovation and sustainability, are lobbying for the adoption of horizontal standards—broad, generic guidelines that apply uniformly across product categories. While these horizontal standards may be marketed as progressive, they threaten to undermine the very foundation of India's cosmetics sector. These one-size-fits-all rules lack the detailed parameters necessary to guarantee the safety, quality and performance of individual products, which vary widely in composition and purpose. Should horizontal standards replace the vertical ones, Indian manufacturers—especially SMEs and startups—will be hit hardest. These businesses, which rely on clear, product-specific guidelines to maintain quality and consistency, would struggle to adapt to a new regulatory framework that lacks the specificity they depend on. The switch to horizontal standards would compromise consumer safety. Vertical standards are crafted with a deep understanding of the unique risks and requirements associated with different types of cosmetics. Horizontal standards, by contrast, offer only minimal guidelines, increasing the risk that unsafe or ineffective products could slip through regulatory cracks and reach the market. This poses a serious threat to consumers, who deserve better than to be exposed to potentially harmful or subpar products. India's cosmetic industry, built on the foundation of BIS's vertical standards, has only helped to innovate and create excellent products. This progress must not be undone by the imposition of generic standards that neither serve the interests of the industry nor the consumers. The Indian government must remain vigilant on this and protect a system that has worked so effectively for decades. The demand for cosmetics in India is growing rapidly, and with it, the responsibility to maintain the highest standards of safety and quality. The Bureau of Indian Standards has long been the guardian of these standards, ensuring that Indian consumers can trust the products they use. The push for horizontal standards, however, threatens to dismantle this carefully built system, undermining both the domestic industry and consumer safety. It is imperative that India protects its existing vertical standards and continues to support a thriving, self-reliant cosmetics sector—one that prioritises the well-being of its people over the demands of foreign interests.

ties. Organisations around the globe are working with schools, parents, and community leaders to make this vision come to fruition. When a girl's education and future are not limited by her natural cycle, it creates opportunities for growth that lead to stronger and healthier communities for future generations. The journey toward menstrual health literacy goes beyond simply providing facts; it seeks to restore dignity, promote equality, and affirm that every girl and woman deserves respect and opportunity. For millions of women and girls who face barriers to managing their period cycle safely, every step toward better literacy and access is crucial. This is not only a health issue—it is a human rights issue. Supporting menstrual health literacy means supporting a world where every girl has the right to live her life fully, to dream without fears, and to lead without limit. This is not just about providing sanitary products; it is about inducing self-respect, igniting self-belief, and inspiring a generation to rise above the challenges they face. Menstrual health literacy stands as a revolutionary force, challenging the status quo of lives, communities, and futures. A thunderous call for change is replacing the whispers around periods. By prioritising menstrual health education and resources, society is forging a world where every girl thrives, every woman takes control, and every community reaps the benefits of the active participation of all its members. This is more than a health campaign; it is a bold commitment to humanity, respect, and an unstoppable future.

A whale tooth's journey from the sea to a Copper Age pit

A photograph showing two humpback whales swimming in clear blue water near the surface. The whale on the left is larger and has a prominent white patch on its side. The whale on the right is smaller and darker. Both are moving towards the right side of the frame.

and animal bones. The archaeologists didn't find any human bones inside and thus concluded the pit to be a "structured deposition" meant to remove precious items from everyday use. This is the only sperm-whale tooth found in Copper-Age Spain and only the second in the Western Mediterranean of similar date. Its discovery thus widened the list of rare and prized materials — including elephant ivory, ostrich eggshells, and rock crystals — circulating at Valencia at this time. The burial also showed that coastal objects, even from gigantic sea creatures never seen alive in Ireland.

The team also unraveled four kinds of small tunnels and grooves: made by sponges, marine worms, grazing snails, and burrow-

Volunteering makes everyone part of solutions



In 2018, Kerala faced an unusual southwest monsoon. The torrential rain devastated the state displacing close to a million people, taking over 400 lives. It resulted in damaging 6000 miles of roads, more than 200 bridges and caused around 340 landslides. This was the century’s biggest calamity the state encountered. The state also witnessed phenomenal aid that flew into the state from India and outside in the very first phase itself through non-governmental organisations (NGOs) fuelled by the efforts of its volunteers. Besides this aid flow, a large number of independent and community volunteers worked side by side contributing immense time and efforts with the government in rescue and rehabilitation mission. Whenever the world is hit by a catastrophe or challenge, it’s the volunteers who jump in first to support. The planet today is inhibited by over eight billion people. There are countless socio-economic, and environmental problems humanity face today such as drought, poverty, the climate crisis and war. Volunteering has immense potential to solve many of these. As per statistics, a third of world’s workforce in NGOs are volunteers. A 2022 World’s Volunteerism Report by the United Nations estimates that around 860 million people volunteer every month worldwide. Nonetheless, ‘giving’ as a practice and culture is not uniform across world. Charities Aid Foundation (CAF) that compiled World Giving Index covering 143 countries, in their 2023 report says that Indonesia is the most generous country in the world (sixth year in a row) followed by Ukraine and Kenya, wherein the least generous are Poland followed by Croatia and Yemen. India ranked 43 from top. The three parameters CAF studies under the volunteering umbrella are giving time, efforts and resources. While helping a fellow being is as old as history, individualism and altruism were regarded antagonistic as the former is about self-interest and the later about interest in the wellbeing of others. Social science research points out that it may not be as contradictory as it may sound. The United States (US) is often cited as an example to this as the country is long known for having deep-rooted individualistic values but is also known for its generosity (the US is consistently in the top quintile of the CAF report). There is evidence to believe that both altruism and selfish interests co-exist in people and it’s the circumstances that triggers any one behavior to be dominant. Corporate volunteering programmes (CVPs) under Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) has gained

substantial momentum over the past years. Besides, there are volunteering hours contributed by employees through CVP. A study done by Benevity covering over 12 million people from 473 companies in 18 countries shows that there is a considerable surge in employee engagement when the employees are in volunteering programmes (they are 50% more likely to stay with the company). According to an observation, India has the potential to use about 150 million voluntary hours that can be contributed by its 15 million (approximate) white-collar workforces through appropriate voluntary programmes. The best thing about volunteering is that it has many win-wins. Stakeholder welfare, success and fulfilment are part of the ‘purpose statements’ of many corporates. Volunteering can be one of the means to achieve this. There is evidence that Volunteering Time Off (VTO) can increase productivity. The benefits of volunteering include reduced stress and improved leadership skills. Many corporates agree that mindful volunteering programmes help build employee engagement, stakeholder trust and brand perception. The general rise in volunteering that involves giving time, efforts, skills and money is a reassurance of hopeful optimism. According to neuroscience, an act of kindness and generosity releases endorphin, a hormone that provides happiness and contentment. Giving also improves self-confidence and provides meaning and purpose to life. However, there are a few gaps in the volunteering paradigm that can be impediment to the growth of good volunteering culture in societies. There are concerns regarding volunteers being used as unpaid workers as the line between genuine volunteerism and free labour is thin. Long durations of voluntary work and unsafe working conditions pause the question of good voluntary practices. According to the US Bureau of Labor Statistics, voluntary workers are three times more likely to have fatal injuries when working in a fire site. Besides, there are instances of commercial organisations using volunteers to get their own work done. Appropriate law and regulations can bring in clarity on the purpose and sanctity of volunteering practices. Providing volunteers with a great experience is a crucial part of building a volunteering culture. Corporates can do this by substantiating a demographically diverse workforce providing them with volunteering opportunities where varied skills can be used. VTO as a practice would communicate the genuine interest of the corporates in social impact. What is important is to focus on ethical volunteering programmes. Volunteering programmes created and initiated by schools can place the students at the center of ‘experiencing’ the same leading to valuable skills and leadership development. If not guided properly, students may develop an ‘opportunistic mindset’ on volunteering (as universities and employers place certain preferences over students with volunteering background). Further, the role of families cannot be undermined in instilling the value of volunteering among children. According to a previous UN report, the global economic value of volunteering is around \$1.4 trillion. As we celebrate another International Volunteers Day on the December 5, ‘volunteering makes people part of the solutions’ as a theme is compelling.

MDB reforms in the slow lane: Findings from a Global Survey of Experts, 2024



The current set of multilateral development banks (MDBs) needs to become bigger, bolder and better, to address the global challenges of the 21st century. The Independent Experts Group (IEG) established under the Indian G20 presidency, made 30 recommendations to make MDBs operationally effective (“better”), mitigate the financial risks facing their borrowers (“bolder”), and triple their lending capacity (“bigger”). Although the G20 has addressed MDB reforms before, the effort under the Indian presidency marked a significant push for comprehensive, transformational change, including a clear implementation timeline. Given the long-term nature of MDB reforms, it is crucial to track progress as well as capture the perception of stakeholders on the pace and scope of their reforms. Thus, a global survey of experts — comprising from academia, think tanks, CSOs, government, private sector and existing and former employees of MDBs — was carried out, to capture

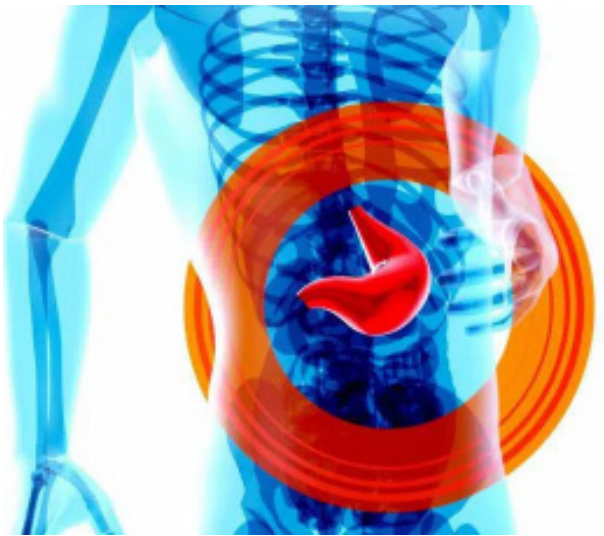
the perception of experts on the current state of MDB reforms. This survey, led by researchers from the Indian Council for Research on International Economic Relations (ICRIER), in close coordination with Brookings, the Centre for Global Development (CGD), and the Overseas Development Institute (ODI), was carried out in February and March 2024. The questionnaire was based on the IEG recommendations and had 30 questions grouped under five components where reforms were seen as essential to streamline the transformation of the MDB system, namely, vision and mission, making MDBs better banks, bolder bank and bigger bank, and establishing a monitoring mechanism. While existing surveys have focused on developmental impact of MDB’s operation, this is the first survey that seeks the views of experts on MDB reform process agreed by the G20. The online survey questionnaire was sent out to 350 experts worldwide, many of whom were previously consulted for the IEG reports. In total, 69 responses were received from 15 countries, representing eight professional affiliation categories. Of the respondents, 55% were from Part I (donor) countries and 45% from Part II (EMDEs) countries. Nearly one-third of the respondents were “insiders”, which include the current employees of MDBs, Board of Directors of MDBs and Executive Directors of MDBs, and the remaining two-thirds classified themselves as “outsiders”, namely those who have no direct or indirect affiliation with the MDBs. Regarding familiarity with MDB reforms, particularly the IEG’s recommendations, 68% of respondents reported being highly familiar, while 32% indicated a moderate to low level of familiarity.

High-fat dairy products may increase risk of fatty liver disease: Study

New Delhi: Eating high-fat dairy products which include whole milk, cream, frozen yoghurt, butter, and ghee, may increase the risk of fatty liver disease, according to a study. The study, published in the Journal of Hepatology Reports, showed that low-medium fat dairy products such as skimmed milk, cottage cheese, and low-fat cheese may be protective, and should be preferred over high-fat dairy to prevent Metabolic dysfunction-associated steatotic liver disease (MASLD).

MASLD is related to nutrition, but evidence of an association between high-fat and low-fat dairy products is lacking. To fill the gap, a team of researchers from the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, in Israel, evaluated this association by performing experimental studies in mice and an observational human study. They found that low-medium fat low-sugar dairy products are more protective than high-fat dairy. In general, high-fat diets may be harmful.

“It would be advisable to prefer low-fat low-sugar dairy products and minimise intake of high-fat dairy products; however, additional evidence is needed to allow generalisability of our findings,” the researchers said. In the animal study, 6-week-old male mice were fed a high-fat diet (HFD) consisting of lard, soybean oil, and milk fat for 12 weeks. All HFDs induced similar weight gain and steatosis and did not affect liver enzymes. Milk fat increases serum cholesterol and advanced glycation end-products (AGEs) levels more than lard or soybean oil. Further, in 316 patients, the team found that high consumption of low-medium fat low-sugar dairy products was associated with a



“It would be advisable to prefer low-fat low-sugar dairy products and minimise intake of high-fat dairy products; however, additional evidence is needed to allow generalisability of our findings,” the researchers said. In the animal study

lower risk for MASLD incidence. “Constantly high consumption of high-fat low-sugar dairy products was associated with greater odds for new onset/persistence of MASLD”. However, the team found that neither low-medium nor high-fat dairy consumption was related to fibrosis.

Gujarat lions tamed for tourism, drives conflict in Saurashtra, finds new study



Private tourism hotspots, where lions are often baited, are leading to increased conflicts between humans and Asiatic lions in Gujarat’s Saurashtra region, according to a new study published in Conservation Biology, a science journal. The research, conducted by Keshab Gogoi, Kausik Banerjee, Stotra Chakrabarti, Anirudh Pratap Singh, and Y.V. Jhala between 2012-2017 and recently released in the journal, revealed a complex dynamic between lions and humans, across a 30,000 square km landscape, shaped by history and economics.

Analysing 11,901 compensation claims, covering 14,099 livestock kills across 1,092 villages, the study found that these community tourism hotspots (CTHs) where locals conduct unregulated lion tours on private land had far reaching effects. The study found that proximity to these areas best explained (68.9%) the variability in the spatial occurrence of conflict. These tourism hotspots, where lions are often baited with livestock for visitor viewing, create risks extending up to 15 km around them. The Gujarat forest department (GFD) pays compensation for livestock predation and for human injuries or deaths in attacks by carnivores. The researchers collected records of compensation from all forest divisions and forest ranges for 2012-2017 for livestock and from 2011-2017 for humans in the lion landscape. “Areas of high lion conflict were in the proximity of CTH and lion refuge patches. These attack hotspots extended up to 15 km and 10 km for livestock and human attacks, respectively, from CTH. Baiting of lions is often practiced at these CTHs, and such provisioning can cause lions to lose the fear of humans and impede the learning of hunting techniques in juvenile lions, consequently resulting in adult lions becoming habituated to humans and losing their wild instincts,” the study said.

The study ‘Deciphering the enigma of human-lion co-existence in India’ examined compensation records for livestock from 2012-2017, with 91.38% of all recorded claims occurring outside protected areas. Based on a sample of 292 respondents, researchers estimated that 95% of livestock predation events resulted in compensation claims. While the GFD regulates official lion tourism within the Gir Protected Area, high demand for less restricted viewing has led to this parallel tourism economy. Compensation claims peaked during monsoon and winter months, according to the study. The findings suggested that while these tourism spots provide income for local communities, their unregulated nature poses risks to both humans and lions. The re-

searchers recommend bringing these sites under proper legal oversight to maintain their economic benefits while reducing potential dangers.

“Lion tourism in CTHs should be legalised with controlled mechanisms in place. Remember, economic incentive is a key driver as why humans are tolerant of lions in Gujarat. Conservation and Community Reserves under the wildlife protection act is one way to do it,” said Y.V. Jhala, a leading wildlife expert and one of the study’s authors. “Currently, people conducting illegal lion shows use livestock as bait and then claim government compensation for these losses. Essentially, taxpayer money is subsidising these illegal activities.” The second factor that contributes to the animal-human conflict is the density of lions (24.2%) as areas of low lion density, which are typically human-dominated landscapes outside Gir Protected Areas, showed higher probability of livestock predation than areas with high lion density inside the protected areas, as per the study. The research showed distinct seasonal patterns - livestock predation increased during monsoon (July-October) and winter (November-February), while human incidents peaked in summer months. Another important aspect of the study is that 61.86% of 1,434 surveyed communities in Saurashtra region showed tolerance towards Asiatic lions despite risks of conflict. The Maldhari communities have lived inside protected areas with lions for over 150 years while some communities near Gir have a three-decade history of coexistence. “This coexistence is related to a mix of sociocultural tolerance, enforced legal protection, government compensation, and mutual adaptation of humans and lions to each other,” the study noted. Economic status significantly influenced attitudes - wealthy respondents were 5.75 times more likely to tolerate lions compared to economically poor respondents. “Economically well-off people rarely need to deal with lions at a personal level and thus can tolerate them in the neighborhood. Whereas livestock herders, one of the most economically impoverished strata in the society, confront lions on a daily basis to the detriment of their livelihoods and thus have a more negative attitude,” according to the research paper. The lion population has grown significantly since the study period. The last census carried out in 2020 recorded 674 lions, up from 523 in 2015 - a 29% rise in five years. These lions inhabit not just the Gir National Park and Sanctuary but have spread across several districts of Saurashtra, including Girnar, Mitiyala, and Pania Sanctuaries, coastal areas, and adjoining regions of Amreli and Bhavnagar districts.

Trigger-happy teens strike terror in NE Delhi

And he’s unapologetic. Brash, even. He flaunts his crimes on Instagram for an audience of thousands. His feed brims with bravado, showcasing weapons, taunts and an unsettling confidence. Now 17, the boy is a core member of the infamous “Makoka 315” gang – a chilling assembly of minors that has unleashed terror in northeast Delhi. They revel in violence — shootings, stabbings, and killings — and flaunt their exploits online. The gang’s name is a nod to the stringent Maharashtra Control of Organised Crime Act, also known as MCOCA, a law meant to crush criminal syndicates. The “315” refers to the bore of the crude pistols they wield with unnerving ease, says a Delhi Police head constable tracking the gang and working to dismantle their functioning. Their crimes have cast shadows over northeast Delhi: a shooting at Guru Teg Bahadur (GTB) Hospital, the November 9 murder of a 24-year-old in Kabir Nagar, a stabbing in Jafrabad, and countless firings in crowded neighbourhoods. They frequently boast of their crimes on social media and post videos of themselves going to observation homes and appearing in courts. Dressed in blue jeans and a red shirt with the words “Gangsta” emblazoned subtly across, the boy, who asked not to be named, screamed languidity. He boasted of the three murder cases against him with disinterest. “Yes, we do it (crime). We go to jail and come back in a few months. What’s the worry?” he said, scrolling through his phone. The minor declined to reveal where the gang gets its weapons. “I can’t share such details with you”. On whether he lives with his parents, the boy said: “I show them my face occasionally... that’s enough... I don’t want the life they live.” During the conversation, the boy, who is mostly hooked to Instagram where he has 3,000 followers, says that he operates social media handles for two of his friends in “Bachcha Jail” — their nomenclature for observation homes — ensuring that their infamy doesn’t wane. “We make videos in advance and post them regularly. It’s important for our clout in the area and generally in our circuits” he said. In 2020, three minors, aged between 13 and 16, including the 13-year-old mentioned above, shot a gym trainer in Jafrabad over a petty insult. “The trainer slapped one of the boys and they saw this as an opportunity to establish their clout in the area. They went to his house and shot him,” the officer said. Around the same time, two teenagers — aged 16 and 17, both social media-savvy residents of Seelampur and Vijay Park — murdered an ice cream seller in Yamuna Vihar. It was their way of “announcing their arrival in Delhi’s underworld”, said investigators. Around the same time, two teenagers — aged 16 and 17, both social media-savvy residents of Seelampur and Vijay Park — murdered an ice cream seller in Yamuna Vihar. It was their way of “announcing their arrival in Delhi’s underworld”, said investigators. A year later, aged 14, he fired outside a house in Welcome area. The same year, he was



allegedly involved in murdering a police informant in Maujpur. He was apprehended and sent to an observation home, but released in a few months. Investigators said that gangs seek out minors to carry out heinous crimes like murders as well as petty thefts because they are sent to observation homes only for four to six months before being released. The fact that the cycle of events — from a juvenile committing the crime to his apprehension, time spent in an observation home and subsequent release — is less time consuming makes minors easy hires. In 2023, aged 16, he was involved in a firing and robbery incident with some friends in a club in Karol Bagh. “We believe the gang was formed in early 2023 when all these minors who committed murders joined hands and started operating under the name Makoka 315,” the officer cited above said. The officer said that they live in the same neighbourhood where they got acquainted and decided to “work together”. The gang was earlier headed by a 21-year-old man who was arrested in July in the GTB shooting case. But now, it is headed by a 17-year-old currently lodged at an observation home where he was sent after his involvement in a murder on November 9. These minors quickly became pawns in the broader nexus of Delhi’s gang wars. “The 21-year-old (mentioned above) is closely associated with this gang, but he has since formally joined the Hashim Baba gang,” the officer said. Links to Hashim Baba: Their exploits caught the attention of the Hashim Baba gang, one of the city’s most feared criminal networks, linked to notorious gangster Lawrence Bishnoi. Makoka 315, by their own admission and according to police probe findings, operates as an auxiliary of the Hashim Baba group. “The gang’s links to Hashim Baba were known for a long time, but it was established during the investigation of GTB shooting. The former head (the 21-year-old) of the Makoka gang was tasked with the hit job,” said the head constable cited above. Its members, most still in their teens, carry out murders, robberies, and intimidation for as little as 15,000–20,000 — a pittance compared to what seasoned gangsters charge.

Meta appoints Arun Srinivas as India head



Meta on Monday (June 16, 2025) appointed Arun Srinivas as Managing Director and Head for Meta in India with effect from July 1, 2025, the company said in a post on Facebook. He is currently Meta's Director and Head of Ads Business in India. As part of his new job, Mr Srinivas would focus on bringing the organisation's business, innovation and revenue priorities together to serve partners and clients, while continuing to support the long-term growth of Meta's business and commitment to India, the post said.

"He will spearhead the India charter and strengthen the strategic relationships with the country's leading brands, advertisers, developers and partners to drive growth for India as a market," it said. According to the Meta, Mr Srinivas's appointment follows the recent announcement of Sandhya Devanathan taking on an expanded role of leading both India and South East Asia. He will transition to his new role from July 1, 2025, and will continue to report to Sandhya Devanathan, vice-president (India and South East Asia), Meta.

IT major Genpact's 10-hour workday announcement triggers backlash

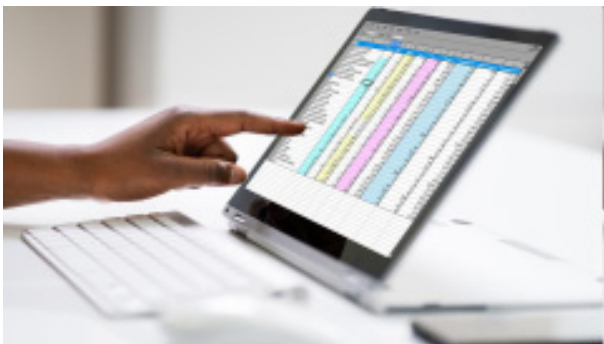
Technology and services major Genpact's decision to increase daily work hours to ten has triggered a backlash from its employees and human resource (HR) experts, who say the move undermines progressive workplace values. A large number of employees have taken to social media to slam the decision. The change, announced internally 20 days ago, has left many employees unsettled. At one of the company's Hyderabad offices, an employee described the mood as tense. "I used to log in at 12 p.m. and wrap up by 9 p.m., and even that was exhausting. Now, with the new policy, I'll have to start at 11 a.m.," the employee said, requesting anonymity.

According to Genpact employees in Hyderabad, the implementation is scheduled in the middle of June. "When the decision was announced, we hoped they might reconsider after 15 days. But that didn't happen and now it is too late," the employee added. Under the new system, the employees explained, 'productivity' will be monitored through an internal portal that tracks daily active hours. "If I clock the allotted time, I earn 500 points per month, which is worth ₹3,000. We have been told that 5% of it, which is ₹150 in my case, will be paid for the additional time. It hardly feels like an incentive."

A senior employee involved in hiring said on the condition of anonymity: "The work pressure is intense, and attrition is rising. I'm seeing experienced staff walking out everyday and new faces being hired. What's worse is that this 10-hour policy isn't even official. It's passed through managers and agents. If you question it, you're branded with 'behavioural issues' and let go. Earlier, HR maintained transparency in hiring numbers. Now, even that's controlled entirely by management." Concerns have also been aired on social media platforms. "This absolutely pathetic and company increased working hours to 10, without increasing salary," wrote one Reddit user. "Not just that, you have to complete 'WAM' that basically is an abusive tool which

"As India continues to be at the forefront of economic growth and innovation, we are excited to have Arun at the helm of our efforts in this critical market. Meta in India is leading the way in AI adoption, WhatsApp, and Reels, and Arun's impressive track record of building high-performing teams, driving product innovation, and fostering strong partnerships makes him the ideal leader to drive Meta's continued investment in the country," said Ms Devanathan. Since joining the company in 2020, Mr Srinivas has played a pivotal role in leading Meta's work with the country's largest advertisers and agency partners focusing on strategic revenue priorities such as AI, Reels, and Messaging, it said.

According to information available on LinkedIn, Mr Srinivas comes with close to three decades of experience in sales and marketing leadership roles in various companies. He started his career as a product manager for Reebok in 1996. He worked with Unilever as a branch sales manager and stayed in the company for more than 15 years until he became the vice-president of Foods South Asia. In 2017, Mr Srinivas left Unilever and joined Bengaluru-based WestBridge Capital Partners as an operating advisor. In 2019, he joined Ola as chief operating officer (COO) and global CMO, and stayed in the company until he joined Meta in 2020. Before heading Meta's India ads business, he was director and head of Meta's global business group from September 2020 to September 2022. He completed his Bachelor of Science degree from the University of Madras in 1993 and finished a PGDM in Marketing from the Indian Institute of Management (IIM) Calcutta in 1996. He also did a course in executive education in strategic customer management in 2007 from the U.S.-based Northwestern University - Kellogg School of Management.



logs keystrokes. You have to maintain 9 hrs of those out of 10 now, or you get warning mails. 3-4 of such emails and they deduct your bonus and kill appraisals (sic)," the user added.

A veteran in the IT-enabled services sector, who began his career at Genpact more than two decades ago, said the decision contradicts the values the company was built on. "I worry this will influence other firms, especially local companies, to follow suit. HR has failed to act as a voice of reason here," he said. Executive search consultant Achyut Menon said the policy reflects a broader post-pandemic shift in corporate strategy. "After giving big salary hikes during the pandemic, companies now think they overpaid. So, they're bringing in harsh policies like extended hours and strict office mandates to make employees leave voluntarily, while hiring cheaper replacements on the side," he explained. Mr. Menon added that automation is accelerating this trend. "Longer hours are not the answer. The future belongs to organisations that invest in skill-building, purposeful work, fair compensation and respect for work-life integration, not those that demand more time for marginally more pay."

Why have special economic zones rules been relaxed? | Explained



The story so far: The Government of India has been taking various steps to boost the production of semiconductors and electronics in India, in a bid to reduce our dependence on imports. Some previous measures include the Semicon India programme launched in 2022 with an outlay of ₹76,000 crore. Now, the government has gone a step further and has relaxed key rules related to Special Economic Zones (SEZs) to further encourage the domestic manufacture of semiconductors and electronics.

Why are semiconductors important?

Semiconductors lie at the heart of an increasingly electronic society, with AI and machine learning only the latest in a long trend of increased digitisation and automation. Semiconductors are the tiny chips processing vast amounts of in-

formation that make all of these processes possible, in one's phone, computer, tablet, smart TV, smart speaker, car, and every other electronic gadget. According to the Semiconductor Industry Association, China accounted for about 35% of all semiconductors manufactured in the world in 2021. Following the COVID-19 pandemic, much of the world, including India, realised that the concentration of supply chains in one country posed huge risks for any country dependent on those supplies. Therefore, they started trying to boost the domestic manufacture of such key components.

What are the latest steps by the Indian government?

On June 9, the Ministry of Commerce and Industry announced that it had notified several modifications to the Special Eco-

nomic Zones (SEZ) Rules, 2006, a week earlier, to enhance the domestic manufacture of semiconductors. One of these tweaks was to Rule 5, which dealt with the size of the SEZ. Earlier, an SEZ set up exclusively for the manufacture of semiconductors or electronic components needed a minimum contiguous land area of 50 hectares. This has now been significantly reduced to 10 hectares. This reduced size will allow companies to make smaller investments but still avail of SEZ benefits such as tax exemptions, duty-free imports, and infrastructure support. Another amendment to Rule 7 of the SEZ Rules now allows the Board of Approval for SEZs to relax the condition that had required SEZ land to be "encumbrance-free". Land is deemed to be encumbrance-free if it does not have any legal claims, liens,

or charges against it, and when clear title of ownership and transfer can be established. With India's complicated and often-archaic land record mechanisms, and lengthy legal processes, such a requirement would have stymied a lot of SEZs. Relaxing this rule will allow SEZs to come up faster. A third amendment was to Rule 18, allowing SEZ units in semiconductor and electronics component manufacturing to supply domestically, after paying the applicable duties. Conventionally, SEZs are exclusively export-oriented. Allowing domestic sales not only shields the SEZs from the ongoing global trade uncertainty, but also ensures a steady supply to the domestic market itself.

What has been the impact?

Given the changes are so recent, one can't immediately establish long-term impacts. However, following the tweaks, two new SEZs have already been approved with a total investment of ₹13,000 crore. Micron Semiconductor Technology India will establish an SEZ facility in Sanand, Gujarat for the manufacture of semiconductors with an estimated investment of ₹13,000 crore, while Hubballi Durable Goods Cluster, a part of the Aegus Group, will establish an SEZ facility for the manufacture of electronic components in Dharwad, Karnataka, at a cost of ₹100 crore.

How should sexual abuse survivors be treated? | Explained



The story so far: The Delhi High Court recently issued a series of guidelines to streamline procedures in hospitals involving Medical Termination of Pregnancy (MTP) cases including sexual assault survivors, after finding that miscommunication, and administrative lapses had resulted in the denial of timely medical care to a minor rape survivor.

What was the case?

Justice Swarna Kanta Sharma issued the guidelines while adjudicating upon the plea of a 17-year-old rape survivor who had been taken to the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS), Delhi, for medical examination and termination of pregnancy. Although accompanied by a police officer following the registration of an FIR, hospital authorities initially refused to conduct an ultrasound, citing the absence of identity documents. The matter was then referred to the Child Welfare Committee (CWC), which directed the hospital to proceed with the termination and submit a status report. However, the hospital continued to insist on identity proof and age verification through an ossification test. The ultrasound was eventually carried out after a CWC member personally intervened. By that time, the minor was found to be approximately 25 weeks and 4 days pregnant. The hospital then declined to convene a medical board, contending that a court order was required as the pregnancy appeared to exceed the 24-week statutory limit prescribed under the Medical Termination of Pregnancy (MTP) Act, 1971. Following the court's intervention, a seven-member medical board was finally constituted at AIIMS to assess the feasibility of terminating the pregnancy. After conducting an ultrasound, the board determined that the gestational age of the foetus was 23 weeks and 4 days, and that the survivor was physically and mentally fit to undergo the procedure. This contradicted the hospital's earlier record, which had put the gestational age at 25 weeks and 4 days. The court noted with anguish that no explanation was provided for this discrepancy.

What directions were issued to hospitals?

The court observed that when an investigating officer presents a sexual assault survivor for medical examination, along with the official case file and FIR details, separate identity verification may be dispensed with. It further stressed that in cases involving minors, procedural safeguards applicable to routine diagnostic cases should not be applied rigidly or mechanically. Justice Sharma directed that

in all cases where a rape or sexual assault survivor is found to be pregnant, a comprehensive medical examination must be conducted without delay. In instances where the gestational age appears to exceed 24 weeks, hospital administrations were instructed to immediately constitute a medical board to conduct the necessary examination and submit a status report to the appropriate authorities without awaiting specific court orders. Hospitals were also directed to ensure that updated Standard Operating Procedures and relevant legal guidelines are readily accessible in both Emergency and Gynaecology Departments, and that duty doctors are regularly briefed and sensitised on their obligations under the MTP Act, the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act, and other binding directives issued by the Supreme Court and High Courts.

The court further mandated that quarterly training programmes be organised for doctors and medical staff in coordination with legal aid bodies such as the Delhi State Legal Services Authority and the Delhi High Court Legal Services Committee (DHCLSC). Each government hospital was also directed to designate a nodal officer to oversee MTP cases and related medico-legal processes, serving as a single point of contact for the CWC, investigating officers, and the courts. Additionally, consent for MTP procedures was to be obtained from the survivor or her guardian, in a language they fully comprehend, such as Hindi or English.

What was the Delhi police instructed to do?

The court directed the Delhi Police to ensure that investigating officers handling POCSO and sexual assault cases undergo mandatory training every six months, with a focus on MTP procedures, court orders, and coordination with medical and welfare authorities. Certificates of completion are to be duly recorded in the officers' service files. Police officers were also instructed to ensure that sexual assault survivors are presented before the concerned doctor, hospital, or medical board at the earliest opportunity, along with all requisite case files.

What were the guidelines issued earlier?

On April 17, Justice Sharma issued guidelines for CWCs and the DHCLSC to prevent delays in such cases, while hearing a plea involving a minor sexual assault survivor seeking termination of a pregnancy beyond 27 weeks. She directed that whenever a minor survivor with a gestational age exceeding 24 weeks is referred by the CWC to a hospital for examination or termination, the CWC must immediately notify the DHCLSC. Upon receiving such information, the DHCLSC shall promptly assess the need for legal intervention, including approaching the competent court for permission to terminate the pregnancy, so as to avoid further delay. Earlier, in January 2023, the judge mandated that during the medical examination of a sexual assault survivor, a urine pregnancy test must be conducted. If the survivor is found pregnant and is an adult seeking termination, the investigating officer must ensure that she is presented before the medical board on the same day. State governments were also ordered to ensure that medical boards are constituted in the hospitals.

What happens to our skin when we take hot shower?

As the weather gets cooler, many of us turn to hot showers and baths to warm up and wind down. But what actually happens to your skin when you have really hot showers or baths? Your skin is your largest organ, and has two distinct parts: the epidermis on the outside, and the dermis on the inside. The epidermis is made up of billions of cells that lay in four layers in thin skin (such as on your eyelids) and five layers in thick skin (such as the sole of your foot).

The cells (keratinocytes) in the deeper layers are held together by tight junctions. These cellular bridges make waterproof joints between neighbouring cells. The cells on the outside of the epidermis have lost these cellular bridges and slough off at a rate of about 1,000 cells per one centimetre squared of skin per hour. For an average adult, that's 17 million cells per hour, every day. Under the epidermis is the dermis, where we have blood vessels, nerves, hair follicles, pain receptors, pressure receptors and sweat glands. Together, the epidermis and dermis (the skin): protect you from ultraviolet radiation from the Sun— synthesise vitamin D3, which helps your intestines absorb calcium protect you against bacteria, parasites, fungi and viruses regulate your body temperature via the dilation of blood vessels and sweat glands releasing sweat help display how we're feeling (think, for example, of blushing or goosebumps) allow us to feel sensations such as touch, pressure, pain and temperature. So, your skin is important and worth looking after. Washing daily can help prevent disease, and really hot baths often feel lovely and can help you relax. That said, there are some potential downsides. Normally we have lots of healthy organisms called Staphylococcus epidermidis on the skin. These help increase the integrity of our skin layers (they make the bonds between cells stronger) and stimulate production of anti-microbial proteins.

These little critters live in an acidic environment, such as the skin's normal pH of between 4-6. If the skin pH increases to around 7 (neutral), Staphylococcus epidermidis' nasty cousin Staphylococcus aureus — also known as golden staph — will try to take over and cause infections. Having a hot shower or bath can increase your skin's pH, which may ultimately benefit golden staph. Being immersed in really hot water also pulls a lot of moisture from your dermis, and makes you lose water via sweat.

This makes your skin drier, and causes your kidneys to excrete more water, making more urine. Staying in a hot bath for a long time can reduce your blood pressure, but increase your heart rate. People with low blood pressure or heart problems should speak to their doctor before having a long hot shower or bath. Heat from the shower or bath can activate the release of cytokines (inflammatory molecules), histamines (which are involved in allergic reactions), and increase the number of sensory nerves. All of this can lead to itchiness after a very hot shower or bath. Some people can get hives (itchy raised bumps that look red on lighter skin and brown or purple on darker skin) after hot showers or baths, which is a form of chronic inducible urticaria. It's fairly rare and is usually managed with antihistamines. People with sensitive skin or chronic skin conditions such as urticaria, dermatitis, eczema, rosacea, psoriasis or acne should avoid really hot showers or baths. They dry out the skin and leave these people more prone to flare ups. The skin on your hands or feet is least sensitive to hot and cold, so always use your wrist, not your hands, to test water temperature if you're bathing a child, older person, or a disabled person. The skin on your but-



tocks is the most sensitive to hot and cold. This is why sometimes you think the bath is OK when you first step in, but once you sit down it burns your bum. You might have heard women like hotter water temperature than men but that's not really supported by the research evidence. However, across your own body you have highly variable areas of thermal sensitivity, and everyone is highly variable, regardless of sex. Making the most of moisturising Moisturising after a hot bath or shower can help, but check if your moisturiser is up to the task. To improve the skin barrier, your moisturiser needs to contain a mix of:— an emollient such as ceramides, squalanes or dimethicone (emollients incorporate themselves into the lipid barrier in the epidermis to reduce water loss)— a humectant such as glycerin or hyaluronic acid (humectants draw moisture from the dermis into the epidermis)— an occlusive such as petroleum jelly or Vaseline, mineral oil, or cocoa butter (occlusives reduce water loss through the skin and increase the production of anti-microbial peptides). Not all moisturisers are actually good at reducing the moisture loss from your skin. You still might experience dryness and itchiness as your skin recovers if you've been having a lot of really hot showers and baths. If you're itching after a hot shower or bath, try taking cooler, shorter showers and avoid reusing sponges, loofahs, or washcloths (which may harbour bacteria). You can also try patting your skin dry, instead of rubbing it with a towel. Applying a hypoallergenic moisturising cream, like sorbolene, to damp skin can also help. If your symptoms don't improve, see your doctor.

Deepfakes and Democracy — truth in the age of hyperrealism

In the long battle between truth and falsehood, the latest and most formidable weapon is no longer misinformation but hyperrealism. Deepfakes — AI-generated images, videos, and audio that mimic real people with uncanny precision, are fast becoming the frontline threat to democratic integrity. They don't just bend the truth. They manufacture it, pixel by pixel.

Unlike traditional forms of political propaganda, which rely on half-truths and selective editing, deepfakes fabricate entire realities. A political leader declaring war, a judge accepting bribes, a journalist confessing to bias, none of it need actually happen.

All it takes is a few hours of training an AI model on publicly available content, and the result can be indistinguishable from reality. In a hyperconnected world where perception often trumps fact, that is a dangerous prospect.

R Ashwin accused of ball-tampering by Madurai Panthers; TNPL asks franchise to show proof



With the allegations against Ashwin being severe, the TNPL's CEO Prasanna Kannan has asked the franchise to show proof of the incidents. (Image credit: TNPL) With the allegations against Ashwin being severe, the TNPL's CEO Prasanna Kannan has asked the franchise to show proof of the incidents.

A day after Madurai Panthers team officially wrote to the Tamil Nadu Premier League (TNPL) that R Ashwin and his team Dindigul Dragons allegedly tampered with the ball during their match on June 14, the organisers have demanded the franchise to provide evidence for the same. In their complaint to TNPL, the Madurai franchise has alleged that the defending champions used towels treated with chemicals that resulted in the ball getting heavier and produced metallic sound when it came into contact with the bat. With the allegations being severe, the TNPL's CEO Prasanna Kannan has asked the franchise to show proof of the incidents.

"They have filed a complaint, which we have acknowledged. Though they have to lodge any complaints within 24 hours of the game, we have still accepted it and have asked them to furnish proof of their allegations. We will be forming an independent committee if we find there is any truth to their allegations. Without sufficient evidence, it is wrong to put forth such allegations against a player and another franchise. If they don't provide any evidence, then Madurai will face due sanctions," Prasanna told.

In the letter to TNPL, the Madurai franchise COO S Mahesh wrote: "A serious case of ball tampering occurred during our recent match against Dindigul Dragons. Despite repeated warnings, the Dindigul team blatantly tampered with the ball, using towels that appeared to have been treated with chemicals." With the tournament coinciding with the monsoon season, the matches have been hampered by rain. The said fixture began after a brief delay following a short downpour in Salem, following which Madurai batted first and made 150/8 in 20 overs, which Dindigul overhauled in 12.3 overs and 9 wickets to spare. Ashwin had gone wicketless with the ball before scoring 49 as an opener. It is understood that factoring the wet outfield conditions, the Tamil Nadu Cricket Association provides towels to each of the franchises and players are allowed to use it to dry the ball only in front of the umpires. "They have to dry the ball only using the towels provided by TNPL. And every time the ball is hit for a six or immediately after a dismissal and over-break, umpires regularly check the ball and they didn't find any issue with the ball during the said match," Kannan said.

WR Chess claim FIDE World Blitz Team Championship title after controversial replay of lost quarter-final match

GNS News Agency, June 24

After controversially making it to the title round, WR Chess claimed their second title at the FIDE World Blitz Team Championship on Sunday after edging past KazChess in both matches with 4:2 scoreline. This is the team's second blitz crown since the competition began in 2023. Rating favourites Team WR Chess beat KazChess in a tight final, with Alireza Firouzja, Hikaru Nakamura and Maxime Vachier-Lagrave scoring crucial wins in the final match to secure the crown.

There was some controversy in the way WR Chess had claimed the title. In the quarter-finals, WR Chess had been handed a 2-4 defeat by Germany and Friends in the first match. WR's top stars like Ian Nepomniachtchi, Nakamura and Firouzja lost their games. But WR then lodged an appeal claiming that they were not informed by the organisers of the exact time when the round was going to start. The team claimed that this made them reach the playing venue two minutes late for the blitz game. After this complaint, the match was replayed, with some reluctance from Germany and Friends. WR Chess won the replayed match 4.5:1.5 and then claimed a 4:2 victory with colours reversed to enter the semi-finals.

India-based Team MGD1 had claimed the FIDE World Rapid Team Championship title earlier in London after starting the event as the sixth seeds. MGD1 had racked up 10 wins from 12 rounds played over three days to be crowned champions following an intense battle for supremacy with



Team Hexamind. From 53 teams that started the FIDE World Blitz Team Championship on Saturday, 16 made it to the knockout stage (where teams played a round of 16, quarterfinals, semifinals and the final). In each knockout pairing, teams played at least two blitz matches, where colours were reversed after the first game. If the score was level after two matches, additional games were played until a winner emerged. Third place in the FIDE World Blitz Team Championship went to the Hexamind Chess Club, who defeated the Uzbekistan team in both matches with 3.5:2.5. The winners of this year's rapid tournament, MGD1, defeated Freedom in the duel for fifth place. In the round of 16 stage, the WR Chess Team had claimed wins in both matches, as had Freedom and MGD1 Team. Meanwhile, Uzbekistan had one victory and one draw.

R Ashwin accused of ball-tampering by Madurai Panthers; TNPL asks franchise to show proof

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With the allegations against Ashwin being severe, the TNPL's CEO Prasanna Kannan has asked the franchise to show proof of the incidents. (Image credit: TNPL) With the allegations against Ashwin being severe, the TNPL's CEO Prasanna Kannan has asked the franchise to show proof of the incidents. A day after Madurai Panthers team officially wrote to the Tamil Nadu Premier League (TNPL) that R Ashwin and his team Dindigul Dragons allegedly tampered with the ball during their match on June 14, the organisers have demanded the franchise to provide evidence for the same. In their complaint to TNPL, the Madurai franchise has alleged that the defending champions used towels treated with chemicals that resulted in the ball getting heavier and produced metallic sound when it came into contact with the bat.



With the allegations being severe, the TNPL's CEO Prasanna Kannan has asked the franchise to show proof of the incidents. "They have filed a complaint, which we have acknowledged. Though they have to lodge any complaints within 24 hours of the game, we have still accepted it and have asked them to furnish proof of their allegations. We will be forming an independent committee if we find there is any truth to their allegations. Without sufficient evidence, it is wrong to put forth such allegations against a player and another franchise. If they don't provide any evidence, then Madurai will face due sanctions," Prasanna told. In the letter to TNPL, the Madurai franchise COO S Mahesh wrote: "A serious case of ball tampering occurred during our recent match against Dindigul Dragons. Despite repeated warn-

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Neeraj Chopra says javelin dreams take flight on home soil at the Neeraj Chopra Classic

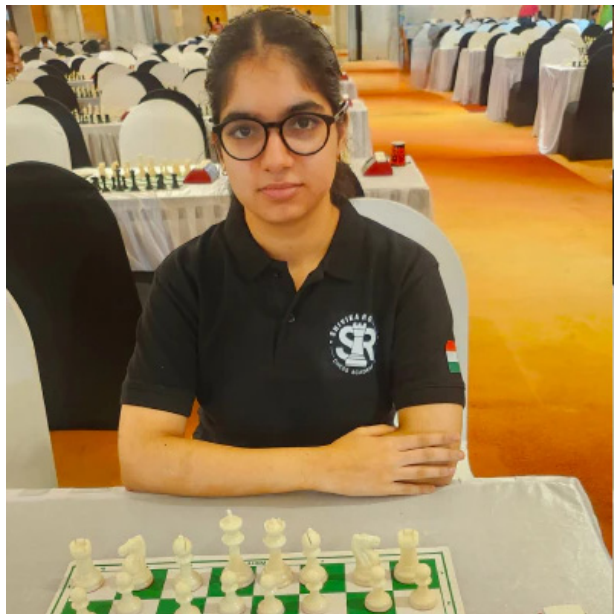
Olympic gold medalist Neeraj Chopra says the Neeraj Chopra Classic is more than a competition—it's a platform where history is made. He urges fans to witness India's rise as world-class javelin throwers compete on Indian soil for global glory.

Hyderabad: "The Neeraj Chopra Classic is not just a competition; it's where every javelin doesn't just land on the ground, but writes history, said Neeraj Chopra, former Olympic gold medalist in javelin.

Once upon a time, there was a dream — that our flag would soar high, proudly in front of the world. Even today, the dream remains, the same, but the stage has change, Neeraj said. Now, our flag must rise on its own soil, among its own people, where the world will witness a rising India. The Neeraj Chopra Classic is not just a competition; it's where every javelin doesn't just land on the ground, but writes history, the world champion said. Watch the world's best javelin throwers compete on the same ground, chasing a new crown," said Neeraj Chopra.



The wild logic of playing 1.b4, also called the Orangutan Opening



GNS News Agency, June 24

In a game where history meets razor-sharp preparation, few openings are more wonderfully odd than 1.b4 — the Orangutan, or Sokolsky Opening. This flank pawn push, born of humour and analytical curiosity, made its global debut in 1924 when Grandmaster Savielly Tartakower, fresh from a visit to the Bronx Zoo, claimed to have been inspired by an orangutan named Susan. While the narrative is entertaining, the maneuver itself is serious. 1. b4 has evolved into a versatile and creative weapon, avoiding deep theoretical lines while inviting rich, imbalanced positions. Despite its underdog status, world champions such as Magnus Carlsen have resorted to it, demonstrating that in chess, a lesser-traveled course can, however, lead to victory.

Indian prodigies chase norms, rating points and dreams, one budget trip to Europe at a time

GNS News Agency, June 24

Two years ago, Yatin Sarbalia and his then nine-year-old son Aarav embarked on a unique Euro trip. In a three-month phase, the father and son duo traversed country lines, going from Spain to France to Hungary before finally ending in Norway then flying back to India. Unlike a sightseeing tour of traditional European delights, this was a chess trip. Aarav had flown to Europe with his chess rating around 1400, and when he came back, it had touched 2000 after playing in five tournaments.

This year, Aarav, now 11 and holding the title of a FIDE Master, has already been on two Europe trips, playing events in Graz (Austria) and Cannes (France) on the first trip in February before playing in three back-to-back events in Munich in May-June. He will soon be back, to play in another three-four tournaments in France next month. Aarav is not the only one. At the Norway Chess Open event — held in Stavanger a few kilometers away from the Norway Chess tournament — IM Savitha Shri and 11-year-old Woman FIDE Master Charvi Anilkumar are among the 16 Indian players competing. These players are paying from their own pocket for travel, food and living expenses in an expensive country like Norway for very specific reasons: some are chasing norms, some are in the hunt for rating points, some are seeking experience against GM-level opponents and others are trying to bring their rating up to match their strength. Trips like these by budding Indian chess stars are becoming increasingly frequent since the pandemic with players going abroad and playing in back-to-back tournaments before returning home to refuel and then flying back again.

So why are Indian youngsters taking so many trips to Europe?

As Kushager Krishnater, an IM who has worked with the likes of Arjun Erigaisi and Vidit Gujarathi in the past and is currently helping players of varying strengths, points out: "European players, as compared to Indians, have an inflated rating. This is because they have a lesser number of players and more tournaments. So more than their rating being inflated, it's Indians whose ratings are deflated (they do not accurately represent how good the player really is in strength)." These Euro trips, for many players, are a way to correct that rating deflation which they cannot in India. This is exactly what happened to Aarav in 2023. Kushager says that travelling abroad to chase norms or ratings started to catch on in India about 15 years ago. But only a few players could afford it then. Around 2015-16, it became common among players rated above 2100. But since COVID, it has become so commonplace that right now, players in the 1700-1800 bracket are also doing it. The basic tenet of these trips is simple: plan one European trip in such a way that you can play two-three events while living on a shoestring budget, finding cheapest accommodations and taking buses. If you do this four or five times a year, you end up playing 12-15 tournaments.

"At this point, chess in India, in my opinion, doesn't exist professionally. If you want to become a professional player, you would only play in India if you don't have the funds to play abroad. If you are someone looking to become one of the best, or let's say you are trying to become an IM or GM at a young age, you would not even think of playing in India, maybe except national tournaments," says Kushager. India's Charvi Anilkumar at the Norway Chess

Even though the line is mostly seen in faster forms of chess these days, such as bullet or blitz, it has also been played at the higher level by many super GMs, such as Fabiano Caruana and Carlsen, among others. Black's most popular replies are 1...e5 and 1...d5. Both leading to a very dynamic position. White's aim with this line is to get the opponent out of his usual preparation early on and invite him to a fierce battle of initiative and tactical play in the middlegame. The following position arises after 1.b4 e5. 2. Bb2 Bxb4 3. Bxe5 Nf6 4. c4, the move c4 is quite rare but interesting. A look at the Orangutan, or Sokolsky Opening, which starts off as 1.b4 after four moves: 1.b4 e5. 2. Bb2 Bxb4 3. Bxe5 Nf6 4. c4. A look at the Orangutan, or Sokolsky Opening, which starts off as 1.b4 after four moves: 1.b4 e5. 2. Bb2 Bxb4 3. Bxe5 Nf6 4. c4. Although a Titled Tuesday favourite, Fabiano Caruana's game with white against Kollars Dmitrij from the NC World Masters, Dortmund, Germany in 2023 is an exception being played during the classical format. A fascinating position arose after 16 moves starting with 1.b4 d5.

A position that arose after 16 moves in a game that started with 1.b4 d5. A position that arose after 16 moves in a game that started with 1.b4 d5. From zoo-side inspiration to grandmaster execution, the Orangutan Opening walks a curious line. Part myth, part method, it's a tribute to chess's rich imagination. And a reminder that every move has a story — even 1.b4. Shivika Rohilla is a Woman FIDE Master based in New Delhi. At just 17, she is the founder of the Shivika Rohilla Chess Academy (SRCA), which she runs alongside her mother, Dr. Nidhi Bhasin Rohilla, and national instructor Yogender Sharma. Passionate about both chess and education, Shivika recently passed Class XII with an impressive 95%, scoring a perfect 100 in English. She firmly believes that excellence in chess and academics can go hand in hand—and is living proof that it's possible to pursue both with dedication and discipline. Through SRCA, she is also working to promote chess among girls and young women. .



Open tournament. India's Charvi Anilkumar at the Norway Chess Open tournament. (Express Photo) "If you look at the junior list of India, off the top of my head, I can recall maybe the one-odd player, who still plays in India. But that is also due to lack of funds, not because he doesn't want to play in Europe. Basically, there are no Indian kids who play in India anymore, if they have a choice."

These days there are websites that — for a small annual subscription fee — give you a detailed list of tournaments around the world that may not even make it to the FIDE website's elaborate tournament calendar. There are also "tour organisers" who help take budding norm seekers on specific events in Europe. There are two popular "tours" that players can play in: the Catalan Circuit which has four back-to-back tournaments in Barcelona in July-August (Barbera Del Valles Open, XXV International Open Sant Martí, 49th International Chess Open "Vila de Sitges" and 49th Open Internacional "Ciutat de Badalona" 2025) and the Czech Tour (Prague Open, Marienbad Open, Pilsen Open, CZECH OPEN Pardubice, Summer Prague Open 2025, Olomouc Chess Summer 2025). "10 years ago, the Catalan Circuit used to be the OG spot for playing European events, because you get to go in one city, rent one apartment for a long couple of months and play," says Kushager. "Even now, you will still find at least 50 Indians playing these events in Europe, who are rated anywhere between 1700 to 2200, just to increase their rating." UAE has also become a hotspot for Indians because for around Rs one lakh you could play in two back-to-back events. But events in UAE used to be so overrun with Indian players — at last year's Abu Dhabi Masters, for example, there were 85 Indians among 217 contenders — that organisers are now putting caps on Indians. Kushager says that players have started to wiser up. About a decade back, a trip to Europe meant playing in cities like Budapest, Belgrade or in Spain. It was rare at that point to find too many Indians there. But once others found out about it, these tournaments too would have plenty of Indians signing up, which meant Indians were again running into plenty of compatriots, and their ratings deflation problem persisted. Then players started to look for outposts in Europe where there wouldn't be too many Indians. Playing events in the USA would also solve the problem, but getting visas for the USA can be tricky business. What has been the most refreshing is the maturity with which players like 11-year-old Aarav and their parents are chasing their goals. "For us, these tournaments are an opportunity to improve by playing stronger players. We don't have specific things like norms in mind," says Aarav's father Yatin. "We don't have expectations of norm in mind because that puts insane pressure on kids. If Aarav gains strength, norms will be easily achieved anyway."

Indian team to compete in Para Powerlifting World Cup in Beijing

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New Delhi: A 16-member team will represent India at the 2025 Para Powerlifting World Cup, to be held in Beijing from June 17 to 25. The team includes the likes of Zainab Khatun, Seema Rani, Jhandu Kumar, Joby Mathew, Manish Kumar and Kasthuri who impressed at the recently concluded national championships. Out of the 16 players, seven are women.

A grand send-off ceremony for the athletes was organized on Sunday. Former president of Paralympic Committee of India Deepa Malik, current PCI Secretary General Jayawant Hamnnavar and India Para Powerlifting Chairman JP Singh were among those present on the occasion. "With every tournament, India is establishing itself as a force to reckon with in the global para powerlifting



fraternity. Our players are in great shape, and we can expect commendable results in China," Singh said. "

Sunjay Kapur's last photo, taken moments before he died, shared by his polo team: 'Our dear friend tragically passed away on field'



Actress Karisma Kapoor's ex-husband, business tycoon Sunjay Kapur, tragically passed away on Thursday in London. As per a few media reports, Sunjay was playing the polo semi-finals for the Cartier Trophy when he accidentally swallowed a honey bee and suffered a heart attack. Days after his passing, his polo team – Sunjan India Tigers shared his last photo with the team's captain, Jaisal Singh, moments before he lost his life. The finals will be dedicated to late Sunjay Kapur, and a minute's silence will be observed before the finals in his memory. As a mark of respect, the team's captain will also not play the final match.

Sharing the photo, his team wrote, "Today we play the final of the Cartier Trophy in memory of our dear friend Sunjay Kapur, who tragically passed away on the field a few days ago. Our Captain and Patron, Jaisal Singh, will mount up with the team to observe a minute's silence in honour of his dear old friend Sunjay, and then sit out as a mark of respect. This photograph of Sunjay and Jaisal was taken moments before they mounted up to play the semi-finals a few days ago."

r...The note further stated, "RIP Sunjay; you will be missed – your tireless enthusiasm and patronage will be remembered forever by the entire polo community."

Who was Sunjay Kapur?

The chairman of Sona Comcast, a business conglomerate with his net worth at over Rs 10,000 crore. He took over the control of the company after his father Surinder Kapur passed away in 2015. A passionate polo player, Sunjay has played the sport with Prince William in the past. On June 12 during a match, he accidentally swallowed a bee and suffered a cardiac arrest. He collapsed on the spot, and could not be revived despite multiple attempts. Sunjay Kapur married Karisma Kapoor in 2003, and the two got divorced in 2016. They have two children together. Before Karisma Kapoor, Sunjay was married to fashion designer Nandita Mahtani. After his separation from Karisma, Sunjay married Priya Sachdev, and the two had a son together. His last post was about expressing grief over the tragic Air India plane crash in Hyderabad.

'Rishi Kapoor was naked, I refused to do the scene': Aruna Irani recalls how Raj Kapoor convinced her to do Bobby sequence, Rishi's surprised reaction

Rishi Kapoor flashing his bare butt in the one of the scenes in Bobby (1973), was considered a bit too much for the 70s. In fact, the late actor's co-star Aruna Irani, who was sharing the screen space with him in the shot, refused to do the sequence because she was feeling 'shy'. It was Rishi's father and the film's director Raj Kapoor who convinced her to do it, telling her not to look at him directly. In an interview, Aruna also revealed that the Chandni actor confronted Irani about her refusal to do the shot with him later.

In an interview with Lehren Retro, Aruna revealed that she wasn't convinced to do the scene earlier, but Raj Kapoor asked her to focus on the 'right things' instead. "I had said no initially. He comes out nude and dries out his hair with a towel. He gave that shot. I told Raj ji that I can't do it. He said, 'Dont look there na, don't see wrong things, see right things'. I did it at last," she said. The veteran actor also recalled that Rishi Kapoor confronted her about her refusal later. "I was then working with Chintu ji in Ravi Malhotra's film. He said, 'Aruna ji, mujhe aapse ek baat poochni hai. You objected a lot in that scene, but nanga toh mujhe hona tha, aap kyun object karahe the (Arunaji, I have to ask you something. I was the one who was naked in the shot, why were you objecting)?" she recalled.

However, after listening to his point of view, Aruna Irani felt that he was indeed right. "I told him that I was feeling shy. I was thinking and getting restless to ask you that why you were feeling shy when I was the one naked in that scene. But, he was actually right," she ended. Rishi Kapoor's film



Bobby was a teen romance of a rich boy and a poor girl which remains fresh for the later generations as well. It also featured Dimple Kapadia, Prem Chopra and Prem Nath. The romantic-musical drama was a major hit and the highest-grossing Indian film of 1973.

Farah Khan says she regrets not marrying Jaaved Jaaferi after seeing his luxury Bandra apartment.



In her latest YouTube vlog, Farah Khan visited actor Jaaved Jaaferi's beautiful sea-facing apartment in Bandra—and she's so impressed that she jokingly says she wishes she had married him. Farah, along with her cook and regular vlog partner Dilip, is seen walking into Jaaved's stylish home and being completely wowed by it. Hugging him, she jokes, "Jaaved, tere se hi shaadi kar leti mai yaar agar yeh ghar mil raha hota mereko (Jaaved, I would've married you if I knew I'd get a house like this!)" The funny moment leaves Jaaved in splits and sets a fun mood for the rest of the vlog. Jaaved's house is decorated in soft beige tones, with large indoor plants and a comfortable sage green sofa in

the living room. Elegant white hanging lamps and a Spanish-style dining table add a touch of class to the space. As Farah continues the house tour, she gets more and more impressed. The bedrooms have large closets, cozy beds, and personal items that make them feel warm and homely. One wall is dedicated to souvenirs Jaaved has collected from his travels. Looking at it, Farah says, "This is beautiful ya." She also meets Jaaved's wife, whom he jokes about, saying, "Achi toh lag rahi hai. She is beautiful abhi bhi," as Farah hugs her warmly. Wall dedicated to collectibles in Jaaved Jaaferi's home. (Photo: Farah Khan/YouTube) Farah Khan checks out Jaaved Jaaferi's home. A fun moment in the vlog is when Jaaved takes Farah to a part of the terrace that he calls the "Titanic view." He stretches his arms out wide like Jack from the movie Titanic, making Farah laugh. From the balcony, Jaaved also shows her a clear view of the mountains, the airport, and homes of actors like Emraan Hashmi and Sanjay Dutt. He also shares a bit of Bollywood history. Pointing to two buildings, he says, "Yaha pe Dilip sahab ka bangla tha, ab building ban gayi, (It was once place to Dilip Kumar's bungalow, but now they have made a building here)," and "Yeh Rishi sahab ka bangla tha, ab building ban gayi (And this was supposed to be Rishi Kapoor's bungalow)." Jaaved then takes Farah into a special room filled with CDs, cassettes, and musical equipment. "This is where my younger son makes his music," he says, giving fans a look at his personal creative space. Towards the end of the vlog, Farah shares an interesting story about her own home—the one where she now films all her YouTube content. She says, "Jaaved had actually seen the same house one day before I did!" Jaaved explains, "Vikas Oberoi told me someone was checking out the house for Vastu, he didn't reveal the name to me. And then he said, if they didn't agree,

Aruna Irani was asked to woo Mehmood to get work; his silence on their marriage rumours ruined her career: 'He stopped working with me'

Veteran actor Aruna Irani and Mehmood were in a relationship while the latter was married. In a recent interaction, Aruna admitted that since she wasn't getting much work when she entered the film industry, she was advised to woo Mehmood to get more opportunities, as he was among the top actors in the industry at the time. She acknowledged that Mehmood supported her career, which eventually led her to fall for the late star.

Speaking to Lehren Retro, Aruna revealed that she had been a big fan of Mehmood ever since her school days. She said, "Dance director Suresh Bhatt told me 'tu Mehmood ko ghaas dal (You woo Mehmood), only he can get you work.' But there also I kept saying yes and no to Mehmood (refusing his advances), but he started giving me work even on those basis and slowly I developed a soft corner for him. Through him I saw money, fame, name and I thought 'Mein kab tak iss aadmi ko bewkoof banaugi (Till when will I make this man a fool). Then we became friends and then more than friends, but that was it with him."

Aruna recalled that she and Mehmood parted ways because they realised they weren't good for each other's careers. She also admitted that rumours of their marriage had been circulating, and since Mehmood never clearly addressed them, it negatively impacted her career. She recalled, "Vinod Khanna asked Mehmood if I can play his heroine in a film. He asked Mehmood if we both have been married. Mehmood just looked at me and smiled and didn't say anything. So he made my career also and ruined it also." Later in the conversation, Aruna shared that Mehmood



had refused to marry her, even though she wanted to get married to him. She added, "His family prevented him from working with me and so he stopped working with me." When asked if she went out of the way to please Mehmood in order to get work, she responded, "Not out of the way but definitely haad se bahar jakar I pleased him. I came from a very poor family so that was the first time I saw name, fame, money." While Aruna gained success during her relationship with Mehmood, she stopped getting work after they broke up. She said, "I didn't have a relation with him after that but I had the responsibility of my family and I focused on that. Nobody was giving me work after this break up. I started doing songs. I never had the complex that I am doing songs after playing the lead heroine. I just wanted to get out and earn."

Aamir Khan answers those questioning his patriotism: 'My film Sarfarosh was the first to take Pakistan's name, suffered losses but...'



GNS News Agency, June 24

India and Pakistan's recent conflict after the Pahalgalam terror attack has caused a storm in the Hindi film industry. Many people blamed the Khan trio – Aamir Khan, Salman Khan, and Shah Rukh Khan for not speaking up against Pakistan publicly in the aftermath of the attack. No, in a recent interview, Aamir defended himself after the accusations, revealing that his 1999 release Sarfarosh was the first ever film in the history of Indian films, to refer to the country as Pakistan instead of 'padosi mulk'. The actor also revealed that he even took a stand for the country and didn't allow Dangal's release in Pakistan despite possible losses, because their censor board demanded the removal of the Indian flag and national anthem. During a chat with Rajat Sharma on his show Aap Ki Adalat, Aamir cited former Deputy Prime Minister LK Advani's example and said, "If you pick India's film history, we have never been allowed to take their name, we had to use the term 'padosi mulk'. My film Sarfarosh was the first one ever in history, in which we have taken Pakistan and ISI's names without hesitation. John said that the Censor Board won't pass this. I said, 'Why won't they? We will explain it to them'. When Advani ji can call their name in the Parliament publicly that they are doing wrong by us and spreading terrorism, then why can't we?"

The film's team finally received the permission to take Pakistan's name. "We got permission to use the names on that basis. So many films released after that were using Pakistan's name. People say that I don't say anything against them, but sabse bada naam toh unka maine hi liya hai, aur kisi ne nahi. After Sarfarosh, I got many negative comments from Pakistan for attacking them

The Rebel Kid aka Apoorva Mukhija makes explosive claims about The Traitors, reveals Karan Johar personally interviewed contestants: 'I lied about lots of things to be on the show'

Karan Johar-hosted The Traitors has become a hot topic on social media. On Monday morning, Uorfi Javed slammed fellow contestant Apoorva Mukhija (The Rebel Kid) for making false claims in her YouTube vlog called Story Time. Apoorva has made several explosive claims about the show, revealing a few behind-the-scenes details that are usually kept under wraps, and admitting that she lied in several interviews just to be on the show.

"I made sure to give such answers in my interview that they selected me..." Talking about how she lied during her interview with BBC Studios, the studio behind The Traitors, Apoorva Mukhija said that she was the most irrelevant contestant as compared to others on the show. "This was a very big opportunity for me. BBC Studios was producing it, Amazon Prime was streaming it, and Karan Johar was hosting the game show. We made the show like Bigg Boss to some extent. Till I was offered this show, I had no content on YT, no films, etc. I was one of the most irrelevant people on the show as compared to others; the makers also thought 50 times before taking me on board. But I made sure to give such answers in my interview that they selected me. I just wanted to be on the show anyway. The minute they told me I was selected for the show, I freaked out, because I lied about a lot of things, saying that I am entertaining and will do whatever. I knew nothing. I was very

underprepared and underconfident," Apoorva confessed. Apoorva Mukhija admitted to saying certain things deliberately, knowing they would make it past the edit. She even revealed details from her interview with Karan Johar. "A friend of mine told me that whenever I went to give interviews on the show, I should say something iconic that they can't cut out from the show. That I should give moments and memes, which changed my perception," Apoorva explained. The Rebel Kid added, "After we went to the palace, everyone was called inside to get interviewed by Karan Johar. It was about whether we wanted to be a traitor or not. I knew I would have been a horrible traitor. But since this game is about the traitors and they would get the most screen time and control over the game, I said I would love to be a traitor. Karan asked me why, and I said I wanted the ability to throw out anybody from the show who talked too much or irritated me. I didn't mean any of it though. Then Karan asked me who would be the first person I would throw out of the show, and I said Sufi Motiwala. I was like, if he judges people's clothing for a living and that's how he dressed, then I didn't trust his judgment." "I was told I would be given three phone calls on the show, but later they denied making such claims." Recalling the moment when her fight with Uorfi Javed began, Apoorva Mukhija shared a back story and explained,