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Young woman disrupts railway traffic at Sankarpally

Hyderabad, June 26 (NSS): A young woman caused a commotion by driving a car on a railway track. She created a commotion by driving the car on the Nagupalli-Sankarpally route in Rangareddy district. The railway staff, who noticed this tried to stop her. However, the young woman left without stopping. In this sequence, local people in Nagupalli stopped the car. However, it was learned that the young woman threatened them with a knife. It is believed that the young woman was drunk. On receiving information, the police reached the spot and detained the young woman. The movement of trains was disrupted for hours due to the young woman's behaviour.

Bhatti clears medical reimbursement bills worth Rs.180.38 crore



Hyderabad, June 26 : The State government has delivered good news to its employees and pensioners. Deputy Chief Minister and Finance Minister Bhatti Vikramarka Mallu on Thursday disbursed Rs. 180.38 crore to settle all outstanding medical reimbursement bills for government employees and pensioners in a single transaction. Despite grappling with significant financial difficulties while managing various welfare initiatives, the Deputy Chief Minister made it a priority to address the long-overdue medical reimbursement requests. The claims pending from March 4, 2023, to June 20, 2025, which overlap with the tenure of the previous administration, have now been resolved. This decision has provided essential relief to 26,519 government employees and pensioners.

KTR slams Congress government for Jurala gate failure, cites negligence in maintenance



GNS News Agency, June 26

Hyderabad: BRS working president KT Rama Rao on Wednesday held the Congress government responsible for the failure of Gate No. 9 at the Priyadarshini Jurala Project, stating that the incident was a direct consequence of the government's negligence in undertaking timely maintenance works. Operational issues were reported at the Jurala project on Thursday when crest gate No. 9 failed to open after one of its two rope cables snapped, even as inflows into the reservoir rose steadily to 53,000 cusecs. The project has 62 crest gates in total. Taking to X, Rama Rao lashed out at Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy, saying he had not laid "a single brick" in building irrigation projects, yet had failed to ensure basic maintenance at crucial infrastructure points like the Jurala spillway, despite annual flood threats. He also expressed concern over the condition of other gates at the project. "The government must immediately alert people in downstream areas and take urgent preventive measures as flood levels continue to rise. All efforts must be made to protect the Jurala project and ensure the safety of downstream habitations," he said. Rama Rao further criticised the Congress government for a series of infrastructure failures, listing incidents such as the collapse of the SLBC tunnel that killed eight people, flooding of 16 villages following the Peddavagu breach, the submergence of the Vattam pump house, and the collapse of the Sunkishala retaining wall. Each of these incidents stemmed from negligence and administrative failure, resulting in substantial public loss, he said.

Rajnath Singh refuses to sign joint statement

GNS News Agency, June 26

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on Thursday (June 26, 2025) refused to sign a joint statement at the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) Defence Ministers' meeting held in Qingdao, China. According to sources, Mr. Singh refused to sign document as it did not mention anything about Pahalgam terror attack but mentioned about militant activities in Balochistan. The pattern of Pahalgam terror attack matches with LeT's previous terror attacks in India, Mr. Singh said. In response to the terrorist attack in Pahalgam on April 22, 2025, in which 26 people died, India on May 7, 2025 launched 'Operation Sindoor' to dismantle cross border terrorist infrastructure. In this address in SCO, Mr. Singh mentioned that on April 22, 2025, the terror group 'The Resistance Front' (TRF) carried out a "dastardly and heinous attack" on innocent tourists at Pahalgam in Jammu and Kashmir.

Indian astronaut Shubhanshu Shukla, along with 3 others, reaches International Space Station

GNS News Agency, June 26 New Delhi: Indian's Shubhanshu Shukla and three other astronauts reached the International Space Station on Thursday as the Dragon spacecraft docked to the orbital laboratory after a 28-hour journey around the Earth. The new spacecraft — fifth in the Dragon series, named Grace — achieved a soft capture with the space station at 4:01 pm IST over the North Atlantic Ocean. This is the first time an Indian astronaut has travelled to the International Space Station. "At 6:31 am EDT (4:01 IST) on Thursday, the SpaceX Dragon spacecraft docked to the International Space Station for the fourth private astronaut mission to the orbiting laboratory, Axiom Mission 4," the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) announced



in a statement. A live video feed from NASA showed the spacecraft approaching the space station. The docking sequence was completed at 4:15 pm IST. After the soft capture of the spacecraft, the hard-mating was completed when the two orbiting bodies were connected with 12 sets of hooks with each other, and communication and power links were established.

The hatch-opening pro-

cedures take about two hours before the astronauts walk on board the space station. Veteran astronaut Peggy Whitson is the mission commander, and Shukla is the mission pilot for the Axiom-4 mission. Shukla, a test pilot with the Indian Air Force, is the second Indian to go to space and the first since Rakesh Sharma's eight-day sojourn in 1984. Polish engineer Slawosz Uznanski-

Wisniewski, a mission specialist and a European Space Agency project astronaut, will be the second person from his country to travel to space and the first since 1978.

Tibor Kapu, a mechanical engineer and mission specialist, will be the second Hungarian astronaut to rocket into space. Hungary's last space mission was 45 years ago. The astronauts, part of the Axiom-4 mission, embarked on the journey to the space station from the Kennedy Space Centre in Florida on Wednesday. The space station has seven astronauts — Nicole Ayers, Anne McClain, and Jonny Kim from NASA, Takuya Onishi from the JAXA (Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency), and Roscosmos cosmonauts Kirill Peskov, Sergey Ryzhikov, and Alexey Zubritsky.

Nitin Gadkari denies toll plans for two-wheelers on highways

GNS News Agency, June 26

New Delhi: Union Minister for Road Transport and Highways, Nitin Gadkari, on Thursday dismissed media reports suggesting that two-wheelers will be required to pay tolls on National Highways from July 15. He called the reports misleading and clarified that no such proposal is under consideration. Taking to the social media platform X, the Union Minister said: "Some media houses are spreading misleading news about toll tax being levied on two-wheelers. No such decision has been proposed." "Two-wheelers will continue to be exempt from tolls. Spreading such baseless news without verifying the facts is not responsible journalism. I strongly condemn it," the Union Minister stated. The clarification comes after a report claimed that toll payment would soon be made mandatory for two-wheelers at all national highway toll plazas, and that riders would need to equip their vehicles with FASTag.

The report also claimed that violators could face penalties of up to Rs 2,000. This comes just days after Gadkari announced a new annual FASTag pass worth Rs 3,000 for private four-wheelers, aimed at simplifying toll payments and reducing congestion. Set to launch on August 15, the pass will be valid for one year or 200 trips — whichever comes first — and can be activated via the Rajmarg Yatra app or official websites of the NHAI and the MoRTH.

The government has significantly expanded its highway infrastructure in the last decade, with the total length of national highways increasing from 91,287 km in 2014 to



1,46,204 km in 2024 — a rise of over 60 per cent. The pace of highway construction has also tripled from 11.6 km/day in 2014 to 34 km/day in 2024.

As of now, 1,366 highway projects covering 32,366 km are under construction across the country, many of which are expected to be completed in phases by FY 2028. With a 570 per cent increase in the road transport and highways budget over the last decade, the Centre continues to prioritise infrastructure development — but for now, two-wheeler riders can rest assured that tolls are not on the horizon.

Komatireddy flags off anti-drug march



Nalgonda, June 26 As part of the Anti-Drug Awareness Week, Minister for Roads and Buildings Komatireddy Venkat Reddy flagged off a rally at NG College in Nalgonda town on Thursday. While speaking to the crowd at Clock Tower Circle afterward, the Minister voiced significant worries regarding the increasing prevalence of drug use among students, particularly in the aftermath of COVID-19. He remarked that substance abuse is wreaking havoc on the lives of young people and earnestly urged students to avoid drugs. "Drugs have no place in Telangana," he stated emphatically. Reaffirming the State government's commitment to youth development, Komatireddy announced that a Skill University is being established for students, with a Rs.34 crore Skill Centre coming up in Nalgonda. He said it would be inaugurated soon by Chief Minister Revanth Reddy. He urged students to focus on education, sports, and yoga at least until the age of 20 and asked them to avoid unnecessary use of mobile phones.

"Study well, appear for competitive exams, and secure government jobs," he advised, adding that students must treat this phase of life as a turning point. He also warned drug peddlers and addicts, stating that the government is taking strict measures in Hyderabad and across the state to curb drug abuse. He even encouraged citizens

to physically confront drug users if needed and inform the police immediately.

The Minister also revealed that a new school with digital classrooms and all modern amenities is being constructed at Prakasham Bazaar in partnership with Prateek Foundation. He assured full support from the government and himself as a Minister for any student welfare initiative taken up through the foundation. Komatireddy also recalled his emotional connection with the town, stating that he had once undertaken an 11-day hunger strike here for the cause of Telangana. Several dignitaries, including District SP Sharath Chandra Pawar, Additional Collector J. Srinivas, MLC Shankar Naik, Miryalaguda Sub-Collector Narayana Amit, Additional SP Ramesh, DWO Krishnaveni, former Municipal Chairman Burri Srinivas Reddy, DEO and others participated in the event. On the occasion, all attendees took a solemn pledge against drug abuse.

ECI starts proceedings to delist 345 registered unrecognised political parties

GNS News Agency, June 26

The Election Commission of India (ECI) on Thursday (June 26, 2025) said it has started proceedings for the delisting of 345 registered unrecognized political parties (RUPPs) which have failed to fulfil the essential condition of contesting even a single election for the last six years since 2019. The offices of these parties could also not be physically located anywhere, the ECI said. These 345 RUPPs are from different states and UTs across the country, it said. It has come to the notice of the Commission that of the over 2,800 RUPPs, currently registered with EC, many have failed to fulfil the essential conditions which are required to continue as an RUPP.

Bonalu festival celebrations begin at Golconda Fort



Hyderabad, June 26 The Bonalu festival, representing the rich culture and traditions of Telangana, commenced in a grand manner at Golconda Fort on Thursday. Traditionally, the celebrations kick off with an inaugural puja dedicated to Goddess Jagadamba Mahankali at the temple located in Langar House, Hyderabad, conducted on behalf of the State government. The festival is set to conclude with the final Bonam at the fort, featuring nine pujas held every Thursday and Sunday for the duration of a month. To celebrate the beginning of the Ashada month Bonalu festivities for 2025, Assembly Speaker Gaddam Prasad Kumar, along with Ministers Ponnamp Prabhakar and Konda Surekha, presented silk garments to Goddess Golkonda Jagadamba Mahankali and conducted the first Bonam in the honour. Speaking on the occasion, Minister Konda Surekha remarked that Ashada Bonalu represents the essence of Telangana's culture and traditions. She expressed her hope that the blessings of Goddess Jagadamba would be bestowed upon the people of Telangana and the state government.

Minister Ponnamp Prabhakar noted that the Bonalu festival during the Ashada month is recognised internationally, highlighting that Hyderabad's traditions and customs have gained popularity worldwide. He announced that the state government has allocated Rs.20 crore to support 3,000 temples in celebration of the Bonalu festival, which will be conducted on a grand scale across various temples for an entire month. GHMC Mayor Gadwala Vijaya Lakshmi, Rajya Sabha Member Anil Kumar Yadav, BC Commission Chairman Niranjana, Principal Secretary (Endowments) Shailaja Ramaiyar, Hyderabad Collector Dasari Harichandana, Police Commissioner CV Anand, senior Congress leader V Hanumantha Rao, Fisheries Corporation Chairman Mettu Saikumar, and other key leaders and officials were also present. Meanwhile, BRS MLC Kavitha also participated in the celebrations and presented Bonam to the deity Jagadambika Ammavaru.

After Revanth steps down, I will try for CM's post: Jagga Reddy



Hyderabad, June 26 : Telangana Pradesh Congress Committee (TPCC) Working President Jagga Reddy made notable remarks regarding the position of Chief Minister in Telangana. He stated that Revanth Reddy is set to serve as Chief Minister for the next three years. "Once he steps down, I will seek to assume the role of Chief Minister. Currently, Revanth Reddy is focused on supporting the Congress government in the upcoming elections and has already made his case to the people for the next five years. My goal is to position myself as a candidate for Chief Minister nine years from now. When Revanth concludes his tenure as Chief Minister, I will express my interest in the role to the people," Jagga Reddy mentioned. Speaking to the media at Gandhi Bhavan on Thursday, he also took the opportunity to criticise BRS MLC Kavitha for making unfounded allegations against Chief Minister Revanth Reddy and the state government. Except for being former chief minister K Chandrashekar Rao's daughter, what qualifications does MLC Kavitha have?" he asked. Jagga Reddy noted that despite the rejections from BRS President KCR and Working President KT Rama Rao, Kavitha was still attempting to craft a political persona. He claimed that the entire BRS administration operated through phone tapping, asserting that BRS leaders, including KCR, KT Rama Rao, Harish Rao, and Kavitha, utilised this practice. Jagga Reddy also mentioned that the previous government had recorded the conversations of married couples.

Police increases security to Medak MP Raghunandan Rao

Hyderabad, June 26 (NSS): Police department has decided to increase security for Medak MP Raghunandan Rao. A recent threat call from Maoists has led to the decision to enhance the security of the MP.

Indian Chronicle

English Daily

Reforming India's bureaucracy

It is ironic that India's bureaucracy, often hailed as the 'steel frame', has become an instrument of control rather than a catalyst for innovation; a rigid hierarchical behemoth that is largely lethargic, obstructive, unresponsive and inefficient. There is probably no other area that requires wide-ranging reforms more urgently than the bureaucracy. On the one hand, India has been making significant strides in economic and technological growth over the last few decades but on the other, a stifling bureaucracy has not kept pace with the changing times. In the rapidly changing landscape of the 21st century, characterised by globalisation and shifting socio-economic priorities, the need for systemic reforms has become more pressing than ever. Against this backdrop, the decision of the Department of Personnel and Training (DoPT) to hire a private consultant to recommend a roadmap for bureaucratic reforms is a welcome move. The Department has initiated a Request for Proposal (RFP) in this regard, a clear proactive step towards seeking external expertise to identify areas for improvement and implement necessary changes. The consultant is expected to analyse the current bureaucratic structure, identify bottlenecks, and propose solutions that can be implemented to achieve the desired reforms. This must be seen as a positive step towards bureaucratic reform, potentially leading to a more efficient and effective government administration. By involving a private consultant, the DoPT is likely looking for fresh perspectives and specialised knowledge to suggest comprehensive solutions for bureaucratic challenges. The RFP might cover various aspects of bureaucratic functioning, such as streamlining processes, enhancing transparency, improving decision-making, and promoting accountability. By removing unnecessary regulations and red tape, reforms can foster a more conducive environment for businesses and investments. Digital transformation and e-governance

Timely Medical Intervention Saves Mother and Baby: DCHS Urges Public to Utilize Maternal and Child Healthcare Services.



“PS Ashokan”Indian Chronicle“Manthani,June 26”“In a commendable demonstration of prompt medical attention and expert care, a high-risk pregnant woman from Manthani mandal was successfully treated, resulting in the safe delivery of a healthy baby girl.”“The woman was initially admitted to the Maternal and Child Health Centre in Manthani. Upon conducting preliminary diagnostic tests, doctors identified a critically low blood cell count, posing significant risk for childbirth. Recognizing the urgency of the case, gynecologist Dr. Sony immediately referred the patient to the Peddapalli District Hospital for advanced care.”“A dedicated team of specialists, including gynecologist Dr. Anasuya and anesthesiologist Dr. Ramam, performed a complex surgical procedure on Thursday morning. The operation was carried out with precision and care, culminating in the birth of a healthy baby girl. Both mother and child are now reported to be in stable and satisfactory condition.”“District Medical and Health Officer (DCHS), Dr. Sridhar, lauded the efforts of the medical professionals involved in this life-saving intervention. He emphasized the importance of timely access to healthcare and encouraged the public, especially expectant mothers, to make full use of government-run maternal and child health facilities.”“This case stands as a testament to the efficiency and capability of our public healthcare system when utilized at the right time,” he added.”“The incident not only highlights the skill and commitment of government medical staff but also reinforces the critical role of early diagnosis and referral in maternal care.

Youth Should Stay Away from Drugs and Bad Habits: ASP Vikrant Kumar Singh



““Shaik Sharief, Bhadrachalam, June 26, Indian Chronicle: ASP Vikrant Kumar Singh stated that youth should stay away from narcotics and bad habits. On Thursday, on the occasion of Anti-Drug Day, he unveiled awareness wall posters at his ASP chamber, organized by the Mother Teresa Charitable Trust.Speaking on the occasion, ASP Vikrant Kumar Singh urged students and youth not to ruin their golden future by becoming slaves to drugs and bad habits.

He also requested the public to immediately inform the police if they have any information about the illegal sale or purchase of narcotics. He called upon everyone to strive for a drug-free society. The program was attended by SIs Shyam Prasad and Swapna, Mother Teresa Trust Chairman Koppula Murali, and Shaz Blood Organization founder Mohammed Sindh.

Wave of Calculated Burglaries Triggers Public Outcry in Manthani.



““Locked Residences Routinely Targeted as Criminals Outmaneuver Surveillance.”Residents Demand Urgent Police Action Amid Rising Lawlessness.”“PS ASHOKAN”Indian Chronicle“Manthani, June 25”“A renewed and alarming surge in targeted burglaries has engulfed Manthani town, plunging the community into a state of fear and unrest. With precision and audacity, burglars are zero-

ing in on locked residences, breaching them effortlessly and making away with high-value assets—seemingly unfazed by the town's surveillance infrastructure.”“The most recent episode unfolded on Monday night in Vasavi Nagar, where the home of Illandula Venkateshwarlu was ransacked in his absence. Having traveled to Hyderabad on official duty, Venkateshwarlu returned only to discover that miscreants had broken the locks, looted valuables including a television, laptop, tablet, silverware, and ₹20,000 in cash—totaling an estimated loss of ₹1 lakh. A formal complaint has been submitted to the local authorities.”“In a separate incident, burglars broke into the residence of a woman from the Budha community in Gaddalapelli village, escaping with two tolas of gold and other valuables. Merely days earlier, the Krishna Mandir in Manthani was also targeted, with essential kitchen items reported stolen.”“This spate of break-ins has reignited memories of a chilling crime wave from February 16, 2022, when five homes were looted in a single night. Among the victims was retired MPDO Muddu Prakash, who suffered a significant loss of cash and precious metals. Despite CCTV footage capturing the suspects, no arrests were made, and the case remains unresolved. Similarly, the burglary on November 17, 2022, yielded no investigative breakthroughs.”“The frequency and boldness of these incidents have stirred widespread frustration. Locals are openly questioning the efficacy of law enforcement, highlighting a deepening crisis of public trust. Many victims lament the inertia of police investigations and are calling for enhanced patrolling, improved surveillance, and swift justice to deter further criminal activity.”“Unless decisive steps are taken, residents fear Manthani may continue to be a soft target for criminal networks, undermining the town's safety and social fabric.

China's Rare Earth Export Curbs Jolt Telangana's Industries



— Minister Sridhar Babu Urges Centre to Act Swiftly.” PS Ashokan”Indian Chronicle“Manthani June,25”“Amid growing concerns over China's tightened grip on rare earth element exports, Telangana's industries are bearing the brunt, especially sectors involved in electronics and electric vehicle (EV) manufacturing. Responding to this critical situation, Telangana's Minister for IT and Industries, Duddilla Sridhar Babu, has urged the Union Government to intervene immediately and explore alternative sourcing mechanisms.”“The Minister met Union Minister of Commerce and Industry, Shri Piyush Goyal, in New Delhi on Wednesday and submitted a formal memorandum, outlining the adverse impact of China's export restrictions on India's manufacturing landscape, particularly in Telangana.”“> “Rare earth magnets, essential raw materials, and key chemicals crucial for electronics and EV production are predominantly imported from China. With fresh restrictions now in place, Telangana's manufacturing sector is facing operational hurdles that could escalate if not addressed promptly,” said Sridhar Babu.”“He appealed to the Centre to review the emerging supply chain crisis and initiate steps toward securing alternate global sources, ensuring the continuity and competitiveness of India's manufacturing ecosystem.”“Strategic Infrastructure Demands Central Backing”“In the same meeting, the Minister stressed the urgent need for comprehensive support from the Centre for Telangana's industrial infrastructure. He called for accelerated development of key industrial corridors including:”“Hyderabad–Nagpur”“Hyderabad–Warangal”“Hyderabad–Bengaluru”“Hyderabad–Vijayawada”“He sought ₹400 crore funding under the PM Gati Shakti scheme for infrastructure projects within the



Zaheerabad Industrial Smart City, which is a flagship initiative for balanced regional industrial growth.”“Future City: Reviving a Stalled Corridor”“The Minister brought to light the stalled progress of the Hyderabad–Warangal Industrial Corridor (HWIC) due to past administrative lapses. He informed the Union Minister that the Telangana government is now transforming the Pharma City, a key node in HWIC, into a cutting-edge ‘Future City’, with the potential to become a global industrial hub. He sought active central co-operation for this transformation.”“Additionally, he requested support for the development of Warangal Airport and infrastructure in other strategic nodes across the state.”“Telangana Keen on 100 Industrial Parks Scheme”“Sridhar Babu expressed the Telangana Government's keen interest in participating in the Central Government's 100 Industrial Parks Scheme, and highlighted that the state has already submitted its proposals. He urged the Centre to provide necessary approvals and financial allocations for swift execution.”“National Design Centre in Hyderabad Proposed”“To bolster India's design capabilities and promote ‘Made in India’ branding globally, Telangana has proposed the establishment of a National Design Centre (NDC) in Hyderabad. The Minister emphasized that this would serve as a national hub for design thinking and innovation, positioning India competitively in global markets.”“Telangana's Commitment to ‘Viksit Bharat 2047’”“Concluding his remarks, Minister Sridhar Babu reiterated Telangana's commitment to national industrial growth aligned with the Atmanirbhar Bharat mission. He affirmed the state's active partnership in achieving the ‘Viksit Bharat 2047’ vision through robust policy implementation and Centre-State collaboration.

New Zealand universities' academic reputation ranks first among English-speaking countries

Hyderabad:Education New Zealand Manapou ki te Ao Chief Executive Amanda Malu lauds the latest results of the Quacquarelli Symonds (QS) World University Rankings 2026 that sees New Zealand rank first in the English-speaking world and fifth globally for the overall quality of its higher education. Published annually, the QS rankings assess more than 1,500 universities globally across areas such as reputation, teaching, research and internationalisation. The 2026 results see New Zealand universities improve across academic reputation, citation per faculty, and international student indicators. New Zealand also ranks the highest globally in terms of employment outcomes among key English-speaking study destinations.

Four of New Zealand's eight higher education institutions have improved their ranking in the QS World University Rankings 2026. The University of Auckland, University of Otago, Massey University, and University of Canterbury all improved their Citations Per Faculty ranking. “This is a fantastic result for our universities as they continue to grow in appeal among international students. It reinforces



New Zealand's position as a high-quality and welcoming international education destination. New Zealand universities are all highly regarded for sustainability research and programmes. We need to celebrate this wonderful result for New Zealand universities that highlights the high calibre of our teaching, research staff and students.” Ms Malu says.

Komatireddy inaugurates renovated Bhavitha Centre at Nalgonda

Nalgonda, June 26 Minister for Roads, Buildings and Cinematography Komatireddy Venkata Reddy inaugurated the newly renovated Bhavitha Centre in Nalgonda, which was upgraded with the support of Prateek Foundation. On the occasion, he assured that if any additional amenities are needed, they would be provided through Prateek Foundation. He recalled that the foundation had already contributed Rs.10 lakh for this project. When District Collector Ila Tripathi requested the inclusion of speech therapy sessions twice a week, the Minister agreed to the proposal. The modernisation of the Bhavitha Centre, including the creation of an activity room and enhancement of basic infrastructure, has been supported by Rs.10 lakh from Prateek Foundation and an additional Rs.7 lakh from District Collectorate funds.

The Minister instructed officials to ensure that the



centre is fully equipped and also directed the installation of an air-conditioning system.

Clashes between youths in Bhadradri-“Young man dies at the scene”



““Shaik Sharief, Bhadrachalam, June 25, Indian Chronicle: A clash between two youths has left one person dead. According to the details given by the police and locals in this regard... Manoj, alias Kasulu (18), of Mudiraj Bazaar in Bhadrachalam town, was doing daily chores. In this process, he was going towards Tirumala Residency near Kodanda Ram Temple on his two-wheeler. In this process, a youth in a trolley carrying cool drinks was also going along. In this process, Manoj and the youth in the trolley exchanged insults. Manoj went ahead of the trolley, stopped his bike there, and tried to climb on the side of the trolley to hit him. At the same time, the youth in it pushed Manoj down with his hands. In this process, Manoj died on the spot when the trolley tire fell off. Meanwhile, locals say that this incident happened due to a previous fight between the two. Similarly, many are discussing that the recent murder of a young man in ASR Colony in Bhadrachalam was also due to the fight. The police have registered a case and are investigating this.

Congress Intensifies Grassroots Restructuring Ahead of Local Elections: TPCC Leadership Gears Up in Manthani.



““PS Ashokan”Indian Chronicle“manthani,june 26”“In a significant stride toward strengthening the party's organizational framework at the grassroots level, a high-powered preparatory meeting of the Telangana Pradesh Congress Committee (TPCC) was convened today in Manthani town, encompassing the Manthani and Mutharam mandals.”“Held at the MLA camp office premises under the directives of Telangana IT and Industries Minister Sri Duddilla Sridhar Babu, the session marked the official commencement of the internal election readiness process. The event witnessed the esteemed presence of TPCC General Secretary Sri Duddilla Srinu Babu, Sri Azmatullah Hussain (Chairman, Telangana Waqf Board & TPCC Observer), and Sri Sangeetam Srinivas (TPCC Observer).”“During the meeting, applications were formally received from Mandal Presidents, Village Branch Presidents, and aspirants seeking nominations for party positions across the jurisdictions of Manthani Mandal, Manthani Municipality, and Mutharam Mandal.”“Addressing the gathering, General Secretary Srinu Babu emphasized that the Congress Party is undertaking an ambitious initiative to revitalize its organizational hierarchy from the mandal level up to the Pradesh Congress Committee. He encouraged party functionaries to engage with utmost dedication, integrity, and discipline to ensure robust internal structuring.”“Highlighting the imminent local body elections, he remarked that the process would open the door for thousands of loyal grassroots workers to assume key leadership roles within the party framework. He urged party cadres to vigorously disseminate the transformative developmental policies and inclusive welfare programs implemented by the Congress-led people's government.”“This is a crucial juncture for the party, and it is imperative that we consolidate our base and reinforce our connect with the people through organizational empowerment,” he concluded.”“The event set the tone for an energized, cohesive, and strategically aligned Congress cadre across the Manthani constituency.”[16:59, 26/6/2025] +91 94401 53424:

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“Once he steps down, I will seek to assume the role of Chief Minister. Currently, Revanth Reddy is focused on supporting the Congress government in the upcoming elections and has already made his case to the people for the next five years. My goal is to position myself as a candidate for Chief Minister nine years from now. When Revanth concludes his tenure as Chief Minister, I will express my interest in the role to the people,” Jagga Reddy mentioned. Speaking to the media at Gandhi Bhavan on Thursday, he also took the opportunity to criticise BRS MLC Kavitha for making unfounded allegations against Chief Minister Revanth Reddy and the state government.Except for being former chief minister K Chandrashekar Rao's daughter, what qualifications does MLC Kavitha have?" he asked. Jagga Reddy noted that despite the rejections from BRS President KCR and Working President KT Rama Rao, Kavitha was still attempting to craft a political persona. He claimed that the entire BRS administration operated through phone tapping, asserting that BRS leaders, including KCR, KT Rama Rao, Harish Rao, and Kavitha, utilised this practice.

Cage-Wheeled Tractors Banned on Roads: Peddapalli Collector Warns of Heavy Penalties for Violations.



“PS Ashokan”Indian Chronicle”Manthani June 26”“In a decisive move to protect road infrastructure and ensure

public safety, Peddapalli District Collector Sri Koya Sri Harsha has officially banned the use of cage-wheeled (KG wheels) tractors on public roads across the district.”“In a press release issued on Thursday, the Collector stated that the continued usage of cage-wheeled tractors has been causing severe and permanent damage to road surfaces, leading to the formation of large potholes and increasing the risk of road accidents.”“To curb this menace, the district administration has imposed strict penalties.”“First-time violators will be fined ₹5,000”“Second-time offenders will face a ₹10,000 penalty”“Third-time violations will incur a ₹20,000 fine and criminal cases will be registered under relevant laws”“Collector Harsha has instructed all Tahsildars, MPDOs, MEOs, and SHOs to remain alert and take immediate punitive action against violators. Officials are directed to impose on-the-spot fines and file cases without delay.”“This directive is aimed at safeguarding public infrastructure and preventing road-related hazards. The district administration appeals to farmers and tractor owners to comply with the order in the interest of community welfare and road safety.

Say No to Drugs, Yes to Life: Police Lead Public Mobilization in Manthani. “



“PS Ashokan”Indian Chronicle”Manthani, June 26”“As part of the observance of the International Day Against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking, the Ramagundam Police Commissionerate organized a spirited 2K Anti-Drug Awareness Run in Manthani town with the objective of mobilizing public sentiment against the growing scourge of narcotic abuse.”“The rally was inaugurated by Peddapalli Deputy Commissioner of Police (DCP) Sri Karunakar, in the distinguished presence of Godavarikhani ACP M. Ramesh and other senior police officials. Coordinated by the Manthani Circle Police, the event witnessed robust participation from students, educators, youth groups, and community members across the region.”“In his keynote address, DCP Karunakar asserted that youth represent the lifeblood of the nation’s future, and their protection from the perils of drug addiction must be a collective societal mission. He warned that substances such as ganja and synthetic drugs not only cause irreparable harm to health but also entrap individuals in criminal behavior, social isolation, and psychological ruin.”“The DCP reiterated that this campaign was not a ceremonial observance, but a strategic initiative within a broader vision to declare Peddapalli a drug-free district. He called on the public to act with vigilance and promptly report any



drug-related activities—be it usage, sale, or illegal trafficking—to the nearest police authorities.”“> “Community vigilance is our greatest strength. Together, we can uproot the drug menace from our soil,” he said.”“The event reached its emotional peak as students from various educational institutions took a unified pledge, echoing the message:”“> “Say No to Drugs, Yes to Life.”“Their commitment to living substance-free lives and spreading awareness within their circles symbolized a strong front against addiction.”““Officials in Attendance:”“CI Raju (Manthani)”“Inspector Prasada Rao (Godavarikhani Two Town)”“SI Srinivas (Ramagiri)”“SI Divya (Manthani)”“SI Ramesh (Manthani)”“SI Naresh (Mutharam)”“The Commissionerate formally commended the leadership and participation of school managements, faculty, and students, acknowledging their pivotal role in shaping a resilient, vigilant, and narcotics-free generation.”

“For reporting any drug-related offenses or suspicious activities, citizens are strongly encouraged to contact the nearest police station without delay.”“> Together, let us build a healthier, safer, and drug-free Peddapalli.”“Issued by:”Office of the Commissioner of Police”Ramagundam Police Commissionerate

Educational bridge... Leader of progress Bhadrachalam ITDA PO Rahul”““



“““Shaik Sharief, Bhadrachalam, June 26 (Indian Chronicle): He has contributed a lot to the educational and cultural progress within the scope of the Bhadrachalam Integrated Tribal Development Agency. Not only that, he has also contributed to the improvement of medical and sports facilities. In this context, for the first time in the state from July 1 of the new academic year, Bhadrachalam ITDA PO B. Rahul has taken steps to organize special classes for the mental development of students studying in tribal educational institutions in the curriculum. Rahul, who took charge as the 56th PO of Bhadrachalam ITDA on June 25 last year, has been serving the tribals of the agency in his own style over the past year. It has been a year since he took over the reins of ITDA. PO Rahul has made special efforts from the beginning to raise the standards of 30,854 students studying in 348 educational institutions under ITDA. Keeping in mind the experiences encountered during the field inspection of schools, a special book called Uddipakam was prepared and distributed to the students to help them master primary education. Special training was given to students of classes 8, 9, and 10 for career guidance, and tests were also conducted and special prizes were given. This time, 93 percent of results were reported in the tenth grade, unprecedented in the history of ITDA, and 26 schools achieved a 100 percent pass rate. As an incentive, students who showed talent in engineering and medicine were provided with laptops and adequate support to pay their art school fees. There have been no funds for repairs in schools under the Bhadrachalam ITDA area for the last seven years. In this context, PO B. Rahul brought the issue of school repairs to the attention of higher authorities at the recent PO meeting. Responding to this, the government released a GO three days ago, sanctioning Rs. 15 crore. Invitation letters for major events in Koya and appreciation certificates given to employees during Independence and Republic Day celebrations were printed in Koya and distributed to the employees. Last year, he received the blessings of the tribals by giving a speech in Koya on the occasion of World Tribal Day. PO Rahul changed the appearance of the Tribal Museum in the Bhadrachalam ITDA premises. From the beginning, he made it look like a village with his passion for the tribals. Boating, box cricket, etc. were organized to attract children and youth. With this, ministers who recently visited the IT Vala Museum also praised the good management of the museum. In this regard, State Minister Danasari



Anasuya (Sitakka) recently brought it to the attention of the officials of the Central Tribal Welfare Department in Hyderabad. They responded positively and announced that they would grant Rs. 1 crore for the development of the museum. They provided support for the improvement of medical and sports facilities within the ITDA area. A scanning machine is being provided to the Bhadrachalam Area Hospital after the authorities requested scanning. Steps are being taken to resolve any medical problems that arise in Dummugudem and Charla mandals. Sports equipment has been brought from Korea for two sports schools at a cost of Rs. 25 lakhs for the improvement of sports facilities. Meanwhile, sports such as wrestling, kutya, ball badminton, and others are being promoted in 20 schools like never before. Bhadrachalam ITDA emerged as the overall champion in the state-level tribal sports competitions held in Utnur in 2024-25. Special focus on students from July: Rahul, ITDA POIt has been very satisfying to carry out the responsibilities as Bhadrachalam ITDA PO for the past year.

Students Play a Key Role in Drug Eradication: Town SI Swapna, Dr. Akkineni Lokesh“



Still mopping it old school: Dyson study reveals India’s obsession with clean homes, but we could be making our floors dirtier



Hyderabad:Dyson announced the results of its first Global Wet Cleaning Study, to investigate wet cleaning habits and behaviours, frustrations people face with their wet cleaning tools, and why our best intentions might not be delivering the hygienic homes we expect.The global study uncovers that despite frequent cleaning by Indian house-

holds, current tools and habits could be making homes less hygienic, not cleaner. The study finds that hard floors dominate Indian homes, with 94.5% of people having floors made of tiles, stone, or wood—materials that attract dirt easily and require frequent wet cleaning. However, popular cleaning methods including traditional mops, buckets, and cloths, may be spreading dirt rather than removing it.

Indians are obsessed with cleaning: Is that enough? Unlike South Korea or Australia, where wet cleaning happens more reactively, occasionally or for specific messes, in India, wet cleaning is part of the daily routine. Traditional wet floor cleaning methods remain the most preferred choice for many Indian households, with mops, cloths, or wet sweepers in constant use. Yet, despite their popularity, these tools bring their own set of challenges:1 in 3 Indians say wet cleaning is simply too time-consuming. In fact, 75% spend over an hour on their cleaning routines, with nearly 35 minutes devoted to wet cleaning floors.Indian use of mops, brooms, and wet cloths is the highest in APAC—yet only 33% finds cloths or sponges truly effective for hard floors.49% admit they don’t change the cleaning water for every room. This means dirty water, and the germs in it, are spread from one part of the house to another, defeating the purpose of cleaning.

45% cite stubborn stains as their top cleaning challenge, and 31% worry about slipping on wet floors. With hard floors so prevalent, this becomes more than a minor grievance. Seeking Solutions: What Do Indians Want in a Wet Cleaner?Despite a strong cleaning culture, India ranks lowest in the APAC region in terms of awareness around modern wet cleaning machines. While 62% of Indians believe that vacuum cleaners with wet functionality are the best solution for floor cleaning, adoption remains low.

PhonePe and HDFC Bank partner to launch co-branded credit card

Hyderabad:PhonePe and HDFC Bank today announced the launch of the ‘PhonePe HDFC Bank Co-branded Credit Card’, marking PhonePe’s foray into the co-branded card segment. In partnership with HDFC Bank, this new line of co-branded RuPay Credit Cards is designed to meet the evolving financial needs of the Indian consumer by offering benefits on UPI spends especially on the PhonePe Platform.

This strategic partnership between HDFC Bank and PhonePe leverages their respective banking and fintech strengths to make credit cards accessible and user-friendly. Available in ‘Ultimo’ and ‘UNO’ variants, these cards offer rewards on popular spending categories like recharge, bill payments, travel, online shopping, groceries, and cabs. Additionally, the cards integrate seamlessly with UPI, allowing users to pay for their everyday spends via credit card while enjoying the rewards offered on the cards via the extensive merchant network enabled on UPI QRs.

Speaking on the launch, Sonika Chandra, Chief Business Officer, Consumer Payments at PhonePe said, “We are excited about our first co-branded credit card launch in partnership with HDFC Bank. This launch underscores our commitment to providing innovative financial solutions to our wide set of user base. This card is positioned to offer PhonePe customers value on their regular spends, by giving them 10% reward points across select categories like bill payments, recharges, and travel bookings. Additionally, consumers can use this card seamlessly across millions of UPI merchants. We are confident that our strategic partnership with HDFC Bank, coupled with the benefits that this



card offers will redefine the credit card experience for millions of Indians.”

Parag Rao, Country Head – Payments, Liability Products, Consumer Finance & Marketing, HDFC Bank, said, “As India’s leading card issuer, it is our constant endeavour to create impactful, tailored offerings for our customers, and expand access to credit in meaningful ways. Our partnership with PhonePe allows us to tap into a segment of digitally native consumers, making credit cards more rewarding and widely usable, especially via UPI—an interface that has become central to India’s digital payments ecosystem. With this co-branded card, users get the best of both worlds with our trusted credit card platform and PhonePe’s customer-centric digital experience.”

Brihaspathi Technologies Limited raises USD 10 million, secures Maharashtra State Road Transport Corporation project, and announces IPO plans

Hyderabad:Hyderabad-based AI surveillance and security solutions provider, Brihaspathi Technologies Limited, has successfully raised USD 10 million in funding from foreign institutional investors (FIIs) and others. This capital infusion will fuel the company’s expansion efforts, including the establishment of a new 72,000 sq. ft. CCTV manufacturing facility in Hyderabad, expected to be operational by the end of the current financial year.

As part of its growth strategy, the company plans to hire over 400 additional employees to support its mission of delivering world-class, Made-in-India AI-based security solutions. Brihaspathi Technologies is also gearing up for an Initial Public Offering (IPO) in the next financial year (FY 2026–27). Proceeds from the IPO will be utilized to strengthen its research and development (R&D) capabilities, expand manufacturing capacity, and advance AI-driven solutions.

In another significant development, Brihaspathi Technologies has been awarded a major surveillance project by the Maharashtra State Road Transport Corporation (MSRTC). The project involves implementing a comprehensive AI-enabled CCTV monitoring system across the MSRTC network, reinforcing the company’s strong credentials in the public sector and its ongoing collaborations with



government and institutional clients.To date, the company has deployed over 1.2 million CCTV cameras across India. Its portfolio includes high-profile installations such as surveillance systems for the Border Security Force (BSF) along international borders, election monitoring for the Election Commission of India, AI-based classroom monitoring systems, wildlife and national park surveillance, and exam control room solutions across various states. In the past, Brihaspathi Technologies has achieved a historic milestone by deploying 64,000 CCTV cameras across 19 states in a single day for the NEET examination.

and to report details of those who use, sell, or encourage the use of intoxicating substances like drugs and ganja. They assured that the identities of those providing information would be kept confidential.

They also advised students to continue their studies with a proper plan during their student life, stressing that discipline is essential for students and that education should proceed with discipline. Only then, they explained, would students achieve their set goals. The program was attended by SI Shyam Prasad, College Principal Sudhakar Reddy, lecturers Bhukya Man Singh, Somesh, Sampath Kumar, Padmavati, Swaroopa, Mahalakshmi, Anand Babu, Srinivasa Rao, Ratnam, Garudachalam, Mother Teresa Trust Chairman Koppula Murali, Trust member Booram Naveen, Shaz Blood Organization founder Mohammed Sindh, and college students.

Grand Celebrations Mark Birthday of ITDP Leader,daminedu 10th ward member Ramesh..



“June 26,Indian Chronicle Rayalaseema co-ordinator”“The birthday of Tiruchanur ITDP President and Daminenidu 10th Ward Member, Ramesh, was celebrated with great pomp and grandeur by his supporters today. The festivities, organized by his well-wishers, highlighted his popularity and strong community ties in the region.“The celebration was marked by a spectacular display of fire-works and the cutting of a massive 100 kg cake, which was distributed to all attendees. In a gesture of respect and admiration, Ramesh was honored with a large garland by his supporters, who gathered in large numbers to extend their heartfelt birthday wishes.“Speaking at the event, his supporters expressed their warm wishes for Ramesh’s continued success. “With the blessings of Lord Venkateswara, the living deity of Kaliyuga, we pray that he

celebrates many more birthdays,” a supporter stated. They also expressed their sincere hope that he would ascend to higher political positions in the future.“In his address, Ramesh extended his gratitude to everyone who attended and conveyed their birthday wishes. He particularly lauded the RJ Youth fan club for organizing such a grand event.

“Earlier in the day, as a sign of respect and to seek blessings, Ramesh met with prominent political leaders, including Chandragiri MLA Pulivarthi Nani, TUDA Chairman Dollars Divakar Reddy, and State Vanniyakula Kshatriya Corporation Chairman Rajan.“The event was a testament to Ramesh’s strong network of friends and supporters, with a large group including JB Balu Royal, Laddu Vinod, Srikanth, Jagga, Prasad, Teja, Bhoopathi, and Jolly Royal in attendance.

TUDA Chairman Dollars Diwakar Reddy Calls for Collective Action to Build a Drug-Free Society““



“June 26 Indian Chronicle Rayalaseema co-ordinator”“On the occasion of International Day Against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking, Tirupati Urban Development Authority (TUDA) Chairman and TTD Ex-Officio member, Dollars Diwakar Reddy, expressed deep concern over how drug use can destroy both an individual’s future and the family structure. He emphasized that a drug-free society can only be achieved through a collective effort from all citizens.“As part of a large-scale awareness campaign organized by the District Police, a public and student awareness program on the dangers of drug abuse was held. A meeting at the RDO office was attended by key officials and leaders, including District Collector Venkateshwar, District SP Harshavardhan Raju, Tirupati MLA Arani Srinivasulu, Municipal Commissioner Mourya, Greenery

and Beautification Chairperson Sugunamma, Yadav Corporation Chairman Narasimha Yadav, and MLC Sipayi Subramanyam, alongside TUDA Chairman Dollars Diwakar Reddy.“During the event, District SP Harshavardhan Raju administered a pledge to all participants to combat drug use. This was followed by a massive rally from the RDO office to the MR Palli junction, where hundreds of students formed a human chain to raise awareness.“In his address, Dollars Diwakar Reddy stressed that curbing drug use requires a unified community effort. He stated that a drug-free society can only be realized when the public is fully educated about the harmful effects of drugs. He urged students to stay away from drugs to protect their promising futures. The event saw participation from hundreds of students, demonstrating strong community support for the cause.

BRS team including former Ministers inspects Jurala project crest gate issues

GNS News Agency, June 26
Gadwal: Former Ministers V Srinivas Goud and C Lakshma Reddy on Thursday visited the Priyadarshini Jurala Project in Jogulamba Gadwal district to assess its condition, following reports of operational issues with crest gate number 9.Later, while interacting with media persons, the leaders expressed concern over the persisting problems with the dam’s crest gates. Srinivas Goud criticised the Congress government for failing to undertake timely repairs ahead of the monsoon season. The BRS delegation interacted with project officials and emphasised the need for immediate restoration of the damaged gates to avoid flood-related risks.Former MLAs A Venkateshwar Reddy and Chittam Rammohan Reddy were also part of the in-



spection team that reviewed the situation and urged quick action from the authorities.

C.H. Venkanna Takes Charge as Municipal Commissioner of Manthani — Vows Transformative Development““

““PS Ashokan“Indian Chronicle“Manthani, June 26““In a move welcomed by public representatives and citizens alike, C.H. Venkanna officially assumed office as the Municipal Commissioner of Manthani on Thursday morning at the local municipal office.““Speaking on the occasion, Commissioner Venkanna conveyed his strong commitment to the comprehensive development of Manthani Municipality, assuring that he would discharge his duties with integrity, efficiency, and a people-centric approach.““> “With the support of local residents, elected representatives, and the media fraternity, I aim to ensure visible and impactful progress across all sectors of the municipality,” he stated.““He emphasized the importance of community collaboration and transparent governance in shaping a cleaner, greener, and better-administered urban environment.““Several public representatives and journalists who were present at the event extended their heartfelt congratulations to the newly appointed Commissioner, expressing hope that his leadership would usher in a new era of civic development for Manthani.



Land Encroachment Sparks Tension in Gunjapadugu: Heir Demands Action Against Illegal Occupation.



““PS Ashokan“Indian Chronicle“Manthani, June 26““In a case that has stirred local attention, a serious allegation of land encroachment has emerged from Gunjapadugu village under Manthani Mandal, where a man identified as Boge Rajanarsu has reportedly trespassed into private patta land and obstructed rightful cultivation activities.““Addressing a press conference at the Manthani Division Media Press Club on Thursday, Devalla Srinivas, the legal heir of the disputed property, narrated the ordeal faced by his family. He stated that the land in question, situated in Survey No. 365/B, has been in their family’s possession for generations and was inherited from his father.

He clarified that in 1981, a certain Boge Gattayya had purchased a separate portion of land from his father, which has no bearing on the current dispute.““However, Rajanarsu, allegedly without any legal documentation or ownership rights, forcefully entered their land, disrupted cultivation, and

damaged a well-established nursery, Srinivas claimed. He further added that even with the implementation of the Dharani Portal, official land records such as the pahani and 1B continue to reflect their father’s name as the rightful owner, reaffirming their legal claim.““Srinivas also revealed that Boge Rajanarsu and Boge Srinivas have been asserting that the land was sold by his father to their father Ankayya — a claim unsupported by any legal evidence. Despite holding a village-level panchayat in the presence of elders, the opposing party reportedly failed to present any valid proof of ownership.“

““From 2019 to 2020, we patiently waited for them to produce supporting documents. When none were presented, we resumed rightful cultivation on the advice of the village sarpanch,” Srinivas stated. He added that on June 6, 2025, while they were ploughing the field, Rajanarsu launched a physical attack, prompting

Bhadradri District DIEO Hasavath Venkateswara Rao's Services Commended-Intermediate Education Commissioner Presents Letter of Appreciation“



““Shaik Sharief, Bhadrachalam, June 26, Indian Chronicle: Intermediate Education Commissioner Krishna Aditya commended Bhadradri District Intermediate DIEO Hasavath Venkateswara Rao for his exceptional efforts in supervising intermediate education, managing colleges effectively, and achieving a high pass percentage in the district. On this occasion, District Intermediate DIEO Hasavath Venkateswara Rao received a letter of appreciation from the commissioner. Commissioner Krishna Aditya praised DIEO’s dedication to raising educational standards and providing quality education to students in the district. He specifically highlighted DIEO Hasavath Venkateswara Rao’s

immense contribution as both District Intermediate DIEO and Principal of Bhadrachalam Government Junior College, stating that it was due to his efforts that Bhadrachalam Government Junior College secured the first position in the state in the vocational education sector.

The commissioner expressed his wish for DIEO to continue working with the same spirit in the future. Bhadrachalam Government Junior College In-charge Principal Sudhakar Reddy, along with lecturers Sampath Kumar, Padmavathi, Swaroopa, Umalakshmi, Anand Babu, Balakrishna, Srinivasa Rao, Ratnam, Garudachalam, Bhukya Man Singh, Lakshmi Prasanna, Hemalatha, and Somesh, extended their congratulations to Intermediate DIEO Hasavath Venkateswara Rao.

Dental surgeons lack formal surgical training to perform hair transplants, Telangana Medical Council clarifies

Hyderabad: Telangana Medical Council on Thursday issued a notice to the general public stating that dentists (Bachelor in Dental Surgery), dental surgeons, oral and maxillofacial surgeons (Master in Dental Surgery) lack the formal surgical knowledge and training to perform aesthetic procedures and hair transplants.

The Council said that hair transplant should preferably be undertaken only by those who have surgical grooming like formal surgical training such as MCh/DNB Plastic Surgery, MD/DNB Dermatology with adequate grooming in dermatological surgical procedures.“It is also noted that the above named specialities have Hair Transplantation as a core topic in their curriculum,” the notice said.

The Council also said that aesthetic procedures should be undertaken only by those RMPs (Registered Medical Practitioners) who have adequate training to perform these procedures as per their curriculum.“So, curriculum of various specialities should be the guiding principle for all RMP’s while undertaking any procedure including aesthetics and hair transplant procedures.”

Brazil auctions off several Amazon oil sites



GNS News Agency, June 26

Brasilia: Brazil auctioned off several land and offshore potential oil sites near the Amazon River on Tuesday as it aims to expand production in untapped regions despite protests from environmental and Indigenous groups. The event came months before Brazil is to host the UN's first climate talks held in the Amazon. The protesters outside venue warned of potential risks that oil drilling poses to sensitive ecosystems and Indigenous communities in the Amazon. A luxury Rio de Janeiro hotel hosted the auction conducted by the National Oil Agency. Most of the 172 oil blocks for sale are located in areas with no current production, such as 47 offshore locations close to the mouth of the Amazon River and two sites inland in the Amazon near Indigenous territories. Nineteen offshore blocks were awarded to Chevron, ExxonMobil, Petrobras and CNPC. The oil companies see the area as highly promising because it shares geological characteristics with Guyana, where some of the largest offshore oil discoveries of the 21st century have been made.

This region is considered to have high potential risk due to strong currents and the proximity to the Amazon seashore. Under public pressure from President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, the Brazilian Institute of the Environment and Renewable Natural Resources, known as IBAMA, approved an emergency plan allowing state-run Petrobras to conduct exploratory drilling in a block near the mouth of the Amazon River, the last step to grant an environmental license. "It's regrettable and concerning that blocks are being acquired

in a basin that has not yet received environmental licensing," Nicole Oliveira, executive director of the environmental nonprofit Arayara, which tried to block the auction in court.

"This is an irresponsible move by the National Oil Agency and a very risky one for the companies involved," Oliveira said. "We will continue litigating to prevent the contracts from being signed and the blocks from being explored." The auction wrapped up with only 34 oil blocks awarded. Brazil's oil agency noted that the signing bonuses — one-time payments made by the winning companies — totaled \$180 million, a record for auctions of this kind.

An agency representative said the highest premium was for a block located near the mouth of the Amazon River, which drew a nearly 3,000% markup. Oliveira took part in a peaceful protest that gathered about 200 people outside the auction site, from environmentalists to Indigenous leaders. "We came to Rio to repudiate the auction," said Giovane Tapura of the Manoki, an Amazon tribe. "We would have liked to be consulted and to see studies on how the oil drilling could affect us. None of this has been done." In a recorded opening statement at the start of the event, Brazil's National Oil Agency said the auctions are part of the country's energy diversification strategy aimed at transitioning to a low-carbon economy and that contracts signed with the winning companies include measures to reduce carbon intensity in production activities, as well as mandatory investments in energy transition projects. Brazil has increased crude oil production, which became the country's top export for the first time last year, surpassing soybeans. The auction is part of the federal government's goal to maintain and even expand output beyond 2030, when production from current oil blocks under exploration is expected to decline. Brazil gets most of its electricity from hydropower and other green energies. The UN climate talks will be held in the city of Belem, close to the mouth of the Amazon. Critics say it's a contradiction that Brazil's president is pushing for increased fossil fuel production while trying to cast himself as an environmental champion. Claudio Angelo, head of international policy at Climate Observatory, a coalition of 133 environmental, civil society and academic organizations, told reporters ahead of the auction that Brazil is both undermining its own standing ahead of the climate talks and

Israeli fire kills 30 in Gaza, medics say, as attention shifts to Iran



GNS News Agency, June 26

CAIRO. - Israeli gunfire and strikes killed at least 30 people across the Gaza Strip on Wednesday, local health authorities said, as some Palestinians there said their plight was being forgotten as attention shifted to the air war between Israel and Iran. The deaths included the latest in near daily killings of Palestinians seeking aid in the three weeks since Israel partially lifted a total blockade on Gaza that it had imposed for almost three months. The Reuters Daily Briefing newsletter provides all the news you need to start your day. Sign up here. Medics said separate airstrikes on homes in the Maghazi refugee camp and Zeitoun neighbourhood in central and northern Gaza killed at least 14 people, while five others were killed in an airstrike on a tent encampment in Khan Younis in southern Gaza.

Eleven others were killed in Israeli fire at crowds of displaced Palestinians awaiting aid trucks brought in by the United Nations along the Salahuddin road in central Gaza, medics said. The Israel Defense Forces (IDF) said it was looking into the reported deaths of people waiting for food. Regarding the other strikes, it said it was "operating to de-mantle Hamas military capabilities" and "feasible precau-

tions to mitigate civilian harm." On Tuesday, Gaza's health ministry said 397 Palestinians among those trying to get food aid had been killed and more than 3,000 wounded since aid deliveries restarted in late May. Some in Gaza expressed concern that the latest escalations in the war between Israel and Hamas that began in October 2023 would be overlooked as the focus moved to Israel's five-day-old conflict with Iran. "People are being slaughtered in Gaza, day and night, but attention has shifted to the Iran-Israel war. There is little news about Gaza these days," said Adel, a resident of Gaza City. "Whoever doesn't die from Israeli bombs dies from hunger. People risk their lives every day to get food, and they also get killed and their blood smears the sacks of flour they thought they had won," he told Reuters via a chat app. Israel has been channelling much of the aid it is now allowing into Gaza through a new U.S.- and Israeli-backed group, the Gaza Humanitarian Foundation, which operates a handful of distribution sites in areas guarded by Israeli forces. It has said it will continue to allow aid into Gaza, home to more than 2 million people, while ensuring aid doesn't get into the hands of Hamas. Hamas denies seizing aid, saying Israel uses hunger as a weapon against the population in Gaza.

The Gaza war was triggered when Hamas-led militants attacked Israel in October 2023, killing 1,200 and taking about 250 hostages, according to Israeli allies. U.S. ally Israel's subsequent military assault on Gaza has killed nearly 55,000 Palestinians, according to Gaza's health ministry, displaced almost all the territory's residents, and caused a severe hunger crisis. The assault has led to accusations of genocide and war crimes, which Israel denies. Palestinians in Gaza have been closely following Israel's air war with Iran, long a major supporter of Hamas. "We are maybe happy to see Israel suffer from Iranian rockets, but at the end of the day, one more day in this war costs the lives of tens of innocent people," said 47-year-old Shaban Abed, a father of five from northern Gaza. "We just hope that a comprehensive solution could be reached to end the war in Gaza, too. We are being forgotten," he said.

Zelenskiy leaves G7 with no Trump meeting or fresh arms support from US

KANANASKIS, Alberta, GNS News Agency, June 26, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskiy left the Group of Seven summit on Tuesday with new aid from host Canada for its war against Russia but said diplomacy is in "crisis" having missed the chance to press U.S. President Donald Trump for more weapons. The G7 wealthy nations struggled to find unity over the conflict in Ukraine after Trump expressed support for Russian President Vladimir Putin and left a day early to address the Israel-Iran conflict from Washington. A Canadian official initially said Ottawa had dropped plans for the G7 to issue a strong statement on the war in Ukraine after resistance from the United States. Emily Williams, director of media relations for Prime Minister Mark Carney, later said no proposed statement on Ukraine had ever been planned.

Carney had started the day by announcing Ottawa would provide C\$2 billion (\$1.47 billion) in new military assistance for Kyiv as well as impose new financial sanctions. Zelenskiy said he had told the G7 leaders that "diplomacy is now in a state of crisis" and said they need to continue calling on Trump "to use his real influence" to force an end to the war, in a post on his Telegram account. Although Canada is one of Ukraine's most vocal defenders, its ability to help it is far outweighed by the United States, the largest arms supplier to Kyiv. Zelenskiy had said he hoped to talk to Trump about acquiring more weapons.

After the summit in the Rocky Mountain resort area of Kananaskis concluded, Carney issued a chair statement summarizing deliberations. "G7 leaders expressed support for President Trump's efforts to achieve a just and lasting peace in Ukraine," it said. "They recognized that Ukraine has committed to an unconditional ceasefire, and they agreed that Russia must do the same. G7 leaders are resolute in exploring all options to maximize pressure on Russia, including financial sanctions." Canada holds the rotating G7 presidency this year. Other leaders do not need to sign off on G7 chair statements. Trump did agree to a group statement published on Monday calling for a resolution of the Israel-Iran conflict. "We had a declaration given the exceptional, fast moving situation in Iran," Carney told a closing



news conference.

A European official said leaders had stressed to Trump their plans to be hard on Russia and Trump seemed impressed, though he does not like sanctions in principle. Three European diplomats said they had heard signals from Trump that he wanted to raise pressure on Putin and consider a U.S. Senate bill drafted by Senator Lindsey Graham, but that he had not committed to anything. "I am returning to Germany with cautious optimism that decisions will also be made in America in the coming days to impose further sanctions against Russia," German Chancellor Friedrich Merz said. G7 leaders agreed on six other statements, about migrant smuggling, artificial intelligence, critical minerals, wildfires, transnational repression and quantum computing. Trump said on Monday he needed to be back in Washington as soon as possible due to the situation in the Middle East, where escalating attacks between Iran and Israel have raised risks of a broader regional conflict. A White House official on Tuesday said Trump explained that he returned to the U.S. because it is better to hold high-level National Security Council meetings in person, rather than over the phone. Upon arriving at the summit, Trump said that the then-Group of Eight had been wrong to expel Russia after Putin ordered the occupation of Crimea in 2014.

What is Netanyahu's endgame in Iran?



GNS News Agency, June 26

When Israel launched an all-out air war against Iran on June 13, it said the attack was aimed at destroying Iran's nuclear programme. On day one, Israel bombed Iran's Natanz nuclear facility and several ballistic missile sites, besides assassinating the country's top Generals, including the chief of the armed forces. In the subsequent days, Israel bombed the nuclear facility in Isfahan, Iran's command centres, missile launchers, civilian locations and even the headquarters of the state TV. Israel has established air superiority over Iran. In retaliation, Iran launched close to 400 missiles, hitting several targets in Israel, including an oil refinery in Haifa and a top research institute near Tel Aviv.

While the air war is escalating, there are questions about Israel's endgame. What does Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu want?

If it is the destruction of Iran's nuclear programme, Israel is far from achieving it. The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), the UN's nuclear watchdog, said on June 16 that Israel's attack "severely damaged if not entirely destroyed" the centrifuges at the Natanz facility. The Israeli strike had "completely destroyed" the above-ground facility at Natanz, according to IAEA chief Rafael Grossi. The underground hall housing the centrifuges that enrich uranium was not directly hit. "However, the loss of power to the cascade hall may have damaged the centrifuges there," he said. Mr. Grossi also said four buildings were destroyed at the Isfahan Nuclear Technology Centre — a chemical lab, a uranium conversion plant, a fuel manufacturing plant, and a facility to convert uranium hexafluoride to uranium metal. But there was no major damage to the Fordow enrichment plant, which is Iran's most fortified facility that has been built deep under a mountain. As Israel has aerial superiority, it can continue to bomb Iran. But there are two problems. One, Israel doesn't have the kind of bunker buster bombs or strategic bombers that can carry such bombs to destroy heavily fortified facilities such as Fordow. Therefore, Israel's offensive is not going to be concluded any time soon. And two, despite Israel taking out most of Iran's chain of command in the initial strike, Tehran is hitting back with drones and ballistic missiles. Israel's air strikes in Iran have not reduced the intensity of Iranian missile barrages. At least 24 people have been killed so far in Israel. The Ben Gurion airport in Tel Aviv, the country's main airport, remained shuttered. If Israel's air strikes do not blunt Iran's fire power, Mr. Netanyahu could come under greater pressure at home to

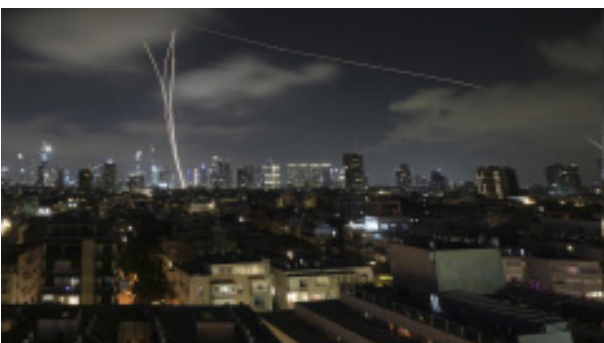
Hypersonic missiles Fattah-1 fired at Israel, says Iran

Iran said early GNS News Agency, June 26, it fired hypersonic missiles at Israel in the latest round of overnight strikes between the archfoes, hours after Donald Trump demanded the Islamic republic's "unconditional surrender". The U.S. president insists Washington has played no part in ally Israel's bombing campaign, but also warned Iran his patience is wearing thin as the conflict enters a sixth day. Israeli warplanes targeted the Iranian capital before dawn Wednesday after the military issued a warning for civilians to leave one district for their safety.

The Israeli military later said it struck weapons manufacturing sites and a facility used to make centrifuges in Tehran. Iran told residents of Tel Aviv to prepare for an attack, with the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps claiming its hypersonic Fattah-1 missiles were "repeatedly shaking the shelters" in the commercial hub. "The 11th wave of the proud Operation Honest Promise 3 using Fattah-1 missiles" was carried out, the Guards said in a statement broadcast on state television. File picture of the hypersonic ballistic missile called "Fattah" with a range of 1400 km, unveiled by Iran in Tehran. File picture of the hypersonic ballistic missile called "Fattah" with a range of 1400 km, unveiled by Iran in Tehran | Photo Credit: via Reuters Hypersonic missiles travel at more than five times the speed of sound and can manoeuvre mid-flight, making them harder to track and

wrap up the war quickly. And if Israel accepts a ceasefire without destroying Iran's nuclear facilities, it could be seen as defeat.

One is to continue the relentless bombing of Iran, destroying state institutions and infrastructure, decapitating the regime and pushing for a state collapse or regime change in Tehran. On June 15, while speaking to Fox News, Mr. Netanyahu said Israel's attack could lead to regime change in Iran. The next day, he refused to rule out assassinating Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, Iran's Supreme Leader, saying killing him would end the conflict. But there is a grey area. Before starting the war, Mr. Netanyahu had urged the Iranians to rise against their government. But when Israel started widespread bombing across the country, killing hundreds of Iranians, it was an 'I-told-you' moment for the Iranian government, who always warned the public of the threats from "the Zionist entity". So it is to be seen whether the Israeli bombings would weaken or strengthen the political and social roots of the regime. Even after the Israeli strike began, U.S. President Donald Trump said he was open for a deal with Iran. On June 16, there were reports that Iran had sent feelers to America through Gulf Arab countries that it was ready to return to talks if Israel stopped bombing. Mr. Trump's initial posts suggested that he wanted to use the Israeli strikes as an added layer of pressure on the Iranians to get the deal he wanted. While Iran is ready to scale back the programme, it is not ready to give up its capabilities. Mr. Trump wants Iran to completely abandon its nuclear programme. Even if Iran is ready to seriously consider Mr. Trump's offer, will they return to talks when the country is under attack? So far Iran has said no. So the next question is whether Mr. Netanyahu will stop his attacks to facilitate talks between the U.S. and Iran? If that would be the case, why did Mr. Netanyahu start the war in the first place, three days ahead of a sixth round of talks between the U.S. and Iran? This indicates that a nuclear deal between the U.S. and Iran has never been Israel's priority. The third option is to drag the U.S. into the war. Mr. Trump has so far maintained that America is not involved in the war. But he admitted that he was aware of Israel's attack plans even when he publicly voiced opposition to them. Israeli officials say they went ahead after getting "a clear green light" from the U.S. Mr. Trump has warned Iran not to target American bases or soldiers. And Iran has been careful not to escalate the war beyond Israel. But Israeli officials, according to Axios, are pressing the U.S. to join the war because Israel needs American military involvement to meet their objectives — total destruction of Iran's nuclear facilities either through direct strikes or through regime change. If Tehran falls, that would be an added boost for Israel's efforts to reshape West Asia. The Assad regime in Syria is already gone. Iran's network of militants has been weakened. Gaza lies in ruins. In the West Bank, Israel is free to do whatever it wants to do. Arab nations voice protests meekly. If Iran is weakened, Russia's remaining strategic influence in West Asia will shrink further. China will be more dependent on America's Gulf Arab allies for oil. Mr. Trump's position, as of now, is to let Israel continue the bombing. He will not call for a ceasefire. But as the war drags on, with both Israel and Iran hitting each other, Mr. Trump will come under greater pressure to join the war.



intercept. Iran also sent a "swarm of drones" towards Israel, where the army said it intercepted two over the Dead Sea area. Attempts to prevent regional war. World powers have scrambled for an off-ramp, hoping to prevent the conflict from spiralling into a region-engulfing war. In separate phone calls with his Iranian counterpart and US envoy Steve Witkoff on Tuesday night, Egyptian Foreign Minister Badr Abdelaty urged a diplomatic solution. Mr. Trump fuelled speculation about American intervention when he made a hasty exit from the G7 summit in Canada, where the leaders of the club of wealthy democracies jointly called for a ceasefire.

US pulls out from vaccines alliance from Gavi, says it has lost public trust

GNS News Agency, June 26

London: US Health Secretary Robert F Kennedy Jr said the country is pulling its support from the vaccines alliance Gavi, saying the organisation has "ignored the science" and "lost the public trust." A video of Kennedy's speech was shown to participants at a Gavi meeting in Brussels on Wednesday, where the vaccines group was hoping to raise at least USD 9 billion for the next five years. Gavi is a public-private partnership including WHO, UNICEF, the Gates Foundation, and the World Bank. It has paid for more than 1 billion children to be vaccinated through routine immunisation programmes, saving an estimated 18 million lives. The US has long been one of its biggest supporters; before Trump's re-election, the country had pledged USD 1 billion through 2030.

Kennedy called on Gavi "to re-earn the public trust and to justify the USD 8 billion America has provided in funding since 2001," saying officials must "consider the best science available, even when that science contradicts established paradigms." Kennedy said until that happens, the US won't contribute further to Gavi. Kennedy, a longtime vaccine sceptic, said he and President Trump were concerned about how Gavi and the World Health Organisation partnered together during the COVID-19 pandemic to work with social media companies "to silence dissenting views, to stifle free speech and legitimate questions" during a time when many people had questions about vaccine safety.

Kennedy said Gavi continues to make "questionable recommendations," like advising pregnant women to get immunized against COVID-19 and funding the roll-out of a vaccine against diphtheria, tetanus, and pertussis in poorer countries. WHO and other health authorities have recommended that pregnant women get vaccinated against COVID-19, saying they are at higher risk of severe disease. Kennedy said he has seen research that concluded that young girls vaccinated against diphtheria, tetanus, and



pertussis were more likely to die from all other causes than children who weren't immunized. Gavi said in a statement Thursday that its "utmost concern is the health and safety of children." The organisation said any decision it makes on vaccines to buy is made per recommendations issued by WHO's expert vaccine group.

This ensures Gavi investments are grounded in the best available science and public health priorities," it said. Gavi said scientists had reviewed all available data, including any studies that raised concerns, and that the diphtheria, tetanus, and pertussis vaccine has "played a key role in helping halve childhood mortality." The British government said Wednesday it would give 1.25 billion pounds (USD 1.7 billion) between 2026 and 2030 to Gavi. It said the money would help Gavi protect up to 500 million children in some of the world's poorest countries from diseases including meningitis, cholera, and measles.

Two existing drugs offer hope to cure Russell’s viper bites



Studies carried out in mice have demonstrated that two approved drugs — varespladib and marimastat — were effective in countering systemic and lethal effects of Russell’s viper (Daboia russelii) venom either individually or in combination. The two drugs were tested against Russell’s vipers venom sourced from different States across India. Russell’s vipers are responsible for over half of India’s snakebite cases. The study led by Dr. Kartik Sunagar, Professor, Centre for Ecological Sciences at IISc, Bangalore, was published recently in the journal Communications Medicine.

Dr. Sunagar and his team are now working with ICMR to design a human clinical trial to test the two drugs. “During the trial, the drugs will be used as an ancillary treatment to determine how effective they would be in treating snakebites,” he says. The control group control will receive only the antivenom but not the drugs.Phospholipase A2 (PLA2), and Snake Venom Metalloproteinase (SVMPs) are two main components of Russell’s viper snake venom. These toxins interfere with components of the blood clotting cascade to induce anticoagulant and haemorrhagic effects in humans. While the varespladib drug inhibits PLA2, the marimastat drug inhibits SVMP. Venom influencing factors

“In a 2021 study, we found differences in venoms of Russell’s vipers from across India depending on the biogeography where they were found. In a follow-up study, we showed that diet and development probably had a major influence in dictating the differences in the venom of Russell’s viper,” says Dr. Sunagar. “Another study published recently [April 2025] found that climatic conditions, such as temperature and rainfall, can also indirectly have a small effect on venom variation.”“In the Western Ghats, characterised by heavy rainfall and dense forests, a rich variety of amphibians and arthropods thrive, providing snakes with a diverse diet. In contrast, arid regions experience limited rainfall and sparse plant cover, resulting in reduced diversity of prey available for snakes,” Dr. Sunagar says. “Temperature can also influence gene expression, though the extent to which this affects venom variation remains unclear. However, it is likely that temperature changes indirectly alter venoms by affecting the availability of prey composition in the region.”Differences in venom

In the latest study, Russell’s viper venom from Punjab and Tamil Nadu exhibited the highest PLA2 activity, followed by other regions — Kerala, Maharashtra, Goa, and Madhya Pradesh. Russell’s viper snake venom from all other regions exhibited minimal PLA2 activity. Proteinase activity was highest in Karnataka followed by the Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Goa, and Andhra Pradesh regions. In contrast, venom from Tamil Nadu exhibited little to no activity, while venom samples from other regions exhibited modest proteolytic activity.Effectiveness of drugsThe PLA2 inhibitor varespladib was found to neutralise even the high PLA2 activity of the venom found in Tamil Nadu and Punjab. The varespladib drug effectively inhibited the modest PLA2 activity of the venom from other Indian regions. In the case of the matrix metalloprotease-inhibiting drug, marimastat, the drug effectively inhibited the venom in a concentration-dependent manner. The drug was effective even when the proteolytic activity was high, as seen in Karnataka. As expected, the drug exhibited highly potent inhibitory effects against the venom with moderate activity, as seen in Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, and Goa.

Overall, the drugs varespladib and marimastat when used individually or in a therapeutic drug combination were found to be very effective in reducing venom-induced cytotoxicity, venom-induced coagulopathy, and fibrinogenolysis. When used individually, the drugs were effective in reducing the venom-induced cytotoxicity by snake populations from some regions while being less effective in the case of venom from some other regions. However, the therapeutic combination of varespladib and marimastat nearly completely inhibited these activities.To replicate the real-world scenario and to test the effectiveness of the drugs after the venom challenge, the researchers administered the drug 30 minutes after venom delivery.

Rescue experiments involving PLA2-rich snake venom from Punjab revealed that the varespladib drug conferred complete protection against venom-induced lethality even when the drug was administered 30 minutes after venom injection. In contrast, marimastat was ineffective in rescue experiments even when the drug was administered soon after venom delivery. In the case of venom from Karnataka, the Marimastat drug provided only 40% survival rate against the SVMP-rich venom at the end of 24 hours even when the drug was administered soon after venom injection.In the case of venom from Madhya Pradesh, which is rich in both SVMP and PLA2, varespladib and marimastat individually provided only 60% and 40% protection, respectively, when dosed immediately after venom challenge. But a therapeutic combination of the two drugs conferred complete protection from venom-induced lethality even when the drugs were administered 30 minutes after venom injection.According to Dr. Sunagar, since the body size of mice is extremely small, where they weigh between 18-22 grams, 30 minutes delay in administering the drug is perhaps equivalent to many hours delay in treating patients bitten by a Russell’s viper.Even in a single State, the snakes might be producing a different type of toxin in different parts of the State. For instance, in Karnataka, one drug is effective in the southern part of the State, while the other drug is effective in the northern part of the State. “Given this stark variation in venoms, clinical trials must be conducted across various regions of India. Initially, we will begin the clinical trials in select regions and gradually expand them to cover most areas throughout the country. Once the trials are completed, we will determine which drug(s) are necessary for treatment in each specific region,” Dr. Sunagar says. The targeted approach will help in treating patients with a single effective drug or the drug combination instead of blindly using the two drugs in combination across the country and thereby reducing dose effectiveness.

Towards empowerment: busting myths around vitiligo



GNS News Agency, June 26

In a world that idolises perfection, vitiligo tells a strikingly different story — one of resilience, uniqueness, and rediscovered beauty. Vitiligo is a skin condition where the body loses its pigment in patches, turning areas of the skin white due to the loss of melanin.India is home to one of the highest populations affected by vitiligo globally, with studies showing a prevalence ranging from 0.46% to 2.16%. That means that millions live with this condition — often silently, and sometimes, undiagnosed, in the shadows of misconceptions.

What causes it?

Vitiligo is an autoimmune condition where the body’s immune system mistakenly attacks its own pigment-pro-

ducing cells. It can also be triggered by genetics, thyroid dysfunctions, or skin trauma. It can occur at any stage in life — across genders, ages, and skin tones.There is no permanent cure for vitiligo as yet; however, several treatments can help to manage and reduce progression of the condition. These include: topical creams to encourage repigmentation; phototherapy (UVB light therapy). Surgical options such as mini punch grafting, blister grafting and split-thickness skin grafting give excellent repigmentation in stable cases. There are also options for cosmetic coverage for those who choose it and certain oral medications including immunosuppressants, as well as multivitamins, to arrest progression and for repigmentation.Consulting a dermatologist is essential to decide what is best for each individual. Emotional support and counselling often prove just as important as medical care.Fact: It is a skin condition that requires treatment as it impacts emotional and mental well-being.Working on normalisation and empowermentTo date, many react to vitiligo with curiosity or stigma — simply because they do not understand it.

World Vitiligo Day, observed every year on June 25, reminds us that awareness can lead to acceptance. And acceptance is the first step towards empowerment.Let us start conversations that celebrate differences. Let us raise children who see contrast as character. Let us create a society where no one has to hide their skin to feel seen. Because every shade tells a story — and sometimes, the brightest stories are written in white.

Dopamine makes it hard to put down our phone. Here's why

GNS News Agency, June 26

Ever find yourself unable to stop scrolling through your phone, chasing that next funny video or interesting post? Or maybe you’ve felt a rush of excitement when you achieve a goal, eat a delicious meal, or fill your online shopping cart.Why do some experiences feel so rewarding, while others leave us feeling flat? Well, dopamine might be responsible for that. Here’s what it does in our brains and bodies. Dopamine is a neurotransmitter — a chemical messenger that facilitates communication between the brain and the central nervous system. It sends messages between different parts of your nervous system, helping your body and brain coordinate everything from your movement to your mood.Dopamine is most known for its role in short-term pleasure, and the boost we get from things such as eating tasty foods, drinking alcohol, scrolling social media or falling in love.Dopamine also assists with learning, maintaining focus and attention, and helps us store memories. It even plays a role in kidney function by regulating the levels of salt and water we excrete. Conversely, low levels of

dopamine have been linked to neuro-degenerative disorders such as Parkinson’s disease.Dopamine is not just active when we do pleasurable things. It’s active beforehand and it drives us to pursue pleasure.Say I go to a cafe and decide to buy a doughnut. When I bite into the doughnut, it tastes fantastic. Dopamine surges and I experience pleasure. The next time I walk past the cafe, dopamine is already active. It remembers the doughnut I had last time and how delicious it was. Dopamine drives me to walk back into the cafe, purchase another doughnut and eat it.From an evolutionary perspective, dopamine was incredibly important and it ensured survival of the species. It motivated behaviours such as hunting and foraging for food. It reinforced the pursuit of finding shelter and safety and keeping away from predators. And it motivated people to seek out mates and to reproduce.However, modern technology has amplified the effects of dopamine, leading to negative consequences. Activities such as excessive social media use, gambling, consuming alcohol, drug use, sex, pornography and gaming can stimulate dopamine release, creating cycles of addiction and compulsive behaviours.

What is IIT-Delhi’s quantum communications breakthrough? | Explained



The story so far: On June 16, the Ministry of Defence said in a statement that IIT-Delhi scientists together with the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) demonstrated quantum communication over a distance of more than 1 km in free space. The development was hailed as a breakthrough in quantum cybersecurity.

What is quantum communication?

When two or more photons, the subatomic particles of light, are created in just the right way, measurements made on one photon will instantly determine the result for the partner photon, too — even if the photons are far apart. This phenomenon is called quantum entanglement. Ordinary or classical physics can’t explain this correlation, it’s a purely quantum phenomenon.Quantum communication is an umbrella term for any scheme that uses the concepts of quantum physics, but especially entanglement, to make a given communication channel leak-proof. In one scheme, like the one the IIT-Delhi team demonstrated, entangled photons carry information from a source to two stations. If any third party intercepts one of the photons, the other photon will immediately be disturbed as well and the channel will be revealed as insecure.In short, quantum communication can be used to create communication channels that are protected against computational attacks since any attempt to tap the quantum channel will itself be revealed. Thus they have great value in defence settings.An important method in quantum communication is quantum key distribution (QKD).

How does QKD work?

If Bala has a message for Selvi that he wants only Selvi to receive, a simple way is to send a letter. At the address, the postal worker will deposit the letter into a letterbox. The location of the letterbox is public knowledge, but only Selvi will have the key to access it. The key is private knowledge.Receiving email works similarly: Bala will send an email to Selvi’s email ID (public knowledge) and Selvi will use her password (private knowledge) to access it.QKD is a specialised form of quantum communication whose sole purpose is to help Bala and Selvi possess identical secret keys. Once they both have the key, they can unlock and read the messages they send each other.

The future of Abujhmad

Abujhmad, a dense and nearly impenetrable forest region, is the only largely unsurveyed area in the country. Even its name suggests the difficulty of the terrain: Abujhmad means ‘incomprehensible plateau’ in Hindi. According to the 2011 Census, the area is home to 40,000 residents, who are Abujhmediya tribal people. This is one of the seven Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups in Chhattisgarh. The Abujhmediyas are sub-tribes of the Gond tribe. Abujhmediyas say that Abujhmad is a Gond word that translates into ‘sal forest’. In colonial India, the British categorised some areas of the country as ‘excluded areas’ and some others as ‘partially excluded areas’ under the Government of India Act, 1935. These areas were left untouched. Abujhmad was an ‘excluded area’ although the British did conduct a land survey there in 1873. In independent India, the fruits of development did not reach Abujhmad. The region has therefore not seen the negative consequences of development either. Maoists took advantage of the lack of development and made Abujhmad their unofficial headquarters. They termed it a “liberated zone”.

Union Home Minister Amit Shah has said that the Maoists would be eliminated by March 2026. So Abujhmad is about to be liberated again, but this time from the Maoists. What will this liberation look like? The idea is to build new roads, police stations, schools, hospitals, and mobile towers. The work on some of these has already started. Over the last few years, iron ore is being mined from the periphery areas of Abujhmad. Now, it is set to happen inside Abujhmad as well. But will the law be followed?

The Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act, 2006, gives special rights to forest-dwelling communities. In 2019, when Abujhmediyas made efforts to apply for habitat rights, the Maoists threatened the head of their samaj with death. The State government also did not cooperate with the tribal people. Will that change now?The Abujhmad forest area is larger than Goa. It is spread across three districts in Chhattisgarh — Narayanpur, Bijapur, and Dantewada — and one of Maharashtra — Gadchiroli. As part of its anti-Maoist strategy, the Indian Army once planned a manoeuvring range in Abujhmad. This plan has not been abandoned yet.Abujhmad also produces what is possibly the purest form of organic food. Will there be efforts to leverage this unique opportunity? Or will the region be flooded by modern fertilizers and pesticides with the help of the new roads and markets?

In the sal forest of Abujhmad, mahua trees flourish. Like many other Adivasi women, Abujhmediya women also collect mahua flowers and make liquor out of it. Will there be efforts to establish an Abujhmad Mahua Union Limited, akin to Amul, so that Abujhmediya mahua liquor can be sold worldwide and the profit can go to Abujhmediya mahua collectors? If liberation means only opening a mahua liquor factory, that may not help the Abujhmediyas much.CGnet Swara, an NGO I founded, is trying to start a platform called Abujhmad AI-R (Artificial Intelligence Radio). This will have an AI agent which will ask hundreds of Abujhmediyas about their problems and what development they wish to see in their region. A radio programme will be made from this and taken to government officials. Will the officials listen to their voices?Deep inside Abujhmad, an Adivasi Maoist once told me, “We are not ‘terrorists’; we are journalists like you. We use guns to make loud noises like Bhagat Singh because the media does not listen to us. Can you come up with a media that is not owned by a few and gives equal respect

Note that QKD doesn’t encrypt the message itself: that’s achieved using traditional algorithms like AES. Instead QKD helps both parties acquire the key to unlock that encryption in a secure way. There are two kinds of QKD. In the classic prepare-and-measure way, Bala prepares single photons in some predetermined states and Selvi measures them. In entanglement-based QKD, a source creates entangled photon pairs and sends one photon to Bala and the other to Selvi.

What did the IIT-Delhi team do?

The IIT-Delhi team, led by Prof. Bhaskeri Kanser, transmitted keys through the air using entanglement-based QKD, across a distance of 1 km in the IIT campus. This is a step up from transmitting photons through an optical fibre. The greater goal here is to establish reliable QKD between a ground station and a satellite orbiting the earth hundreds of kilometres up. This way the satellite can distribute keys to receivers anywhere in India by beaming photons through the atmosphere. Notably, the test demonstrated “a secure key rate of nearly 240 bits per second with a quantum bit error rate of less than 7%”. When the photons reach Bala and Selvi, they will measure each particle. Since they’re entangled, the measurements have to match up. In this case the measurements disagreed <7% of the time, which is considered acceptable for the present scheme. Common sources of error include turbulence in the air, detector noise, and artificial lighting.Previously, Prof. Kanser’s team had demonstrated a quantum communications link between Vindhyachal and Prayagraj in Uttar Pradesh in 2022. The year after, they increased the distance to 380 km with a spool of standard telecom fibre and a quantum bit error rate of 1.48%. In 2024, they established a QKD scheme through more than 100 km of an optical fibre link.

What next?

The IIT-Delhi team demonstrated the technology in the presence of dignitaries from the DRDO, the institute, and the Directorate of Futuristic Technology Management, including the director of the DRDO-Industry-Academia Centre of Excellence at the IIT. After the event, Minister of Defence Rajnath Singh said India had “entered into a new quantum era of secure communication which will be a game-changer in future warfare.” These changes entail a quantum network with multiple nodes maintaining quantum communications. In 2021, China created the world’s first quantum network with two ground-to-satellite links and optical fibres together covering 4,600 km.Quantum communications has important civilian applications too, especially in the banking and telecom sectors.A future ‘quantum internet’ of the sort the U.S. expects to possess by the mid-2030s could also enable distributed quantum computing, ultra-precise sensing, and network-wide secure time synchronisation in addition to secure messaging. To help scientists develop such technologies, the Indian government approved the National Quantum Mission in 2023 with an outlay (2023-2031) of Rs 6,000 crore.

Delving into multiple layers of Tamil identity

As per the Gondi religion, the journey of mankind started from a hill inside Abujhmad called Verwakot. When the world got inundated, only Verwakot was not submerged. Believers say that the first Shiva, who they also call Badadev, survived by floating on a Tumba, or a boat made of big bottle gourd. According to these oral Gondi stories, there were 84 Shivas who they call Shambhu Shek. Can habitat rights give Abujhmediyas the right to say ‘no’ if there is a proposal to mine Verwakot? Will the rights of the people be respected in liberated Abujhmad? These are questions to ponder.

Delving into multiple layers of Tamil identity

Nirmala Lakshman, Publisher and Chairperson of The Hindu Group of Publications, Ramachandra Guha, writer and historian, and Ranvir Shah, cultural activist, philanthropist and businessman, after the discussion on her book The Tamils, in Bengaluru on June 17. Nirmala Lakshman, Publisher and Chairperson of The Hindu Group of Publications, Ramachandra Guha, writer and historian, and Ranvir Shah, cultural activist, philanthropist and businessman, after the discussion on her book The Tamils, in Bengaluru on June 17. | Photo Credit: K. Murali Kumar

The rich repository of Tamil heritage and culture has largely remained invisible to the wider world, said Nirmala Lakshman, Publisher and Chairperson of The Hindu Group of Publications, speaking at a discussion on her book The Tamils, at the Bangalore International Centre here.Ms. Lakshman described how it took her four years of multiple journeys across Tamil Nadu, studying, researching and listening to stories of people, to come up with the book.“I spoke to epigraphists, historians, experts as well as ordinary people who generously shared their experiences, their sense of culture and tradition, and I discovered that multiple narratives coexisted,” she noted.It was during this journey, Ms. Lakshman said, that she realised how a large part of it still remained unknown to the larger world.“Many expert voices had not been heard outside of Tamil Nadu and Tamil world which led me to realise that the wealth of knowledge of the rich repository of Tamil heritage and culture has not been visible to larger world, and the nuanced and better-informed reading of Tamil history and society as seen through their eyes could be highlighted in my book.”“Through The Tamils, I hope to convey my personal insights to what I have learned about Tamil culture, history and literature to an audience of not just Tamil people, but also to non-Tamil speaking people everywhere,” she further added. The discussion, moderated by Ranvir Shah, founder of Prakriti Foundation, and introduced by Ramachandra Guha, writer and historian, delved into multiple aspects that have shaped the Tamil identity.“The Tamil diaspora is as strong in Tamil as people in Tamil Nadu are. In places like Malaysia, there is a thirst to know more about one’s roots,” said Ms. Lakshman, who further added that the research for the book was a journey of discovery for her too.According to her, Tamils, as with many other communities, are a complex demographic and carry with them a weight of history that goes back several millennia. Pointing out that there are about 90 million people across the world who identify themselves as Tamil, she recollected how, when she visited places like Malaysia, the diaspora there expressed a strong desire to know more about their roots, despite having migrated at least three generations ago.“In this book, I tried to find that Tamil essence as I weave through history and story, talking to a wide spectrum of people. So that in that sense it’s an anecdotal and personal journey,” Ms. Lakshman remarked while further adding that today, a Tamil in Tamil Nadu is no more a Tamil than a Tamil in Malaysia or Sri Lanka or Canada.

What is the procedure for removing judges? | Explained



Articles 124 and 217 of the Constitution provide that a judge of the Supreme Court/High Court shall be removed by the President, on the grounds of ‘proved misbehaviour’ or ‘incapacity’ after a motion is passed in each House of Parliament by a majority of the total membership of that House and by a majority of not less than two thirds of the members of that House present and voting (special majority) in the same session. The Constitution does not define the terms ‘proved misbehaviour’ or ‘incapacity.’ The Supreme Court has opined in various cases that wilful misconduct in office, corruption, lack of integrity or any other offence involving moral turpitude would constitute misbehaviour. Incapacity here means a medical condition that may include physical or mental incapacity.

The detailed procedure for removal is provided in the Judges (Inquiry) Act, 1968. It stipulates that a notice of motion for removal should be signed by not less than 50 members in the Rajya Sabha and 100 members in the Lok Sabha. The Chairman or Speaker may after due consideration and consultation admit or refuse to admit the motion. If admitted, a three-member committee will be constituted consisting of Supreme Court/High Court judges and a distinguished jurist. If the Committee, after investigation, absolves the judge of any misbehaviour or incapacity, the motion pending shall not be proceeded with. If found guilty

of misbehaviour or suffering from incapacity, the committee report will be taken up in the Houses of Parliament which would then need to pass the motion with special majority.

What is the current issue?

Justice Yadav made communally-charged remarks while speaking at an event organised by the Vishwa Hindu Parishad. He is reported to have said the country would be run according to the wishes of the majority. The ‘Reinstatement of Values of Judicial Life’ adopted by the Supreme Court in 1997, and followed by all the High Courts, mandates that behaviour and conduct of members of the higher judiciary must reaffirm people’s faith in the impartiality of the judiciary. The judges should not commit any act of omission or commission that is unbecoming of the high office they occupy. Notably, though the Judges (Inquiry) Bill, 2006 was not passed by the Parliament, it defined ‘misbehaviour’ to include violation of code of conduct for the judges. This bill proposed imposition of ‘minor measures,’ like issuing warnings, public or private censure, withdrawal of judicial work for a limited time etc., for misconduct that does not warrant removal.

What is required?

The Blackstone’s ratio in criminal jurisprudence that ‘it is better that ten guilty persons escape than that one innocent suffer’ can be applied even when it comes to the removal of judges. The stringent process with the requirement of special majority in both houses has resulted in the non-removal of judges even after having been found guilty of misbehaviour by the inquiry committee. This is nevertheless essential to protect the independence of judges while discharging their duties. The Chairman of the Rajya Sabha, against whom himself a notice of motion for removal has been submitted, is unlikely to admit the present motion. The Supreme Court has issued a notice seeking details of the controversial speech made by Justice Yadav. The Judge is likely to appear before the Supreme Court Collegium to explain his stand. It is cardinal that Judges display behaviour that behoves the high constitutional office they hold.

How does La Niña affect India’s climate? | Explained

La Niña, a phase of the El Niño Southern Oscillation (ENSO), occurs when the region of the Pacific Ocean between Indonesia and South America is cooler than usual. Its counterpart, El Niño, represents a warming of the same region. These two phases significantly influence global atmospheric circulation and weather patterns. During La Niña years, India receives normal or above-normal rainfall during the monsoon season. Yet the same phenomenon causes droughts in Africa and intensifies hurricanes over the Atlantic Ocean. Conversely, the El Niño brings extreme summers and droughts in India while increasing rainfall in the southern United States.While the La Niña was expected to emerge by July this year, it is yet to. The India Meteorological Department now expects a La Niña to set in by late 2024 or early 2025, plus a milder winter due to this delay. This decade began with three consecutive La Niña events (2020-2022), a rare occurrence known as Triple Dip La Niña, followed by an El Niño in 2023. Climate change may increase the frequency and intensity of both La Niña and El Niño events, as rising sea and land temperatures disrupt the Pacific’s balance. This could also amplify extreme La Niña events, which generally lead to harsh winters in India.

Will a La Niña emerge this winter?

2024 is different; the U.S. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration in fact called it “spooky”. The La Niña has not emerged as expected. Historically, the La Niña has usually formed during the monsoon or the pre-monsoon period, and it has formed only twice between October and December since 1950. Global forecasts had also predicted its emergence this monsoon. But in December, there remains only a 57% chance of it forming in 2024. It will be weak if it still does but it could affect global weather.The onset of La Niña or El Niño can be declared on the basis of many indices. For instance, the oceanic Niño index (ONI) compares the three-month average sea surface temperatures in the East-Central Tropical Pacific with the 30-year average. When the difference between the two is 0.5° C or higher, it is an El Niño, and when it is –0.5° C or lower, it is a La Niña. Currently, it is around –0.3° C. To be classified as a full-fledged La Niña or El Niño, ONI values need to exceed the thresholds at least five times consecutively.

Meteorology of a La Niña winter

Cities in southern India like Bengaluru and Hyderabad are experiencing a colder than usual winter this year, while north India is witnessing a delayed winter with above-normal temperatures. Some reports have linked the southern chill to a La Niña, but the current ONI values suggest otherwise. Had a La Niña developed already, north India would likely be experiencing a colder winter than usual.An analy-



sis of meteorological data over 35 years by researchers at the Council on Energy Environment and Water, New Delhi, has revealed that while La Niña winters feature colder nights compared to El Niño, daytime temperatures tend to be higher. Meteorological parameters like wind speed and planetary boundary layer height (PBLH) — the lowest atmospheric layer directly influenced by land-atmosphere interactions — also vary during ENSO phases, affecting air quality. The team found the average wind speed is higher throughout the day during La Niña winters. Faster winds help reduce air pollution by transporting pollutants away. They also found that the average PBLH is slightly lower during La Niña winters.If La Niña sets in, lower temperatures in north India may lead people to burn more biomass for heating, worsening air pollution. A lower PBLH could also trap more pollutants near the ground. But higher wind speeds could disperse the pollutants, potentially leading to better air quality.

La Niña and the monsoonsEl Niño summers are relatively harsher, as was the case in April this year, when India experienced intense, record-breaking heat waves. If a La Niña arrives and persists into the summer of 2025, it may offer relief from high heat. Additionally, an El Niño often disrupts monsoons, with India historically receiving below-average rainfall during at least half of all El Niño years since 1871. But the same figures also indicate evolving patterns since 1980.Both north and south India, for instance, have received less rainfall during more intense El Nino events while central India has been barely affected. A La Niña, on the other hand, promotes robust monsoons as evidenced by the “normal” or “above-normal” rainfall in the La Niña years of 2020, 2021, and 2022. There were “below normal” rains in the El Niño year of 2023. Thus it would be a welcome development if a La Niña forms now or early next year and continues until the monsoon season. This would mean a less intense summer and more rains for India.

Try India’s first Christmas cake from Mambally’s Royal Biscuit Factory in Kerala

On the ground floor of the Harbour City Mall, around 210 metres away from the Old Bus Stand Junction in Thalassery, Kannur, is a dark green board with capital neon letters that spells out Mambally’s. Behind its glass door, biscuits and cakes are neatly arranged on a glass shelf jostling for space with boxes of plum cakes that whisper a legacy of more than a century. Believed to be one of India’s first bakeries, Mambally’s Royal Biscuit Factory in Thalassery, established in 1880, is also reportedly the birthplace of the beloved plum cake, an assured presence on the dining table beside a glass of red wine at Christmas feasts.

The history of Mambally’s Royal Biscuit Factory can be traced back to five generations when Thalassery-native Mambally Bapu was approached by a British merchant Murdoch Brown to bake a cake for Christmas in 1883. He gave Bapu a cake from England to taste, asking him to replicate it and also provided some ingredients such as dry fruits. Brown also suggested Bapu to soak the fruits in a French brandy.Bapu had started his bakery on the main road opposite the Thalassery police station which moved to the Harbour City Mall a few years back. Following his training in Burma, he started the bakery which sold around 40 varieties of biscuits, buns and rusks initially.

For preparing the cake, the baking doyen procured spices and replaced the brandy with local arrack made from cashew apples and bananas. He also had a blacksmith from Dharmadam, Thalassery, prepare a custom-made mould. As Murdoch returned to taste the cake, he was spellbound

and called it one of the best he had ever eaten. This incident which eventually contributed to Thalassery being branded the City of Three C’s – Cricket, Cakes and Circuses – is so popular that there is even an Amar Chitra Katha comic about it. As years progressed, the Mambally family branched out to different parts of the State, continuing to be a notable presence in the baked good industry. “In Thiruvananthapuram, Santha bakery is well-reputed in the business. We have got Best Bakery in Kottayam and Modern Bakery in Kottayam and Kozhikode. Then we have a Cochin Bakery, which is spread across Kerala and Karnataka. There are multiple bakeries and each one has created a legacy for itself. But everything started from Thalassery,” says Renuka Bala, a fifth-generation member of the family who joined the business two years ago. “I was just trying to help my uncle MM Prakash who runs the shop. Along the way, I realised that we have such a legacy and no one from my generation was taking the business forward,” she says. Today, the Mambally plum cake contains dry fruits and nuts such as raisins, walnuts and figs as well as candied fruits, ginger, and orange peel. (Renuka says the family used to have documents from Japan regarding the procurement of these items in the past.) They don’t use alcohol anymore, but the fruits are still stewed in a bell metal uruli, a traditional wide-mouthed, shallow cookware. This mixture is stored in batches for months and is added to the cake batter which contains spices, sourced locally or grown in the Mambally plantations. The batter is baked in a traditional wood fire oven that uses coconut shells.

Solely blaming stubble burning for Delhi’s pollution is incorrect

Delhi’s air quality has turned extremely bad again with the Air Quality Index (AQI) hovering between severe and very severe category. This deterioration took place over the weekend without the burning of any stubble in the farm fields of Punjab and Haryana.The Delhi AQI on Tuesday crossed 430 and is expected to move upwards this week as the minimum temperature is expected to remain below 5 degrees Celsius range and because wind speed, which helps in disbursement of pollutants, is slow. These facts raise critical questions for policymakers and scientists who have blamed the farmers in Punjab and Haryana for Delhi’ and National Capital Region’s (NCR) air pollution.Let’s discuss some facts about the annual phenomenon of stubble burning. Normally the period between September and November 30 is considered the stubble burning period in Punjab and Haryana when farm fields are cleared for the winter crop. Stubble burning incidents in Punjab has come down from 81,042 in 2016, from when the data is available, to 10,909 in 2024, an eight-fold fall in eight years. The year-wise data shows that stubble fire incidents increased during Covid-19 pandemic years of 2020 and 2021 even though the air pollution level in Delhi did not spike as it happened in 2023 and 2024: This clearly indicates a delink between stubble fire incidents and Delhi poor air quality. Similarly, stubble burning incidents recorded in Haryana, where paddy stubble burning is 20% of the crop remains that are burnt, also dipped by almost 90% since 2016. In 2024, Haryana reported only 559 incidents of farm fires.Moreover, the department of science and technology’s air appropriation analysis cannot distinguish between stubble and non-stubble contribution to air pollution as the measurement is through carbon (soot) content in air and comes under bio-mass burning category. Even satellites cannot distinguish between stubble and non-stubble burning. So, if someone is burning leaves or burning wood for cooking or body warmth in Delhi or anywhere in northwestern India, it will count as biomass burning and will be clubbed with stubble burning. If one drives through Delhi in winter nights, one can see many poor and homeless people burning dry wood or grass to keep themselves warm.The data and historical perspective provide enough evidence that stubble burning is not a major contributor to Delhi’s air pollution levels. So, why is Delhi-NCR so polluted in winter? The two primary reasons are the region’s very high self-generated air pollution load, which is increasing every year, and very poor dust management by the local authorities. The particulate matter air pollution on whose basis AQI is measured is primarily related to dust and vehicle/industry exhaust.According to a study done by non-government organisation, the Centre for Science and Environment (CSE), the contribution of vehicular exhaust to the air pollution load in Delhi between October 12 to November 3, 2024, was 51.5%.The neighbouring

districts such as Gurugram, Sonipat, Rohtak and Faridabad in Haryana and Gautam Budh Nagar in Uttar Pradesh contributed 34.97%. The contribution from neighbouring districts was also on account of vehicles. The study said that the farm fires, read total biomass, contribution was 8.19% and dust particles made up 3.7% of the total air pollution in the city.The analysis was derived from data provided by the Decision Support System for Air Quality Management in Delhi, developed by the Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology in Pune. Industrial emissions, including sulphur dioxide, nitrogen oxides, and volatile organic compounds, lead to the formation of secondary pollutants like ozone. Vehicle emissions, particularly from heavy traffic, release carbon monoxide, nitrogen oxides, and hydrocarbons, intensifying pollution in congested areas, the study said.Given the government’s inability to mitigate pollution levels, the Supreme Court intervened to address the crisis and a bench of Justices Abhay S Oka and Augustine George Masih issues slew of measures including prohibition of polluting vehicles from entering Delhi and not to remove Graded Response Action Plan (GRAP) without its approval. The top court ordered the Delhi government and police to ensure effective enforcement of the firecracker ban and action against polluting vehicles on road.The Delhi-NCR region has been under GRAP since the first week of November but its impact on controlling the pollution levels is not much. It is because the vehicular load is still very high and there is poor disbursement of pollutants generated, especially in the morning when there is a heavy traffic. Hence, the weather plays an important role for high density of pollutants in the city in winters unlike other months when higher temperatures and faster wind speed helps in disbursement of pollutants.The administration would not be able to combat Delhi-NCR’s high winter air pollution levels until the region has a year-around action plan that includes fixing responsibility of officials in local authorities for carrying out any air management plan throughout the year.Pollution management should be turned into a people’s movement with resident welfare associations held responsible for greening of parks and open areas. Littering should be made a cognizable offence, road and street cleaning should be fully mechanised and penalties should be imposed on municipal officials for failing to lift garbage.The government should work on phasing out of industries out of the region to new modern industrial belts with proper air and water pollution management systems, which would ease pollution and population load. For this, a revenue sharing model with Delhi needs to be worked out as the capital will lose the most from such an arrangement. Another way to fix the air pollution problem is by redeveloping a green corridor across the national capital that acts as barrier for dust blowing in with westerly winds.

The hidden cost of green washing the Indian Railways

According to a recent report published in this daily, RITES Ltd., the consultancy arm of the Indian Railways, has won two contracts for the repurposing of six broad gauge diesel electric locomotives for export to some African railways. These locomotives will be converted for use on railways that use the Cape Gauge of 1,067 mm as against the 1,676 mm used on the broad gauge of the Indian Railways. While the Indian Railways, in collaboration with its consultancy public sector undertakings such as RITES and IRCON, has exported locomotives to countries in Asia and Africa in the past, this is probably for the first time that second-hand (used) locomotives are proposed to be exported after “gauge conversion”. While there is no doubt that this is a commendable effort in re-engineering that involves virtually rebuilding the locomotives on a narrower platform, the story that lies hidden is a sordid saga of the humongous wasting of costly assets and profligacy unmatched in the annals of railways anywhere in the world, in pursuit of a wholly fictitious goal.

The report mentions “soon to be redundant diesel locomotives”. The fact is that even as far back as March 31, 2023, according to information obtained by this writer under the Right to Information Act (RTI) more than a year ago, there were 585 diesel locomotives stabled (kept idling/stored) in various locations across the Indian Railways’ network due to electrification. Further over 60% of those locomotives had a residual life of more than 15 years. Today, the figure is reported to be about 760 locomotives. How and why did the Indian Railways end up in a situation where hundreds of diesel electric locomotives in good working order with years of service still left in them became redundant? The answer lies with the policy of the government to electrify the entire broad gauge network of Indian Railways in mission mode, at a frenetic pace.Railway electrification in India has long ago transcended mundane considerations such as economic and financial viability and joined the pantheon of universal desiderata such as world peace and universal brotherhood (Vasudeiva Kutumbakam). Today, railway electrification is generally justified broadly on two grounds: a saving of foreign exchange by reducing the import of crude oil and reducing environmental pollution, and, as a corollary of the second point, the adaptability to switch over to renewable sources of energy such as solar and wind. In fact in an official pamphlet issued by the Ministry of Railways in February 2021, entitled ‘Mission 100% Electrification – Moving Towards net zero carbon emission’, the objectives of the mission have been spelt out thus: to provide environment friendly, green and clean mode of transport to the people; and to unleash its potential to use of renewable energy, especially solar, by making use of the huge land parcel available along the railway tracks.Let us examine these justifications in greater detail. The benefit of saving in foreign exchange is true in absolute terms. But viewed in the context of the total consumption of high speed diesel (HSD) oil in the country, the consumption for railway traction is minuscule. According to a study conducted by AC Nielsen and published by the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas (January 2014), when electrification of the Indian Railways was proceeding at a sedate “conventional” pace, 70% of of total diesel oil consumption in the country was by the transport sector. Out of this, the share of the Railways was just 3.24%. In comparison, trucks consumed 28% and agricultural sector consumed 13.2%. The share of the Railways reduced further to about 2% in 2021-22. So, 100% rail electrification will eliminate one of the smallest segments of diesel consumption, leaving the elephants in the room to roam free.Truth about environmental considerationsThe claim of environmental benefits is even more untenable in the Indian context. Consider the following facts. Electricity is a secondary source of energy, except when generated by lightning. It needs to be generated by expending a primary source of energy from fossil fuels such as coal, oil and natural gas, nuclear energy or the kinetic energy of water stored at a height (as in hydroelectric projects), or through solar or wind power.



What is the situation in India? Nearly 50% of the electricity generated today in the country is through coal-fired thermal plants and the Indian Railways plays a crucial role in transporting the coal from the pit heads to the thermal power plants. In fact, nearly 50% of the Railways’ total freight earnings of about ₹1.7 lakh crore in 2023-24 (revised estimates) was generated by transporting coal for various purposes of which 80%, i.e., 40% of total freight earnings was generated only by transporting coal to thermal generating plants.Replacing diesel locomotives with electric locomotives will only result in electric locomotives powered by electricity — about 50% of which is generated by burning coal — being used to move more coal to coal-fired thermal plants to generate more electricity, to transport more coal. Coal is considered the dirtiest fuel, environmentally, on the planet. A complete switchover by the Indian Railways to electric traction merely shifts the pollution caused by diesel locomotives near the railway tracks to the source of power generation in a more concentrated form, ultimately polluting the same atmosphere. Unless and until about 80% of the total electricity generated in the country comes from non-fossil fuels — and that day seems far off — any claim of 100% electrification of the Indian Railways, making it a “Green Railway”, is in the realm of fantasy. Incidentally, before that situation becomes a reality, the Railways will have to find alternative commodities to coal — which, today, is the single highest freight earner — to avoid a financial meltdown. This article is not intended to reopen the time-worn debate of electric traction versus diesel traction. The issue is about chasing a mirage of converting the Indian Railways into a “green railway”, and, in the process, rendering a large number of serviceable diesel locomotives redundant. If all the locomotives already stabled are lined up today end to end, they will stretch for a length of almost 16 kilometres, a majority of them heading prematurely to the scrapyard.

‘Disaster management, strategic purposes’Mission 100% electrification of the Railways will also result in a dichotomy in the near term. The Indian Railways today has more than 4,000 diesel locomotives. With the impending 100% electrification of the system, all of them will not become redundant overnight. According to a recent news report in a reputed financial daily, quoting a senior official, 2,500 diesel locomotives are proposed to be retained by the Railways for “disaster management and strategic purposes”. It is beyond comprehension what disaster will require such a large number of diesel locomotives to be set aside, unless this is a ruse to avoid sending locomotives with considerable residual service life prematurely to the scrapyard. Further, it is reported that another nearly 1,000 locomotives will continue in service for the next few years to meet traffic commitments. In other words, a 100% electrified “green” railway will continue to use about 3,500 “dirty diesels” in the foreseeable future, financially sustained to a large extent by transporting a not-so-green commodity: King Coal. That raises the question: what was the ultimate purpose of the tearing hurry to electrify 100%?The Indian Railways’ Mission 100% electrification is a sterling example of what happens when headline-grabbing slogans promoting vanity projects substitute for well-thought out policies, finally resulting in colossal wastage of tax-payers’ money.

Made-in-India business jet by 2028: JV of France’s Dassault, Anil Ambani-led company to manufacture Falcon 2000 planes in Nagpur



In what may be seen as a big push for the aerospace manufacturing ecosystem in India, French military aircraft and business jet maker Dassault Aviation will manufacture its best-selling business executive jet—the Falcon 2000—in Nagpur in partnership with the Anil Ambani-led Reliance Group company Reliance Aerostructure Ltd (RAL). The two companies announced a strategic partnership for this purpose at the Paris Air Show on Wednesday, announcing that the first made-in-India Falcon 2000 jet should be ready by 2028.

The announcement comes barely two weeks after Dassault and Tata Advanced Systems announced that the latter will set up a facility in Hyderabad to manufacture the fuselage of the Rafale fighter aircraft. The French company has had a long-standing relationship with India, most notably through its fighter jets Mirage 2000 and Rafale that are part of the Indian Air Force’s fleet of fighters.

“Dassault Aviation will manufacture Falcon 2000 jets outside of France for the first time in its storied history. This pioneering initiative will see India emerge as a strategic centre for high-end business jet manufacturing. It marks a historic moment for Indian aerospace and manufacturing industry, as the landmark agreement paves way for India’s entry into the elite club of countries producing next-generation business jets, alongside the United States, France, Canada, and Brazil,” the two partners said in a joint release, adding that the made-in-India jets will cater to rising business jet demand in India and international markets. The release did not spell out the capacity of the Falcon 2000 production facility, but sources in the know indicated that it could be up to 24 aircraft a year.

This would be the first-ever instance of a foreign aircraft manufacturer setting up a final assembly line (FAL) in India for civilian aircraft. European aerospace major Airbus,

which has a minority stake in Dassault, will be setting up an FAL in India in partnership with the Tata group, but that will be for manufacturing helicopters. Airbus and Tata Advanced Systems already have an FAL in India for the C295 military transport aircraft.

India, the fastest-growing major civil aviation market globally, also harbours the ambition to emerge as a manufacturing base for the global aerospace industry, and is keen on international aerospace majors to source components from the country as well as manufacture aircraft here. Dassault Aviation will also transfer the assembly of the front section of Falcon 8X and Falcon 6X—two other jets in the Falcon family of aircraft—in addition to the wings and complete fuselage assembly of Falcon 2000 to the partners’ joint-venture Dassault Reliance Aerospace Ltd (DRAL). The transfer of assembly operations combined with major facility upgrades, will pave the way for the first flight of made-in-India Falcon 2000 by 2028, Dassault Aviation and RAL said.

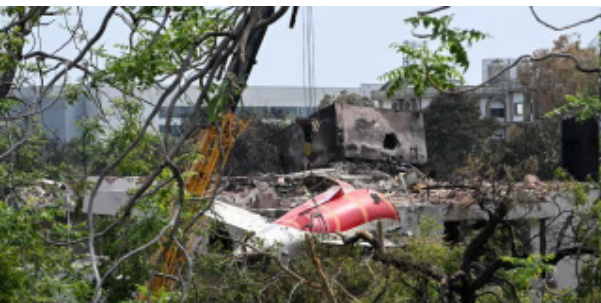
The FAL for the Falcon 200 jets will be set up at Mihan, Nagpur, where DRAL has a manufacturing facility for making various sections of the Falcon 2000 jet. Since delivering its first Falcon 2000 front section in 2019, DRAL has assembled over 100 major sub-sections for the Falcon 2000. “This new agreement, which will make DRAL the first centre of excellence for Falcon assembly outside France and which will eventually enable the establishment of a final assembly line for the Falcon 2000, illustrates, once again, our firm intent to meet our ‘Make in India’ commitments, and to contribute to the recognition of India as a major partner in the global aerospace supply chain,” said Eric Trappier, Chairman and CEO, Dassault Aviation. “Our partnership with Dassault Aviation represents a landmark in Reliance Group’s journey, as we work together to firmly position India as a vital hub in the global aerospace value chain,” Reliance Group Chairman Anil Ambani said, adding that the collaboration with Dassault is a “powerful expression” of the group’s commitment to the vision of self-reliant India and “Make in India for the World” initiative outlined by Prime Minister Narendra Modi. DRAL is expected to recruit several hundred engineers and technicians over the next decade to support its expanding operations, the two partners said, adding that this underscores Dassault’s “deep commitment” to strengthening India’s aerospace manufacturing ecosystem and advancing the country’s emergence as a global centre of excellence for high-precision aviation production.

Ex-aviation minister Praful Patel questions Air India partner Singapore Airlines’ ‘surprising silence’ on Ahmedabad crash

Former Civil Aviation Minister and senior NCP leader Praful Patel on Wednesday hit out at Singapore Airlines – a 25.1 per cent stakeholder in Air India – over what he termed as “deafening” and “surprising silence” following the crash of Air India flight AI-171 last Thursday in Ahmedabad.

In a post on X, Patel said that Singapore Airlines – a key commercial and maintenance partner of Air India – seems to be “in hiding”, an apparent reference to the lack of a public statement from the airline in the aftermath of the crash. Following Patel’s post, Singapore Airlines said that it has been in close contact with Air India and its owner, Tata Sons, and continues to offer its full support and necessary assistance to them. An Air India Boeing 787-8 aircraft, operating flight AI-171 from Ahmedabad to London Gatwick, crashed moments after take-off on Thursday. The aircraft had 242 people on board; only one survived the accident. There were several casualties on the ground as well.

This is the worst aviation disaster involving an Indian airline in at least four decades, and also the first crash of Boeing’s 787 line of aircraft, which first entered service in 2011. Patel was India’s civil aviation minister when the then government-owned Air India placed orders for Boeing 787 jets. “In all the sorrow and din surrounding the Air India crash, there remains a surprising silence — or perhaps ignorance — about the role of a substantial shareholder, and the entity responsible for maintaining a large number, if not all, of Air India’s wide-body aircraft. Guess the name: Singapore Airlines. They seem to be in hiding. Let’s not forget — they have a say in management and a codeshare agreement with Air India. Importantly, Campbell Wilson, the CEO of Air India, is a nominee of Singapore Airlines. He previously served as CEO of their low-cost subsidiary, Scoot Airlines. Why this deafening silence, SQ?” Patel posted on X. SQ is the code for Singapore Airlines, like Air India’s AI and IndiGo’s 6E. Following Patel’s post, a Singapore Airlines spokesperson said, “The Singapore Airlines (SIA) Group extends our deepest condolences to the families and loved ones of everyone affected by the devastating Air India flight AI171 accident. We have been in close contact with our



partner Tata Sons and Air India, and continue to offer our full support and all necessary assistance to them during this difficult time.”

Singapore Airlines holds a 25.1 per cent stake in Air India as a result of the merger of Air India and Vistara. Singapore Airlines held a 49 per cent stake in Vistara, while 51 per cent was held by Tata Sons. After the Tata group acquired Air India from the government in January 2022, it was decided that Vistara would be merged into Air India, giving Singapore Airlines a fourth of the merged airline’s stake. To be sure, while Air India CEO Campbell Wilson was a Singapore Airlines group executive, he was technically not a nominee of the airline in Air India. Wilson had joined Air India in 2022, when Singapore Airlines had no direct stake in the former.

Singapore Airlines is a key strategic partner for Air India under the Tata ownership. Singapore Airlines CEO Goh Choon Phong is also on the board of Air India. Apart from other existing partnerships and synergies, Air India had in May 2024 appointed SIA Engineering Company (SIAEC) – a Singapore Airlines group company – as the strategic partner for the development of Air India’s base maintenance facilities in Bengaluru. Projected to be ready in 2026, the facilities will comprise both wide-body and narrow-body hangars, including associated repair shops, to support the growing Maintenance, Repair and Overhaul (MRO) needs of the aircraft fleet in the Air India Group.

SEBI restrains former IIFL director Sanjiv Bhasin from markets for stock manipulation

The Securities Exchange Board of India (SEBI) on Tuesday barred Sanjiv Bhasin, a former director at IIFL Securities Ltd (IIFL) and 10 other entities from the securities market for alleged stock manipulation by providing recommendations on news channels and social media platforms. In the interim order, the regulator also directed to impound a total amount of Rs 11.37 crore gained by these entities through unlawful activities.

Others who have been restrained from markets include Lalit Bhasin, cousin of Sanjiv Bhasin, Ashish Kapur, Rajiv Kapoor, Jagat Singh, Praveen Gupta, Venus Portfolios Private Ltd, Gemini Portfolios Pvt Ltd, HB Stockholdings Ltd, Leo Portfolios Pvt Ltd and Babita Gupta. “Sanjiv Bhasin, a (former) director at IIFL Securities Ltd, traded through a broker viz. RRB Master Securities Delhi Limited wherein he used to first buy securities himself, then used to recommend the same securities to the public on news channels like “Zee Business” and “ET Now”, and/or IIFL Telegram channel, to buy the same securities,” SEBI said in the interim order.

Once prices of securities increased after his recommendations, Bhasin used to sell the securities, thereby making a profit. Accordingly, Sanjiv Bhasin manipulated the price of securities and made ill-gotten gains, the order stated. Sanjiv Bhasin was employed with IIFL from April 1, 2017 to November 30, 2022 as ‘Director’ of IIFL. Subse-

quently, from December 1, 2022 to June 17, 2024, he was once again associated with IIFL as a consultant wherein, he used to give trading/investment views on stocks, which used to be circulated/broadcasted to all clients of IIFL.

When contacted, IIFL Securities said that Sanjiv Bhasin was associated with the company as a consultant on contractual basis. His term was to end on June 30, 2024. However, due to health reasons, his contract has been discontinued prematurely with effect from June 17, 2024. “Sanjiv Bhasin informed us about SEBI’s enquiry but the details of the same was not disclosed to us,” IIFL said, adding that he was not a member of the board of directors of IIFL Securities Ltd or any other group company or affiliates.

SEBI’s investigation revealed that, prior to his appearances on media channels, Sanjiv Bhasin would take positions—primarily buy orders—in the trading accounts of Gemini Portfolios Ltd, Venus Portfolios Ltd, and HB Stock Holdings Ltd, through dealers of the trading member RRB Master Securities Ltd., Delhi. Given the significant viewership of these channels, his stock recommendations had a considerable impact on the price and volume of the recommended scrips. Capitalizing on this influence, Bhasin would then execute opposite trades (sell orders) in the same accounts—contrary to his public buy recommendations—to profit from the surge in prices of the recommended scrips.

To increase car loading in Railways, Union minister Vaishnaw inaugurates largest automobile in-plant railway siding in Manesar



railway siding in Manesar, Manesar, Nayab Singh Saini, Maruti Suzuki India, Ashwini Vaishnaw, Indian express business, business news, current affairs Vaishnaw said the Railways undertook major reforms in 2021 to strengthen multi-modal logistics, resulting in the construction of 108 MMCT in a short span of time. In a significant step to increase the transportation of passenger vehicles or cars by Indian Railways, Union Minister for Railways, Information & Broadcasting and Electronics & Information Technology, Ashwini Vaishnaw Tuesday inaugurated the country’s largest automobile Gati Shakti Multi-Modal Cargo Terminal (MMCT) at Maruti Suzuki India Ltd facility in Manesar, Haryana.

Haryana Chief Minister Nayab Singh Saini and Maruti Suzuki India’s CEO and managing director Hisashi Takeuchi were also present at the inauguration. Maruti Suzuki is the biggest manufacturer for car loading in Indian Railways. The Manesar in-plant railway siding has a total dispatch capability of 4,50,000 vehicles annually at full capacity. It is company’s second in-plant railway siding facility. Vaishnaw said the Railways undertook major reforms in 2021 to strengthen multi-modal logistics, resulting in the construction of 108 MMCT in a short span of time. “The terminal in Haryana, where the announcement was made, is spread over 45 acres and has a cargo handling capacity of up to 4.5 lakh cars... Legacy problems accumulated in Railways over the years are now being eliminated one by one. Stations, trains, toilets, tracks, cleanliness, technology — every sector has been improved comprehensively. New facilities are being provided to passengers and integrated de-

velopment is being given priority in collaboration with the industry,” said Vaishnaw while addressing the gathering. The Manesar plant is connected to Patli railway station through a 10 km dedicated rail link. It is part of 121.7 km Haryana Orbital Rail Corridor (HORC), which is being developed by the Haryana Rail Infrastructure Development Corp (HRIDC). Officials said that the 10 km railway line was developed at a cost of Rs 800 crore, of which Rs 684 crore was paid by HRIDC and the remaining by Maruti Suzuki. HRIDC is a joint venture of the Government of Haryana (51 per cent) and the Ministry of Railways (49 per cent). HORC is being developed to decongest the Delhi Railway Network by diverting the railway traffic not meant for Delhi.

“On June 17, the vehicles were dispatched to 17 hubs or railway sidings to cater to 380 cities. The siding at the Maruti Suzuki’s Manesar plant comprises four lines and two loading platforms. The biggest benefit of new siding will be the direct loading of the car consignment from the plant. It will end the need for transportation by road to Farukhnagar, Bawal, Palhawas or Gurugram stations. In all, it will reduce a total of 65,000 truck trips per annum, reducing the congestion on road and saving fossil fuels,” said a senior official at the Ministry of Railways.

“The Rail Coefficient of India Railways has increased from 1.2 per cent in 2013-14 to 20.6 per cent in 2024-25. It means out of total car production in India, 20.6 per cent is being transported by the railways. In 2024-25, the total car production was 50.61 lakhs and out of this, 10.41 lakhs were transported by railways. It is mostly for domestic sales. Almost 50 per cent of total car loading is done by Maruti Suzuki,” said the official quoted above. Maruti Suzuki’s Manesar facility was inaugurated in February 2007. Apart from this, India’s largest car manufacturer has three more plants in Gurugram, Gujarat and Kharkhoda. “The project (in-plant railway siding) underscores our strong commitment to India’s Net Zero emissions target 2070. It will contribute to avoiding 1,75,000 tonne of CO2 emissions, saving 60 million litre of fuel annually at full capacity, and reducing road congestion. Lowering carbon emissions remains a top priority at Maruti Suzuki and we aim to achieve this, by increasing the share of vehicle dispatches through railways to 35 per cent by FY 2030-31,” said Hisashi Takeuchi, MD & CEO, Maruti Suzuki India Ltd.

Why the world needs to embrace neurodiversity with dignity and respect

Every year on June 18, the world observes Autistic Pride Day, a day not of mourning or sympathy, but of celebration. It is a day that highlights the unique identities, strengths, and perspectives of individuals on the autism spectrum. Unlike many awareness days that focus on deficits or challenges, Autistic Pride Day stands apart: it is about empowerment, acceptance, and embracing neurodiversity.

What is autism?

Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) is a developmental condition that affects communication, social interaction, and how individuals process information. But to define autism solely in terms of challenges is a limited and incomplete view. Many autistic individuals possess remarkable abilities in fields like mathematics, music, memory, design, and pattern recognition. The term “spectrum” reflects the wide range of experiences from individuals requiring substantial support in daily life to those living independently and thriving in their careers and relationships.

Why take pride in autism?

To some, the word “pride” might seem unusual when associated with a diagnosis. But the pride celebrated today is rooted in the idea of neurodiversity — the understanding that variations in brain function are a natural and valuable part of human diversity. Just as we embrace differences in culture, language, and background, we must also embrace neurological differences. For too long, many autistic individuals have heard messages that they are “broken” or need to be “fixed.” Autistic Pride Day challenges that narrative. It declares that they are whole, valuable, and worthy of inclusion — just as they are. Temple Grandin, a renowned autistic advocate and scientist, once said: “Different, not less.”

This simple phrase captures the essence of Autistic Pride Day. Autistic individuals often see the world in ways that others don’t — noticing patterns, solving problems creatively, and expressing themselves in beautifully unique ways. These are not deficits; they are differences. With the right support and inclusive attitudes, these differences can



thrive. Many of the challenges faced by autistic individuals stem not from autism itself, but from societal barriers: limited access to inclusive education, workplace discrimination, sensory-inaccessible public spaces, and pervasive misunderstandings.

Autistic Pride Day is a call to action especially for those outside the medical or caregiving community to be active allies. It urges us to: While awareness of autism has grown in recent decades, we must move further toward acceptance, advocacy, and equity. The goal is not to “fix” autistic people, but to change the systems that exclude them. This journey starts with conversations at home, continues through inclusive public policies, and leads to a society where autism is respected as a part of the human spectrum not a deviation from it. A message of hope

Autistic Pride Day reminds us that every mind matters. In a world that often prioritises sameness, neurodiverse individuals bring authenticity, creativity, and depth. Whether as artists, scientists, thinkers, or simply as individuals navigating life in their own way, they deserve to be seen, respected, and celebrated. This June 18, let us reaffirm our commitment to building a world where neurodiversity is honoured, differences are embraced, and every individual is treated with dignity and respect.

All you need to know about: clinical trials

In 1747, Scottish naval surgeon James Lind conducted what is now considered the world’s first controlled clinical trial aboard HMS Salisbury. Scurvy, a deadly disease causing bleeding gums and fatigue, was devastating for sailors. Unaware of vitamins, at that stage, Lind divided 12 affected sailors into six pairs, each receiving a different treatment. Only those given oranges and lemons recovered. Though vitamin C wouldn’t be identified for another century, Lind’s use of comparison and observation led to a medical breakthrough. His experiment laid the foundation for modern clinical trials—structured studies on humans to assess the safety and effectiveness of treatments, vaccines, or preventive interventions.

What is a trial?

A clinical trial begins with a question and ends with a verdict—the outcome is effectiveness or failure. A clinical trial is an organised method of determining whether one approach to treatment is better than another. These trials evolved greatly during the 20th century. In 1948, British epidemiologist Sir Austin Bradford Hill introduced the randomised controlled trial, testing the efficacy of streptomycin in pulmonary tuberculosis. Randomising participants to different groups—one receiving the experimental drug and another a placebo—reduced bias and improved inference quality. Randomisation, blinding, and controlled comparisons became the cornerstones of modern clinical research. Clinical trials vary in design based on the research question. In a parallel trial, different groups receive different treatments throughout. In a crossover trial, each participant receives both treatments in sequence. Other designs include factorial trials, testing multiple interventions simultaneously, and cluster trials, randomising groups rather than individuals. Blinding and placebos help reduce bias and isolate true treatment effects. Before human testing, new drugs undergo preclinical studies in labs and animals. Phase 1 assesses safety in healthy volunteers through microdosing. Phase 2 evaluates early effectiveness in patients. Phase 3



compares with standard care in large, multi-centre trials. Phase 4, after approval, monitors long-term safety in real-world settings. These phases ensure scientific rigour and public safety at every step. Yet, for all the rigour in conducting these studies, a problem persisted: selective reporting. Often, only favourable results found their way into journals, while unfavourable or inconclusive trials were quietly buried. This distorted the evidence landscape, misled clinicians, and led to wastage of resources due to the repetition of unsuccessful and unpublished trials. To improve, the concept of clinical trial, registries was born. These registries act as public ledgers, documenting the intention to conduct a trial and the protocol, methods, and outcomes regardless of whether the study sees the light of publication.

The making of Shubman Gill the Test captain, through the eyes of coaches and a trainer



GNS News Agency, June 26

What caught India's junior coach Abhay Sharma's attention when he first saw a 14-year-old Shubman Gill was the consistency of his conduct. Shubman had hit eight straight centuries for Punjab but there was nothing about his demeanour to suggest that. "His behaviour remained consistent whether he scored 100 or 10. His mindset was excellent, he knew he was good but always wanted to improve," Sharma says. Two years later, Shubman, now 16, was at Dharamshala in the middle of a net session with his talented Punjab junior team of that time. WV Raman, former India opener and reputed coach, was on the sidelines. Shubman was facing a variety of bowlers, one of them an express pacer.

While judging a young batsman, Raman has relied on an old method. "What I look to see is the kind of time that he has when batting and how composed he is when up against real fast bowlers." Shubman would get the coach's nod. "He played the fastest bowler like any other bowler, he had a lot of time and he didn't play the fastest bowler any differently," recalls Raman.

Soham Desai, Team India's trainer till very recently, too has a Shubman tale, this one too is about his poise and composure. It's from his 200 against New Zealand in an ODI at Hyderabad. That was 2023, Shubman was 23 then. "He didn't accelerate till the 47th over as he was following the team plan. Then he asked the dressing room for permission to accelerate or not. Once he got the go ahead, he did and scored his 200. This for a guy who wasn't even 25," he says. Shubman doesn't get carried away, be it the starting of an inning or when he is nearing a 100 or even 200. It is that consistency of conduct again. Leadership gurus value consistency of character. So do Indian selectors. Shubman has had lean patches, significant form dips and also chronic technical batting flaws. So why was he preferred over the other captaincy candidates? At the crux of the observations made by Sharma, Raman and Desai lies the answer. What gave Shubman an edge over others was his leading-man looks and a reassuring persona. He has a face that exudes calmness. He hasn't had a rousing start to his Test career, he doesn't have a phenomenal captaincy record but strangely his cricketing fabric has captaincy material. Shubman looks the part for sure. But can he deliver the lines on the big stage? Can he handle the swing in England? Can the young captain take on the Bazballers, handle the seniors in his team and work with the coach with an aura of authority around him?

Beyond his sparkling numbers and temperament, Shubman's strength in his commitment to his craft, aversion to peacockery and that finely tuned sense of his own self-importance. Many of his peers were earmarked for greatness before him, a few he had played under, but they faltered and were left behind. At the junior level, Shubman was denied captaincy. At Punjab, he played under his friend and present-day T20 basher Abhishek Sharma. In the Under-19 World Cup, it was Prithvi Shaw who led the team. He didn't see it as a setback, it didn't compel him to change his character. He wasn't an eager beaver. Shubman didn't try to catch the attention of the coaches, he didn't try to show that 'he too can lead.' Coach Raman remembers the bright batsman who kept to himself but it wasn't because he didn't have much to say. "He was not the captain or a vice-captain, maybe he felt it was better not to really try and impose himself on the team management. Whenever he was asked, he would always be very keen to give his views. He was not what I would call a forthcoming guy, who would venture into volunteering to suggest things at meetings," recalls Raman. His early days in the senior Indian team too were similar. On the field, he wasn't in the captain's ear all the time. Now, it has come to light that he was busy watching, listening and imbibing. The other day, in a Skysports interview, he said he picked a few captaincy attributes from his seniors – Virat Kohli's proactiveness and Rohit Sharma's tactical nuance.

Shubman loves preparing for the road ahead, from the time he picked his bat as a 4-year-old. At Chak Khare Wala, the Punjab village on the Pakistan border, he would watch

Sachin Tendulkar on telly and try to bat like him. In the courtyard of his sprawling ancestral home, Shubman would chuck the ball against the wall and quickly take guard to hit it straight, just like Tendulkar. He was self-driven but having a cricket-obsessed farmer father, who didn't believe that academics was the only path that leads to success and wisdom, helped. The family moved to Chandigarh for Shubman's cricket. From the age 8 to 14, every day of his life, the batting prodigy batted for close to 6 hours. Such was his family's backing that Shubman couldn't understand why his fellow juniors complained that their parents wanted them to leave cricket and focus on studies. Who does that? The boy would wonder. Though, there would be occasional moments of weakness. What if cricket doesn't work out? That's when he would tell himself that there was always the family's large swathes of land in his village to fall back on. There was always the option of being a landed farmer, like his grandfather and father.

Unlike his peers, the ones with modest means traveling on train from Virar to Churchgate or Roorkee to Delhi in a bus, Shubman was at peace. He had a Plan B but he was fully-committed to Plan A. He was never anxious, defensive or insecure. In a crowd of hopefuls, he stood out because of his confidence to make it big. This wasn't wishful thinking but a process-driven pursuit. "From the beginning, he was disciplined. He understood his game, maintained routines, was punctual for the gym, and focused on his skills. He is confident, not overconfident. You can see that focus in his eyes. This is very important as a leader. International cricket will bring different pressures, but I'm sure he'll handle it," he says. And then he says those magical words: "He knows how to conduct himself, he is also consistent which is why everyone likes him." Trainer Soham speaks about how Team India benefited from getting a ready-made complete cricketer. "He is very clear about what he wants. He had a desire to be a complete package when he gets into the Indian team. He is system-oriented about his diet, training, and recovery. With him it's never like, 'okay I am here now, what do I need to do?'" Indian cricket's ultimate committed man Virat Kohli too had drifted from the path after success at the junior level. He had his moment of realisation when one day, in his early 20s, he stood in front of the mirror and saw his puffed up face and much-abused body. There have been a few stray rumours and gossip magazine speculations but Shubman has broadly walked the straight line that has taken him to the top. India captain at 25 – is a testimony of the consistency of his conduct.

The English shores aren't new for Shubman. He has been there and even done it too. Starting from the India Under-19 days. Sharma and Raman recall two different innings in England that have stayed in their minds. First Raman and his memories of a hundred at Kent. This was the tour when the coach had given simple advice to the batsman. "He was too keyed up to do well, so I had asked him to relax a bit," he says. The English bowlers would suffer at the hands of a relaxed Gill. "I remember the 100 he got in one of the one-dayers in England. The first 80 runs, the domination that I saw from him, I don't think that's ever been seen by entire sides. Everybody went absolutely gaga over his ability and his talent," he said. Raman would follow the career of his one-time ward at the senior level. He would cheer his highs, observe his lows and appreciate his ability to bounce back. "He's grown in confidence both as a cricketer and also as a person. Along the way, he's also understood what it is that he can do, what he shouldn't do," he says.

So what is it that Shubman the batsman should not do in England? "Not trust the pitch," says Raman with a laugh. "By that I mean he should try and ensure that his eyes are glued on the ball since there's bound to be a little bit of lateral movement. He's got to try and play a little bit late. In England, you've got to start moving a trifle late because of the moisture, because of the heavy atmosphere, the ball may not come as quickly as it comes in other places in the air." Raman also gives the weather warning. "There's no guarantee as far as English weather is concerned. So every session is going to be different, every half an hour is going to be different," he says. Shubman's other coach Sharma is confident that he can do all that. He too banks on his memories for his prediction. Sharma remembers his under-19 days and his hundred at Brighton. That was the tour, Sharma had backed him to play at No.3 and had spent long hours giving him throwdowns. The two had formed a bond. "I still remember after he got the man of the match award, while everyone was on the ground, he walked towards me, thanked me and touched my feet. It was an emotional moment," he says. "Years later, we met again, by then he had become an India team regular. This was Jaipur during the Ranji season. I was coaching Delhi and he was playing for Punjab. Both teams were having nets, the ground was full. Just as Shubman spotted me."

FIFA lifts transfer ban on ISL club Mohun Bagan Super Giants



GNS News Agency, June 26

Mohun Bagan's Jason Cummings celebrating with team mates Jamie Maclaren and Sahal Abdul Samad after scoring from the spot during the ISL 2024-25 Final at Vivekananda Yuba Bharati Krirangan Stadium, Kolkata on Saturday. (ISL media) Mohun Bagan's Jason Cummings celebrating with team mates Jamie Maclaren and Sahal Abdul Samad after scoring from the spot during the ISL 2024-25 Final at Vivekananda Yuba Bharati Krirangan Stadium, Kolkata on Saturday. (ISL media)

Football's global governing body FIFA has lifted the transfer ban on Mohun Bagan Super Giant on Tuesday clearing the way for the club to sign new players for the upcoming season. The ban was imposed on May 5 over

non-payment of dues to the Australian striker Jason Cummings' former club Central Coast Mariners of Australia. It took just more than a month to revoke the ban as the club acted proactively. Mohun Bagan had submitted a 107-page document to FIFA and responded to two subsequent queries from the governing body.

"Mohun Bagan submitted a 107-page document to FIFA and thereafter there were two queries, and finally the disciplinary committee has sent a mail lifting the ban," a Mohun Bagan Super Giant official told PTI. Unlike Mumbai City FC, whose similar ban took nearly three months to be lifted, Mohun Bagan managed to resolve the issue within a month. The news comes days after a new president Debasish Dutta and general secretary Srinjoy Bose took charge of the club. However, the ban did not significantly impact the club as the summer transfer window opened last week on June 9, giving them plenty of time to build on the team for the coming ISL season. Mohun Bagan will also be able to feature in the continental tournament this year after they had to pull out last time due to a ban by the AFC. The continental body had sanctioned a fine and banned the Kolkata-based club from the AFC Champions League 2 after the team decided to withdraw from a league match in Iran citing concerns related to the political tensions in the Middle East between Israel and Iran. The Indian club withdrew from the match against Tractor SC and didn't travel to the city of Tabriz inviting ban from AFC under the competition regulations.

‘England should beat India if they temper Bazball and use some common sense’: Geoffrey Boycott

GNS News Agency, June 26

England bazball Boycott Ben Stokes, Ben Duckett, Joe Root and Tom Hartley of England during the 3rd day of the second test match between India and England held at the Dr. Y.S. Rajasekhara Reddy ACA-VDCA Cricket Stadium, Visakhapatnam on the 4th February 2024. Former England player Geoffrey Boycott urged the Ben Stokes-led England team to temper their Bazball style of batting and apply some common sense in the upcoming 5-match Test series against India, adding that winning is more important than entertaining.

"England should beat India if they temper Bazball and use some common sense. At times their cricket has been thrilling and super enjoyable but also reckless batting has lost them Test matches. Their only thought should be winning because it is no use telling us how good you are when the last three World Test Championship finals have been played in our country but England have not qualified for any of them. They should be embarrassed. Their aim should be to make the next WTC final," Boycott wrote in his column for the Daily Telegraph. "The new cycle starts now and somebody needs to get through to the England players that being a winner is better than being known as an entertainer. If you can win and entertain, that is a bonus. At the moment England are like a one-trick-pony. It's Bazball or Bazball and that is the way we play; take it or leave it. They don't want to change or learn from their losses. It doesn't seem to make



any difference that so many top class ex-England Test players keep telling them to moderate their batting. So please, get your act together, bring your best game and apply some cricket nous," he added. Bazball is the term associated with England's aggressive style of play under head coach Brendon McCullum. Essentially, it gives players license to be more attacking and emboldened with their shot-making and field placings, and be free from recrimination. Last month, Bazball was in full flow against Zimbabwe in England's one-off Test match win where Zimbabwe folded inside three days as expected and the Three Lions won by an innings and 45 runs with four sessions to spare in a worthy warmup for India's five-test tour starting on June 20 in Leeds.

‘Rohit Sharma won’t be missed as much as Virat Kohli’: Geoffrey Boycott ahead of England vs India series



GNS News Agency, June 26

Rohit Sharma Virat Kohli Boycott Rohit Sharma and Virat Kohli of India during day 1 of the 2nd Test Match between India and New Zealand held at the Maharashtra Cricket Association Stadium, Pune, India on the 24th October 2024. (Sportspics) The legendary Geoffrey Boycott said that India will be hurt due to the absence of Virat Kohli and Rohit Sharma in the upcoming Test series against England, adding that the former will be a bigger miss than the latter. Both Kohli and Rohit retired from the longest format last month with Shubman Gill getting promoted as captain.

"The retirement of Virat Kohli and Rohit Sharma hurts the chances of India beating England. Kohli is the biggest

loss as he has been their best batsman and talisman in all three formats. With so much international cricket played by India, and so little rest, it takes its toll and the mind becomes fatigued," Boycott wrote in his column for the Daily Telegraph. "It does not matter how much talent or experience you have, if you are not mentally fresh and up for the challenge then it becomes draining. Rohit was a superb batsman. At his best, a beautiful stroke player, but he won't be missed as much as Kohli because his Test record was good rather than exceptional. In the last couple of years his batting was a little inconsistent, which was not surprising in his late 30s. Rohit was never a natural athlete like Kohli and he knows that opening the innings in England can be pretty tough because the new ball moves around more. You really have to be up for the challenge to have any chance of success. I just think that over time the wear and tear of opening the innings and being captain in all three formats wore him down," Boycott added.

England skipper and all-rounder Ben Stokes also heaped praises on Kohli, saying India will miss his "fighting spirit". In a video released by England Cricket, Stokes said on what India will miss after the retirement of Kohli, "I think what India will miss will be his fighting spirit out in the game, his competitiveness, desire to win. He has made number 18 his, hasn't he? It'll be a bit weird not seeing number 18 on the back of anyone... of any Indian shirt, but he has been class for them for a long period of time."

Kangana Ranaut named Brand Ambassador for New Delhi 2025 World Para Athletics Championships

GNS News Agency, June 26

Hyderabad: The Paralympic Committee of India (PCI) is proud to announce that Ms. Kangana Ranaut, renowned actor and politician, has been appointed as the official Brand Ambassador of the New Delhi 2025 World Para Athletics Championships. A powerful voice in Indian public life, Ms. Ranaut's association brings immense energy, visibility, and a renewed focus to para-athletics in India. As Brand Ambassador, she will champion the values of resilience, inclusion, and excellence — the very ethos of the Championships. "I am deeply honoured to support them and help raise awareness about their incredible achievements. Para sport is not just about competition — it is about courage, and I am proud to stand behind our champions," she said. The Paralympic Committee of India believes that Ms. Ranaut's voice will significantly amplify public engagement with para sports and inspire the next generation of athletes and fans across the country. Mr. Devendra Jhajharia, President of PCI and a two-time Paralympic gold medalist, said they were thrilled to have Kangana Ji on board. "Her passion, influence, and commitment to India's athletes make her a perfect ambassador for the New Delhi 2025 World Para Athletics Championships," he said.



‘I’ll miss those battles we’ve had on field’: Joe Root on Virat Kohli’s retirement ahead of ENG vs IND 1st Test



World No. 1 Test batter and England's batting great Joe Root said he will "miss those battles" with contemporary Virat Kohli after the latter decided to put an end to his glorious red ball career for India.

GNS News Agency, June 26

World No. 1 Test batter and England's batting great Joe Root said he will "miss those battles" with contemporary Virat Kohli after the latter decided to put an end to his glorious red ball career for India. "I've never been in competition with Virat. He is someone I've

always admired, and thought, 'Wow, what a player'. I'll miss those battles we had on the field, but it provides opportunities for other players to try and put their mark on Test cricket," Root said as quoted by Sportstar.

Team India will take on England in a five-match Test tour starting from the Headingley Test on June 20 in the absence of veterans

Virat and Rohit Sharma, who both announced their retirements from the longest format last month. "Cricket is poorer without them being around. They are two Indian legends. They've done amazing things for Indian cricket for such a long period of time. It'll be a slightly different look to the series, but we still expect it to be highly competitive," said

Root.

India ace pacer Jasprit Bumrah is unlikely to feature in all five Tests, yet he will be a big threat for England, believes Root. "Every time he's played, he's had a huge impact. He is clearly going to be a big threat. We have to try and manage as best we can," he said. "You can't single out individual bowlers. You have a plan for each every challenge and different bowler type. There will be times when he (Bumrah) is going to be hard work, and we're going to have to work through that."

And when we get opportunities to score, we've got to take it," he added. Kohli retired as India's fourth-highest run scorer in Test cricket, having scored 9230 runs at an average of 46.85 in 123 matches. He scored 30 centuries and 31 half-centuries. His annual average never dipped below 55 in the four years between 2016 and 2019. Additionally, his calendar year average at the end of 2016 and 2017 were both above 75.

Bollywood's biggest hairstylist died penniless, family was left with 'nothing to eat' despite counting Bachchans, Kapoors as friends



Celebrity hairstylist Aalim Hakim painted a disappointing picture of the Hindi film industry, where his late father made a name for himself as the go-to hairstylist for A-list stars such as Amitabh Bachchan and Vinod Khanna. He even did the hair of international stars such as Bruce Lee and Richard Harris. In fact, it was while he was cutting Bachchan's hair that Aalim's father felt a pain in his chest. He died the next day, at the age of 39. Aalim said that he was just nine years old at the time, and that his family was left with only Rs 13. They asked several film industry personalities for help during this difficult time, but Aalim said that nobody really showed up to support them.

Appearing in an interview with Hindi Rush, he said, "My father was doing Mr Bachchan's hair on a film called *Mard*. He felt a pain in his chest, and Mr Bachchan immediately told him to get a flight and go to a hospital near his

house. He died the next day. I was only nine years old. We had no idea what to do. In those days, people didn't really save money. They spent whatever they earned. I remember we had only Rs 13 to our name when he died." Asked if anybody from the industry stepped forward to help out, or take Aalim under their wing, he said, "We didn't get any help. We got help from unexpected people. It's not like people from the film industry showed up. Some of them did, yes, but very shortly. Nobody stays with you. *Bolte hain na, chadhte sooraj ko salaam*. That was the situation. All the stars who used to come home every day, they stopped coming by. Nobody stayed. My mother would go around asking for help, telling them that we didn't have anything to eat. They did what little they could, but they help to a degree."

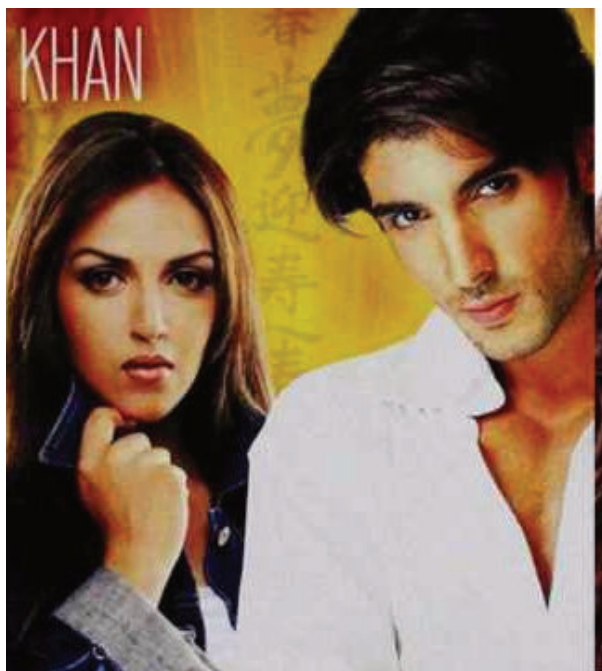
Aalim said that the experience made him world-weary. "They're all self-centred, and let me tell you one thing, even today they're the same. They meet you nicely, they're friendly, but you have to work for yourself. As a child, all I wanted to do was earn my father's respect back, to keep his legacy going." He said that he had learned nothing of the trade when his father passed, and had to train himself. "I would be inspired by newspaper cuttings of him... He worked with them all; not only Mr Bachchan, but also Shatrughan Sinha, Vinod Khanna, Jeetendra, Shashi Kapoor. He would travel with them. He was iconic." Asked if any of these people offered a helping hand, Aalim said, "Let me tell you what this industry is like. They're all nice to you, but the second you make a flop movie, nobody will speak to you. A hero will party with you, share meals with you, but he will never work with you if you've made flops." Aalim has created a successful business of his own, and continues to work with the Bachchans. He has also styled the who's who of the film industry, from Ranbir Kapoor and Rajinikanth to Hrithik Roshan and Allu Arjun.

Zayed Khan refutes rumours of affair with Esha Deol; says Aishwarya Rai knows how to play with co-stars: 'She is so beautiful, it's like porcelain'

Zayed Khan and Esha Deol have starred in several films together, including *Chura Liyaa Hai Tumne*, *Dus*, *Cash*, and others. Given their frequent collaborations, rumours once swirled that the two were dating. However, in a recent interaction, Zayed rubbished all such claims, clarifying that he was in a long-term relationship with his now-wife Malaika Parekh during the time he worked with Esha. He also referred to Esha as his "buddy for life." Speaking to Siddharth Kannan, Zayed said, "No, I was never in a relationship with Esha Deol. We have done a lot of films together. I was always with my wife Malaika, and Esha and Malaika have always been good friends. Esha is a sweetheart, and I don't want to say anything because she got married and all. She has been a buddy for life."

Zayed also reflected on his experience of working with Aishwarya Rai Bachchan in the film *Shabd*. Calling the film ahead of its time, he said, "Shabd was the film that showed a married woman falling in love with a young man. Strangely, all the films that I had chosen were ahead of their time. *Shabd* had a good story. It was a slice of life told at a time when people weren't ready for it." Zayed further admitted to being awestruck by Aishwarya's beauty and noted how she had a strong presence around her co-stars. He explained, "I was a fan of Aishwarya when she became Miss World. I used to have her picture in the locker room. When I heard the script of the film and learned that Aishwarya is in the film, I quickly asked where do I sign on. I had a wonderful experience working with her."

He added, "She really knows how to play with you. There are actors who take time to come on set and there is drama and actual work is suffering, that's the worst situation to be in. But with Aishwarya, I thought it would be tough to break my fan moment, but she so naturally just said 'hi'



and asked me if I want to do rehearsals first. She is so beautiful, it's like porcelain, it's not possible. Today people do filters and all, but she had a natural filter." Zayed's career in the film industry was relatively short-lived. Despite starring in various high-profile projects, his career took a downturn after the failure of the 2009 film *Blue*. He was last seen on the big screen in 2015's *Sharafat Gayi Tel Lene*.

Manoj Bajpayee was signed to do Aamir Khan's role in Rang De Basanti; producers thought it was a 'Sholay remake', wanted to cast Esha Deol as Basanti: screenwriter reveals details



Rang De Basanti (2006) would be a career-defining movie for anyone involved with the project, even for Aamir Khan, who already had a couple of those in his filmography. He played the iconic character of DJ/Chandrashekhara Azad, who, with his band of friends, decided to fight against the corrupt and unjust system of the country. But what if Aamir never played DJ? One of the screenwriters of the movie, Kamlesh Pandey, recently talked about that very possibility and revealed how originally Manoj Bajpayee was supposed to play DJ.

Talking to Ravya Sarda on her YouTube show, Pandey shared many anecdotes from behind the scenes and what all transpires on the writers' table. Talking about *Rang De Basanti*, he revealed how Aamir wasn't the first choice for the film, but casting Manoj came with its own set of problems. He said, "We had been roaming around with the script of the film for 6 years, and no one was ready to make that film. We had signed Manoj for the role that Aamir played finally. We thought we would make a small film; we didn't have a big budget. The moment Aamir heard the script, he told us that he wanted to do the film, and he even got AR

Rahman to come on the project. UTV, who had rejected the film twice in the past, immediately said yes to it."

Pandey added that people in the industry were not taking the script seriously and were also not very clear about what the narrative was about. "Producers thought that this was a *Sholay* remake from the point of view of Basanti. They used to make fun of it and ask who was going to play her, and I used to tell them with a straight face that we were thinking of casting Esha Deol. They used to take it so seriously, and I didn't really know whether to slap these people or ignore them," added Pandey. Another change in cast which could have affected the final product was Randeep Hooda playing the role of Karan (Bhagat Singh). Hooda told podcast host Shubhankar Mishra that he regrets letting go of the opportunity and that he only said no because he did not want to play second fiddle to Aamir. He admitted that he lost another role in *Rock On* because of his Jaat akad. The role ultimately went to Siddharth.

Ali Fazal shares insights on music and direction in upcoming film 'Metro... In Dino'

Mumbai: Actor Ali Fazal, who is gearing up for the release of his upcoming film 'Metro... In Dino', has shared if the muscle memory of guitar strumming in 'Give Me Sunshine' came in handy for his upcoming release. Ali essays the role of a musician in the Anurag Basu directorial and said that while 'Give Me Sunshine' from '3 Idiots' had a very simple chord structure, the songs composed by Pritam in 'Metro... In Dino' are far more complex, and demanded a lot from him. Speaking with IANS, the actor said, "I had to learn. For some shots, I had to learn the chords and stuff because again, these are very complex compositions.

Aamir Khan rejects Rs 120 crore OTT deal for Sitaare Zameen Par; stands firm on 9 am FDFS, fair ticket rates: 'No blockbuster pricing'



Aamir Khan has turned down a massive offer from Amazon Prime Video, choosing instead to give *Sitaare Zameen Par* a full theatrical run without rushing a digital premiere. Helmed by RS Prasanna, the sports comedy-drama *Sitaare Zameen Par* is billed as a spiritual successor to Aamir Khan's directorial debut *Taare Zameen Par*.

Despite not being a big-ticket, action-oriented star vehicle typical of this era, Bollywood superstar Aamir Khan's *Sitaare Zameen Par* is generating massive hype. Helmed by RS Prasanna, known for the Tamil romantic comedy *Kalyana Samayal Saadhham* (2013) and its Hindi remake *Shubh Mangal Saavdhan* (2017), the sports comedy-drama is billed as a spiritual successor to Aamir's directorial debut *Taare Zameen Par* (2007). Interestingly, social media is abuzz with expectations that the film will offer a breath of fresh air amidst the current flood of mindless actioners. With the movie's release just around the corner, Aamir Khan, who also serves as the film's co-producer, has made some bold decisions regarding its theatrical and OTT premieres, including its first-day-first-show (FDFS) timing. In a significant and gutsy move, the actor-producer has reportedly turned down a massive offer from a major OTT platform,

choosing instead to give the movie a full theatrical run without rushing a digital premiere.

According to trade analyst Komal Nahta, Amazon Prime Video offered Rs 120 crore for the digital rights to the film, but Aamir declined the deal. While many might assume this was a tactic to attract higher offers from other platforms, Nahta clarified in Film Information that Aamir made the decision "to try and change the game". In recent times, Aamir has frequently voiced concerns about the standard eight-week window between theatrical and digital releases, calling it a "faulty business model". With this, the Bollywood biggie has once again proven that he isn't one of those "all talk and no action" stars and that he has decided to lead by example and be the change he wishes to witness around him. Nahta pointed out that if Aamir's strategy works and the film's absence of an OTT release drives up box office revenue, it could be a revelation for the industry. On the flip side, if the strategy backfires, *Sitaare Zameen Par* could end up losing Rs 120 crore in easy revenue.

Meanwhile, ahead of the film's release on June 20 (Friday), Aamir has also issued a series of instructions to exhibitors regarding show timings. According to Bollywood Hungama, the makers have requested not to begin shows before 9 am. They've also asked theatres to maintain popular weekend pricing, rather than inflating ticket rates as per the blockbuster pricing technique. While single-screen theatres wishing to screen *Sitaare Zameen Par* have been instructed to dedicate all shows exclusively to the film, without alternating titles, cinema halls with two screens have been asked to allot a total of eight shows per day for the sports comedy drama. "Multiplexes with 3, 4, 5 and 6 screens need to play 11, 14, 16 and 19 shows a day, respectively. For 7-screen multiplexes, 22 shows are a must while for 8-screen plexes, 25 shows are mandatory in a day. There should be 28 shows in 9-screen cinemas and for multiplexes with 10 screens and more, the requirement is 31 shows," Bollywood Hungama quoted a source as saying.

Aruna Irani recalls mother borrowing money from cousin and actor Bindu's family to feed them; says they were kept at a distance: 'We would ask for Rs 50'

Veteran actor Aruna Irani faced competition from her own cousin and fellow veteran star, Bindu. In a recent interaction, Aruna revealed that despite being first cousins, she and Bindu never shared a close bond and didn't even speak to each other much. Explaining her relationship with Bindu, Aruna told Lehren Retro, "Bindu is my step-Masi's daughter (step-aunt's daughter). My maternal grandfather had two wives and Bindu was the daughter from his other wife." When asked if they were ever close as cousins, Aruna candidly shared, "Never. Bindu's father was a director so they mostly stayed away from us. We never had money growing up, so my mom would again and again go to Bindu's mother to ask for money to feed me and my siblings. She would ask them for Rs 50 or Rs 10 and she would also send me to ask them for money. And, obviously, they didn't like that, so there was always this distance between us." Aruna also admitted that since both Bindu and she were cast in character roles, it was usually either one of them in a film — which meant they rarely got a chance to meet on set. Both actors became known for playing negative roles, side characters, and performing item songs during the 80s and 90s, making them direct competitors in the same space.

In the same interaction, Aruna recalled an incident involving another veteran actor — Rekha. She claimed



Rekha had her removed from a film because she feared Aruna might overshadow her performance. Sharing the memory, she said, "Rekha removed me from a film even though she was a good friend of mine. She still is. But when she took me out of a film called *Mangalsutra*, I asked the producer, 'Why did you remove me even after giving me the signing amount?' He said, 'Rekha ji never wanted you in the film.' When I asked Rekha why she did it, she said, 'Aruna, if you pulled off the role too well emotionally, I'll start looking like a vamp in the film.' So she cut me out."

'Star Wars inspired from Mahabharat, ET from Satyajit Ray script': Akshay Kumar and Vishnu Manchu claim all Hollywood superheroes inspired by Indian mythology



Actors Akshay Kumar and Vishnu Manchu are all set for the release of their upcoming mythological film titled *Kannappa*. Directed by Mohan Kumar Singh, the film will follow the story of Kannappa (Manchu), who was a devout follower of Lord Shiva (Akshay Kumar). During the promotions for the film, the duo sat down for an interview where they talked about the plethora of stories available in the country and how Hollywood takes a lot of inspiration from these tales. They listed out some specific instances of when the West borrowed ideas and narratives that originated in India.

While talking to Bollywood Hungama, the duo was asked whether all the stories present in the country were getting a stage or a medium to be shared. Akshay agreed with the fact that the country and its history have an immense bank of stories to pull from, and in many cases, creators from the West have reached into that bank and taken some stories for themselves. Akshay said, "There are so many stories here, and I personally believe that Hollywood takes a lot from our stories. Their superheroes and their superpowers are all inspired by our mythology. The kind of stories we have is unbelievable, like I didn't know the story behind *Kannappa* before the film."

Manchu added to this and said, "Even *Star Wars* has been inspired by *Mahabharat*, and E.T. actually came from a script written by Satyajit Ray." Ray admitted in an inter-

view that his original script had been making the rounds of L.A. for some time, and suddenly one day they announced E.T., which was very similar to his story." What Manchu is presumably referring to is a script titled 'The Alien', which was written by Satyajit Ray. While Steven Spielberg, who directed E.T., never admitted to plagiarism, it is believed that the unproduced film was the inspiration behind one of Spielberg's most sought-after works of cinema. During the interview, Akshay also commented on the Hera Pheri 3 situation and stated that he was positive that the movie will get made and that he is keeping his fingers crossed. Kannappa is being helmed by Mohan Kumar Singh, and the cast of the film includes Akshay Kumar, Vishnu Manchu, Prabhas, Mohanlal, Preity Mukhundan, Mohan Babu, and Kajal Aggarwal. It will release on June 27 and will have to compete with Brad Pitt's *F1*, which will be releasing just two days prior.

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