

GHMC commissioner inspects ongoing works

Hyderabad: GHMC Commissioner RV Karnan on Sunday inspected the developmental works in the Malakpet and Kundanbagh areas. He instructed officials to expedite them and complete at the earliest.

In Malakpet, Karnan inspected drainage works aimed at easing traffic congestion. He instructed officials to expedite the works and complete it to avoid further inconvenience. He directed the engineering staff to increase manpower and materials to facilitate round-the-clock operations.

BRS chief KCR wishes people on the occasion of Telangana Formation Day

GNS News Agency, June 2

Hyderabad: BRS chief and former Chief Minister K Chandrashekhhar Rao extended greetings to the people of Telangana on the occasion of Telangana Formation Day on Monday. He recalled the peaceful and democratic struggle of the people that led to the creation of the State. In a statement, Chandrashekhhar Rao said Telangana, which was neglected under the erstwhile Andhra Pradesh, had witnessed inclusive development and remarkable welfare after the State formation. "For a decade, Telangana stood as a model for the nation in development and welfare," he said. He suggested that the current Congress government prioritise people-centric policies, fulfil electoral promises and boost public confidence. He expressed hope that Telangana would continue to prosper in agriculture and dairy, and ensure well-being across all sections of society.

JEE Advanced results out; Rajit Gupta of IIT Delhi zone tops



GNS News Agency, June 2

Hyderabad: Rajit Gupta of IIT – Delhi zone emerged as the topper of the Joint Entrance Examination (JEE) Advanced 2025. He secured 332/360 marks in the results declared by the IIT-Kanpur on Monday.

Russia, Ukraine holding talks in Turkiye after launching major attacks



GNS News Agency, June 2

Delegations from Russia and Ukraine met in Turkiye on Monday for the second round of direct peace talks in just over two weeks, although expectations were low for any significant progress on ending the three-year war after a string of stunning attacks over the weekend. The Ukrainian delegation was led by Defence Minister Rustem Umerov, officials said. Vladimir Medinsky, an aide to Russian leader Vladimir Putin, headed the Kremlin team, Russian state media reported. Turkish Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan chaired the talks at the city's Ciragan Palace and gave an opening speech to mark their start.

COVID-19 in India: Four new deaths reported, active cases near 4,000



GNS News Agency, June 2

India's active COVID-19 cases stand at 3,961 as of 8 AM on Monday (June 2, 2025), according to the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare. The cumulative COVID-19 deaths in the country since January this year have increased to 32, with four deaths reported since Sunday (June 1, 2025). According to official data, 203 new cases were added to the active case count since Sunday. Delhi reported 47 more COVID-19 cases, increasing the total active cases in the national capital to 483. In Kerala, active COVID-19 cases rose to 1,435, with 35 new cases reported since Sunday. In Maharashtra, 21 new COVID-19 cases were reported, taking the active case count to 506. In West Bengal, 44 new COVID-19 cases were reported, increasing the State's active cases to 331. On Friday, Union Minister of State for Health and AYUSH (Independent Charge), Prataprao Jadhav, assured that the Centre is fully prepared to handle any situation that may arise. "Both our Central Health Department and the AYUSH Ministry are fully alert and closely monitoring the situation across all States. We have spoken with the respective Health and AYUSH Secretaries, as well as other concerned ministers," Jadhav had told ANI. He added that the infrastructure developed during the earlier COVID-19 waves has been reviewed and that preparations are underway to deal with any eventuality. "We've reviewed the infrastructure built during the earlier Covid waves, such as oxygen plants and ICU beds, and have already begun preparations.

India offers an excellent opportunity for investment in aviation sector: PM Modi

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday (June 2, 2025) said India's fast-growing aviation sector offers an excellent investment opportunity for leading global companies. Addressing the AGM of the International Air Transport Association (IATA) in New Delhi, Mr. Modi said the country aims to increase the size of the maintenance, repair and overhaul (MRO) segment to \$4 billion by 2030. Emphasising that India has an open and supportive policy ecosystem, Mr. Modi said all efforts are being made to make the country a global manufacturing hub.

CM lauds Manda Krishna Madiga for efforts in ensuring social justice

Hyderabad: Padma Shri awardee and founding president of Madiga Reservation Porata Samiti, Manda Krishna Madiga, paid a courtesy call to Telangana CM Revanth Reddy at his residence in Jubilee Hills on Sunday. On this occasion, CM Revanth Reddy congratulated Manda Krishna Madiga, who recently received the prestigious Padma Shri award from the President of India, Droupadi Murmu. Later, he felicitated him with a shawl and presented him with a memento. The CM praised his work in social justice as well as over the classification of SCs. Both the leaders discussed the key milestones of the SC classification movement as well as the movement undertaken by MRPS, the challenges faced, and past experiences.

Telangana Aims to Become \$3 Trillion Economy by 2047, Says CM Revanth Reddy

GNS News Agency, June 2

Telangana celebrated its State Formation Day in Hyderabad on Monday. On this special day, Chief Minister Revanth Reddy spoke about big plans for the future of the state. He said that in the next 10 years, Telangana will grow into a \$1 trillion economy. By the year 2047, it will become a \$3 trillion economy. He also said that Telangana's share in India's total GDP will grow from 5% to 10% by 2047.

To help reach these goals, the government has started new plans for industries, roads, and investment. The Chief Minister said the government is working hard to make Telangana the best in development and public welfare. Honoring Heroes of the Telangana Movement On this day, the government also honored people who helped in the Telangana movement. The Chief Minister gave Rs. 1 crore to each of nine people, including writers, singers, and artists. The families of late artists and leaders like Gude Anjaiah, Balladeer Gaddar, and Bandi Yadagiri also received

Kaleshwaram project: KCR to appear before Ghose Commission on June 11



GNS News Agency, June 2

Hyderabad: Bharat Rashtira Samithi (BRS) President and former Telangana Chief Minister K. Chandrasekhhar Rao will appear before Justice PC Ghose Commission, probing irregularities in the execution of the Kaleshwaram Lift Irrigation project, on June 11. KCR, as Chandrasekhhar Rao is popularly known, was asked to appear on June 5, but on his request, the Commission changed the date. The Commission on May 20 had issued notices to KCR, former minister T. Harish Rao and BJP MP Eatala Rajender. BRS leader Harish Rao has been summoned on June 6. Rajender has been directed to appear before the Commission on June 9. When KCR was the Chief Minister, Harish Rao was the Irrigation Minister, while Rajender was the Finance Minister. The Commission, headed by retired Supreme Court judge Pinaki Chandra Ghose, is probing the alleged irregularities in planning, design, construction, quality control, operation and maintenance of Medigadda, Annaram, and Sundilla Barrages of the Kaleshwaram project. The one-man Commission was constituted in March 2024, a few months after some piers of the Medigadda Barrage caved in. The term of the Commission has been extended repeatedly for seven times so far after its initial term ended on June 30, 2024. Notices to KCR, Harish Rao and Rajender were issued a day after the state government extended the Commission's term for two more months, till July 31, to enable it to complete the examination of all those involved. The Commission has so far examined over 100 engineers, retired and serving officials associated with the barrages and others. Most of the engineers who were examined by the Commission either admitted to lapses in the procedures or expressed ignorance about decision-making. The Commission examined various documents, including the final report of the National Dam Safety Authority, the Vigilance report and other files. The panel was expected to submit its report to the government on May 21 or 22. However, the Commission decided to examine KCR, Harish Rao and Rajender as most of the engineers and officials who deposed before it stated that the decisions were taken in the presence of the then Chief Minister and that they acted on the Chief Minister's and ministers' orders. The BRS alleged that the notice to KCR is an attempt by the Congress government to cover up its corruption and failures.

LoP Rahul Gandhi moves Jharkhand HC to quash Non-Bailable Warrant issued by Chaibasa court

GNS News Agency, June 2

Ranchi: Congress MP and Leader of the Opposition (LoP) in the Lok Sabha, Rahul Gandhi has approached the Jharkhand High Court seeking cancellation of a Non-Bailable Warrant (NBW) issued against him by the MP-MLA special court in Chaibasa in connection with a 2018 case over alleged derogatory remarks against then BJP National President Amit Shah. The NBW was issued on May 22 after LoP Rahul Gandhi failed to respond to earlier court summonses. The Chaibasa court has directed him to appear in person on June 26.

LoP Gandhi's legal counsel has argued in the High Court that a petition filed under Section 205 of the Criminal Procedure Code (CrPC) -- which seeks exemption from personal appearance in court -- is still pending before the same court. Therefore, the issuance of a NBW while the exemption plea remains unheard is premature and legally inappropriate, the petition contended. The case stems from a complaint filed by Chaibasa resident Pratap Katiyar on July 9, 2018. According to the complaint, Gandhi allegedly stated during a Congress session that, "No murderer can become the national president in the Congress. Congressmen cannot accept a murderer as the national president -- this is possible only in the BJP." The remark was seen as a veiled reference to Amit Shah, who at the time was the BJP's

Congress asks Centre to provide funds for northeastern States grappling with floods

GNS News Agency, June 2

Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge on Monday attacked the Modi government over the flood situation in the northeastern States, and hoped Prime Minister Narendra Modi will open the floodgates of his PM CARES Fund, where he claimed crores lie without any audit. Referring to Assam, he said PM Modi had promised in 2016 to make the State flood-free but it seems the BJP's double engine governments have betrayed the State. In a post on X, he noted that the northeast is reeling under devastating floods, landslides and heavy rains. Assam, Arunachal, Manipur, Sikkim and Meghalaya are among the worst affected States, where many lives have been lost and lakhs of people have been affected, he observed. Congress leaders and workers must do everything to provide assistance to the people, he said. "In 2016, BJP had promised to make a 'Flood-Free' Assam. In 2022,



awards. Since poet Goreti Venkanna was not in Hyderabad, a Rs. 1 lakh award was given to his daughter. The government also gave the Kaloji Award to Nelimela Bhaskar for his work in literature.

National President. In response to the complaint, the Chaibasa court had initially issued a bailable warrant in April 2022. However, LoP Gandhi reportedly did not respond to the summonses.

Subsequently, a NBW was issued in February 2024. His legal team filed an application seeking an exemption from personal appearance, which was rejected by the trial court. Following this, Rahul Gandhi had moved the Jharkhand High Court, which granted him temporary relief. But with the matter still pending, the lower court's latest issuance of a non-bailable warrant prompted the LoP to file a fresh petition in the High Court.



LOSS OF PASSPORT

I, KADAM KALAVATHI W/O KADAM SHIVAJI aged 87 Years R/O H. No. 3-4, Shanthapoor (V), Mandal Gudihathnoor, Dist. Adilabad 504308. Lost my original Passport No. S5050516 during travel on 31-10-2024 from my house Sri Sai residency dasnapur, Adilabad.

DECLARANT.
KADAM KALAVATHI
W/O KADAM SHIVAJI

Indian Chronicle

English Daily

Economic performance, Viksit Bharat

The data on India's economic performance in 2024-25, released on Friday, have something for everybody. Those with an optimistic outlook can rejoice at the seemingly robust growth in the fourth quarter. Pessimists can despair over the four-year low annual growth figure. The realist's assessment, however, is that there is cause for some restrained celebration, and more than a healthy dose of disappointment. The Q4 growth of 7.4% was considerably higher than what was expected for the quarter, and the fastest seen in an otherwise dismal financial year. The main drivers were the construction sector returning to double-digit growth, and the agriculture sector posting a strong showing. These are also two major employment drivers. Services, too, continued their steady and strong growth. The manufacturing sector, on the other hand, grew at just 4.8%, down from 11.3% in Q4 of the previous year. There is a reality check hiding in the aggregate numbers, as well. The GDP growth rate of 7.4% was achieved in large part due to a 12.7% growth in net taxes. This bump in tax collections provided a statistical boost without which growth in actual economic activity would have come in at around 6.8%. The much-hyped 'Maha Kumbh effect' on consumption expenditure also does not seem to have materialised. Growth in Private Final Consumption Expenditure in Q4 — the Kumbh quarter — came in at 6%, the slowest in five quarters. Capital formation, however, grew a robust 9.4% as the government finally sped up its sluggish capital investments. Government officials and Union Ministers have expressed their satisfaction at the 6.5% growth in 2024-25, the slowest since the pandemic, saying it is still the fastest among major economies, and not bad in the context of a "growth-scarce" global environment.

SUDHA REDDY SPOTLIGHTS HYDERABAD ON THE WORLD MAP, WINS MASSIVE HONOUR AS MISS WORLD'S FIRST-EVER GLOBAL AMBASSADOR



Hyderabad: Making history for Hyderabad once again, billionaire heiress and global humanitarian Sudha Reddy illuminated the 72nd Miss World Festival finale with her regal presence, marking a momentous occasion as she was formally appointed the first-ever Global Ambassador for the Miss World Organization. The appointment heralds a new era for the renowned pageant and underscores Reddy's unwavering dedication to philanthropy and global betterment.

MEIL Director Sudha Reddy's appointment follows the felicitation of Founder and Chairperson of Reliance Foundation Nita Ambani who was bestowed with the Miss World Humanitarian Award last year, setting a precedent for Indian women leaders to engage in global humanitarian efforts. Sudha Reddy, embodying sophisticated grace, captivated attention at the event in a custom Tarun Tahliani saree, a true testament to artistry and craftsmanship. Her saree featured a delicate blush Kanjeevaram base in authentic zari, woven with a William Morris-inspired pattern of flowers and vines in subtle shades of jade, Mughal mango, and coral, creating a fresh, summery effect. The design cleverly blurred the lines between saree and gown, featuring an extra-long, trailing pallu and lace wings adorned with raffia, resham, crystals, and French knots, cascading in a romantic and sensual array of elements. Sudha Reddy presented herself as a powerful symbol of feminine strength. The ensemble, much like Sudha herself, was both deeply rooted and forward-looking. It was not designed for mere spectacle, but shaped by profound meaning, crafted to honor heritage while embracing the future with clarity and purpose. Completing the regal aura, a breathtaking 250-carat neckpiece, meticulously set in white gold with lush emeralds, fiery rubies, serene sapphires and brilliant diamonds, adorned her neckline. In her new role as the Global Ambassador for Beauty With A Purpose, the Miss World Organization's charitable arm, Reddy will champion global outreach, promote crucial humanitarian efforts and share inspiring stories from around the world. In anticipation of the final competition, Reddy orchestrated the opulent Beauty With A Purpose Gala, held at her private residence, Mon Amour Palais and featuring the participation of 108 contestants. The event was showcased in Times Square, New York, representing a signal moment for the state of Telangana.

Hyderabad sees dip in property sales in April

Hyderabad: Hyderabad's residential property market experienced a dip in April 2025, with a 12 percent year-on-year (YoY) decrease in residential property registrations and a 4 percent dip in the value of registered properties, according to the monthly Knight-Frank India report on Monday. Despite this moderation, the cumulative value of homes registered in the month remained above Rs 4,000 crore, the report said, adding that while the overall registrations saw a decline, the demand for premium homes, particularly those priced above Rs one crore continues to show stability.

Mahindra Thar ROXX brings Dolby Atmos for an elevated entertainment experience



Hyderabad: Dolby Laboratories, a global leader in immersive entertainment experiences, and Mahindra & Mahindra Ltd., India's leading SUV manufacturer, today announced the debut of Dolby Atmos in the Mahindra Thar ROXX AX7L variant. This marks a first-of-its-kind innovation in the global SUV market — integrating 4-channel immersive audio powered by Dolby Atmos into a vehicle. The Thar ROXX redefines the aural experience on wheels. Whether you're cruising through urban streets or navigating remote trails, Dolby Atmos enhances every journey, allowing sound to move freely around you with unmatched depth and realism. With Gaana streaming integrated directly into the infotainment system, Thar ROXX owners can immerse themselves in Dolby Atmos music anytime, making every ride truly unforgettable.

Commenting on this collaboration, Karan Grover, Senior Director, Commercial Partnerships - IMEA, Dolby Laboratories said, "We are excited about the possibilities that our collaboration with Mahindra can bring for customers, especially in India. With Dolby Atmos in Thar ROXX AX7L,

we're taking the car journey to an entirely new level by transforming the interior cabin into a personalised concert hall on wheels, making every ride an immersive audio experience that complements the adventurous spirit of the Thar ROXX AX7L."

Mr. Velusamy R, President – Automotive Technology & Product Development, Mahindra & Mahindra Ltd, said, "At Mahindra, it is our constant endeavour to explore limitless boundaries in automotive innovation, and the Thar ROXX is a testament to that spirit. By being the first vehicle in the world to feature Dolby Atmos featuring 4 channels of immersive audio integrated into the premium 9-speaker Harman Kardon Branded Audio system, we are redefining the driving experience. No matter the terrain or conditions, the Thar ROXX delivers a sensory experience like no other SUV of its kind on the Indian roads, bringing every moment on the road to life with Dolby Atmos." This collaboration between Mahindra and Dolby sets a new benchmark for in-cabin technology — one that caters to the Global Indian consumer who desires performance, design, and an immersive digital lifestyle. Furthermore, Mahindra has ramped up production of the Thar ROXX, equipped with Dolby Atmos, to meet overwhelming demand. This ensures customers can enjoy the unmatched thrill and innovation of 'the SUV' with a reduced waiting time. About Dolby Dolby Laboratories (NYSE: DLB) is a world leader in immersive entertainment. From movies and TV, to music, sports, gaming, and beyond, Dolby transforms the science of sight and sound into spectacular experiences for billions of people worldwide across all their favorite devices. We partner with artists, storytellers, and the brands you love to transform entertainment and digital experiences through groundbreaking innovations like Dolby Atmos, Dolby Vision, Dolby Cinema, and Dolby OptiView.

Crystal Crop Protection Limited launches “RICEACT” – a “revolutionary” herbicide for paddy cultivation and “JIVORA” – a “next-generation” insecticide for cotton

Hyderabad: Crystal Crop Protection Limited (CCPL), India's leading agro-chemicals solutions company today announced the launch of two major research-driven herbicide and insecticide. CCPL's introduction of these two major herbicide and insecticide variants comes at a time when India's crop-protection market is projected to grow from ~ USD 2.59 Bn in 2025 to ~ USD 3.21 Bn by the year 2030 with a CAGR of 4.35 percent. To further its growth and reinforce its position as a market leader in the segment, CCPL has today launched RICEACT, a revolutionary solution tailored specifically for rice cultivation and JIVORA, a next-generation insecticide designed to address the rising challenges of sucking pests in cotton. With the launch of these two products, Crystal Crop Protection is expecting to increase its herbicide portfolio by ~ 8 percent and its insecticide portfolio by ~ 7 percent.

As a part of its launch, Crystal will be introducing both RICEACT and JIVORA across key markets in Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat, Karnataka, Rajasthan, Haryana and West Bengal.

RICEACT is a powerful early post-emergence herbicide that brings together two highly effective active ingredients — "Triafamone" (20%) and "Ethoxysulfuron" (10%) — offering a robust dual mode of action, providing effective control on various weeds. It works efficiently across transplanted and wet direct-seeded paddy crops, managing a broad spectrum of grasses, sedges, and broadleaf weeds that are known to significantly affect paddy yield and profitability. With a unique combination of two active ingredients, RICEACT ensures early weed control and provides sea-



son-long residual control. While Triafamone acts through the roots and leaves of the weed and inhibits critical enzyme activity, Ethoxysulfuron is absorbed through foliage and disrupts weed development through systemic action. Together, they effectively block the Acetolactate Synthase (ALS) enzyme, resulting in complete weed mortality with superior crop safety.

This innovative product is designed to be applied as an early post-emergence spray, ideally when weeds are in the "1-3 leaf stage" and with an application window of "8-12 DAT/DAS". With a recommended dose of 90 g per acre, RICEACT provides a unified solution for full-season weed management in rice cultivation, reducing labour dependency and increasing operational efficiency.



Dr. Pasupuleti Hariprasad Assumes Charge as Chairman of Andhra Pradesh Handicrafts Development Corporation

June 2, Indian Chronicle, Rayalaseema co-ordinator: Dr. Pasupuleti Hariprasad has officially taken charge as the Chairman of the Andhra Pradesh Handicrafts Development Corporation. The assumption of office ceremony took place at the Lepakshi office in Vijayawada. "In light of his new appointment, Dr. Hariprasad was formally felicitated by Mr. Sai Dev Yadav, Janasena Tirupati Town Secretary and President of the 44th Ward. Mr. Yadav extended his heartfelt congratulations, honouring Dr. Hariprasad with a traditional shawl and a floral bouquet. "The event was also attended by friends, Janasena party leaders, and other well-wishers who gathered to congratulate Dr. Hariprasad on his new role.

Covid-19 cases rise in Telangana; experts call for variant surveillance

GNS News Agency, June 2

Hyderabad: New Covid-19 positive cases continue to be reported from multiple Indian states, with the Union Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoHFW) on Monday reporting two more infections in Telangana. The overall caseload across the country has now reached 4,000. Although most current cases are mild, public health experts believe Telangana must initiate efforts to conduct testing and collect samples to identify the SARS-CoV-2 variants presently in circulation. Such an exercise is vital to determine the prevailing virus strains and to understand their evolution in order to prepare for potential changes in severity and transmissibility. As of now, a coordinated effort to offer free Covid-19 diagnostic tests and conduct genomic surveillance is yet to begin in Telangana. The major states reporting a significant surge in COVID-19 infections over the past fortnight include Kerala (1,435), Maharashtra (506), Delhi (483), Gujarat (338), West Bengal (331), Karnataka (253), Tamil Nadu (189), Rajasthan (69), Uttar Pradesh (157), Puducherry (38), and Andhra Pradesh (30). Four COVID-related deaths have been reported. Since January 1, 2025, the country has recorded a total of 32 COVID-19-



related deaths. The rising number of active infections, along with reported deaths, is a matter of concern. However, the Union Health Ministry, the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR), and public health experts from Telangana have stated that most cases remain mild and there is no immediate cause for panic. The current surge is being attributed to the circulation of various Omicron sub-variants, especially JN.1, which remains the dominant strain and accounts for 50% of new infections.

Telangana woman dies after husband forces her to take abortion pills

GNS News Agency, June 2

The incident took place in the Bangariguda colony on the outskirts of Adilabad. A six-month pregnant woman in Telangana's Adilabad district died Saturday due to severe bleeding after her husband allegedly forced her to take abortion pills. Pravalika, 23, was married three years ago to S Prashant from Maharashtra, and the couple have a two-year-old son. They were constructing a new house in Maharashtra. The relatives of the deceased alleged that the husband held a superstitious belief that a woman should not be pregnant when undertaking rituals or responsibilities associated with a new house. The incident took place in the Bangariguda colony on the outskirts of Adilabad, following which the Adilabad rural police registered a case under Section 90 (Whoever, with intent to cause the miscarriage of a woman with child, does any act which causes the death of such woman) of Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS).

Circle Inspector Phanidhar said the police are inquiring whether the husband forced her to take the medicines and, if yes, what medicines these were. "The relatives allege that she was forced to take the pills. The woman suffered heavy bleeding during an abortion and could not be saved. The reports of a superstitious belief involved have not been reported to us so far," he told indianexpress.com. According to a complaint from Pravalika's brother V Rajesh, she swallowed an unknown medicine allegedly given to her by her husband. Following this, she experienced severe pain and began bleeding, he said. Prashanth allegedly fled the locality shortly thereafter.

Pravalika was immediately transported to Rajiv Gandhi Institute of Medical Sciences IMS, Adilabad, for treatment. During her treatment, she suffered a miscarriage due to heavy bleeding, and her health condition deteriorated significantly. The duty doctor at RIMS Adilabad then referred her to Gandhi Hospital in Secunderabad for advanced medical care. Pravalika passed away while undergoing treatment at Gandhi Hospital Saturday evening. Her body was subsequently moved to the mortuary at RIMS Adilabad for safe-keeping. The police are awaiting a postmortem report to conclude the cause of death.

IRS officer sent to judicial custody in Chandigarh; CBI seizes Rs 3.5 crore gold, Rs 1 crore cash from premises



GNS News Agency, June 2

A Special CBI Court in Chandigarh on Sunday remanded Indian Revenue Service (IRS) officer Dr. Amit Kumar Singal and his associate Harsh Kotak to judicial custody in a bribery case involving ₹45 lakh. A 2007-batch officer, Singal is currently posted as Additional Director General at the Directorate of Tax Payers Services. The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) told the court that Singal and Kotak had allegedly demanded and accepted ₹45 lakh from businessman Sanam Kapoor, with ₹25 lakh recovered during a trap operation at Singal's Delhi residence. As per the FIR registered on May 31 under Section 61(2) of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS), 2023, and Section 7 of the Prevention of Corruption Act, 1988 (amended 2018), the complaint was lodged by Kapoor, a restaurateur and owner of the La Pino's Pizza franchise. The accused were produced before the court of Judicial Magistrate First Class (JMFC) Ambika Sharma.

In its remand application, the CBI submitted that Dr. Singal acknowledged the ₹45 lakh bribe demand in a phone call with Kapoor and later accepted ₹25 lakh through Kotak. The agency said the bribe was sought in exchange for favourable treatment from the Income Tax Department after Kapoor allegedly received a retaliatory tax notice under Section 131(1)(a) of the Income Tax Act in February 2025. The CBI further stated that digital forensic analysis of Kotak's mobile devices revealed entries indicating the creation and possession of undisclosed foreign assets by Dr. Singal, allegedly managed by Kotak.

Follow-up searches at Singal's properties in Delhi and Mohali led to the recovery of what the CBI described as massive undeclared assets. These included approximately 3.5 kilograms of gold worth ₹3.5 crore, 2 kilograms of silver, ₹1 crore in cash, documents related to several bank accounts and lockers, and records of immovable assets in Delhi, Mumbai, and various cities in Punjab including Ludhiana, Bathinda, Mohali, Zirakpur, and New Chandigarh. Digital devices and documents suggesting ownership of foreign assets were also seized.

"The investigation is at a nascent stage. Several key witnesses and documents are yet to be examined," the CBI told the court, arguing that there was a strong likelihood of the accused influencing witnesses or tampering with evidence. The court accepted the submission and sent both accused to judicial custody. According to Kapoor's complaint, he had entered into a business agreement with Dr. Singal in 2019 through a company named Parker Impex, where Kotak and Singal's mother were partners. The deal involved a master franchise arrangement in Mumbai. Kapoor terminated the arrangement in December 2024 after buying back three outlets, citing repeated violations and unprofessional conduct. He alleged that after the business fallout, Dr. Singal misused his official position to issue a retaliatory income tax notice, which could have led to heavy penalties. When Kapoor reached out to Kotak for help, he was told to speak directly with Dr. Singal. In a meeting in Delhi in April 2025, Dr. Singal allegedly demanded ₹45 lakh to "settle" the issue. The demand was reportedly reiterated later, with payment instructions passed through Kotak. A CBI team led by Inspector Sonal Mishra laid a trap on May 31 in Mohali, where Kotak was caught red-handed accepting ₹25 lakh.

‘Wish I could have done better’: Devdutta Majhi, female topper in JEE Advanced with AIR 16



GNS News Agency, June 2

Devdutta Majhi from the IIT Kharagpur zone has emerged as the top female topper in the JEE Advanced, bagging an All India Rank of 16, scoring 312 marks in the Common Rank List. Hailing from Katwa, her success comes

as no surprise: she has consistently excelled at academic milestones. In 2023, she was the West Bengal Madhyamik topper, followed by a perfect 100 percentile and AIR 1 in JEE Main 2025 (Session 2). “For the last two years, I have been studying for this day. I wish I could have done a bit better,” she said.

A student of Katwa Durgadasi Chaudhurani Girls’ High School, Devdutta studied for 10-12 hours daily. Her dream is to join IISc Bangalore to pursue a BTech in Computing, followed by research in Robotics and Artificial Intelligence. Over 1.8 lakh candidates appeared for the JEE Advanced this year. Her mother, Shelly Dan, a physics teacher, expressed pride and surprise. “I am very happy for her. I had expected a good rank, but not this. She is the female topper. We were waiting for this day. She studied under my guidance. She never took tuitions, just self-study and online guidance. Many students go to Kota or Delhi, but she didn’t,” Dan said. Majhi, who enjoys playing chess, caring for stray animals, and playing the violin, credited her preparation strategy to a disciplined study plan. “I focused on theory in Physics, Chemistry, and Mathematics first, then practiced problem-solving. I had a lot of books for that,” she said. She also occasionally took online guidance from teachers based in Delhi and Kolkata. For aspirants, she advised that one needs hard work, discipline, and dedication.

Orchard labourer beaten to death ‘over accusations of mango theft’ in Surat, 5 arrested

GNS News Agency, June 2

Over accusations of mango theft in Surat, a 48-year-old labourer from Sultanpur district in Uttar Pradesh was allegedly beaten to death by a mango orchard leaseholder and four others. According to police, Suresh Verma, a resident of Akota village in Bardoli taluka of Surat district, and another labourer, Ajay Banwasi, were working in a mango orchard when they were allegedly tied to a tree and beaten on May 21 by Ashfak Rayan and the other accused. Banwasi “managed to escape from the spot” that night.

Rayan had rented the orchard from Rakesh Patel of Bardoli for the current mango season. He accused Verma and Banwasi of stealing mangoes worth Rs 50,000 and selling them to villagers. Speaking to The Indian Express, Bardoli Rural Police Inspector P N Jadeja said, “We will produce them before the Bardoli court and seek police remand. Ashfak and others have confessed to beating Suresh Verma over mango theft allegations. One more victim, Ajay Banwasi, is still missing, and we are trying to locate him.” On the evening of the incident, Bardoli police said Verma’s wife Bhanumati called Ashfak after failing to reach her husband by phone. Ashfak allegedly told her that Suresh had stolen mangoes worth Rs 50,000 and sold them to villagers, and allegedly demanded that she send her son, also named Suresh, with the money if she wanted her husband released.

He “allowed her to hear Suresh’s cries” over the phone to convince her he was in his custody. Bhanumati then contacted her son, who also works at a mango orchard in Surat, and urged him to act. Police sources said the son traveled to Akota village and spoke with other labourers at the orchard. He then learned of the accusations against his father and Banwasi. Police said labourers claimed that Ashfak and four others disposed of Suresh’s body in a car that same



night. When the son later called Ashfak to ask about his father, he was allegedly told that Suresh had left for Sultanpur. On May 25, the son filed a missing person complaint with Bardoli Rural Police. During the investigation, police discovered that Kamrej Police had found an unidentified body in a canal at Shampura village on the same day. When Bardoli police and the son visited Kamrej police station, he identified the body from photographs as his father’s. He also learned the body had already been cremated by Kamrej police.

On May 31, the son lodged a formal complaint against Ashfak and the four others with Bardoli Police Station. Rayan, Vinod Agrawal, Mohammed Umar Munihar, Dashrath Maurya, and Yakub Abdul Gaffar, all natives of Sultanpur, were booked under several sections of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita: 103(1) (murder), 238(a) (causing disappearance of evidence or giving false information), 308(2) (extortion), 115(2) (voluntarily causing hurt), 127(2) (wrongful confinement), 189(2) (unlawful assembly) and 191(2) (rioting).

HC freezes one-third salary of Punjab health secretary in pension row

GNS News Agency, June 2

The Punjab and Haryana High Court has recently ordered the attachment of one-third of the salary of the Principal Secretary, Health and Family Welfare, Punjab, until compliance is ensured with a prior court judgment granting pension benefits to retired Senior Lecturer Dr Parveen Parkash. The court had cautioned that failure to comply would allow the petitioner to revive the petition, with the erring officer liable to pay Rs 50,000 in costs from their personal funds.

The Punjab and Haryana High Court has recently ordered the attachment of one-third of the salary of the Principal Secretary, Health and Family Welfare, Punjab, until compliance is ensured with a prior court judgment granting pension benefits to retired Senior Lecturer Dr Parveen Parkash. Parveen Parkash, who retired from Guru Gobind Singh Medical College and Hospital, Faridkot, had initially approached the court through his advocate Abhilaksh Gaiind, filing a contempt petition to address the non-implementation of a July 13, 2023, high court judgment. That judgment had directed his promotion/redesignation as Senior Lecturer, effective from August 16, 1991, with corresponding revisions to his pension and retiral benefits. Despite this order, Parkash alleged that the promised benefits remained unfulfilled. The dispute escalated during a resumed hearing on March 5, 2025, when the state counsel assured the court that arrears of pension from April 1, 2017, to June 30, 2021, along with leave encashment differences, would be released within three weeks. Relying on this undertaking, the contempt petition was withdrawn.

However, the court had cautioned that failure to comply would allow the petitioner to revive the petition, with the erring officer liable to pay Rs 50,000 in costs from their personal funds. Despite this warning, the arrears were not released, and the leave encashment was erroneously calculated based on the 5th Pay Commission’s pay scale, while



Parkash’s pension had been revised under the 6th Pay Commission. This discrepancy prompted Parkash, represented by advocates Abhilaksh Gaiind and Rakesh Roy, to file an application to revive the contempt petition, citing a false statement made to the court.

Parkash contended that his arrears of pension from April 1, 2017, to June 30, 2021, and the difference in leave encashment were not correctly calculated or released. He highlighted that the leave encashment was computed based on the 5th Pay Commission’s pay scale of Rs 72,380, whereas his pension was revised to Rs 1,91,400 under the 6th Pay Commission effective January 1, 2025. This discrepancy, he argued, led to an underpayment of Rs 3,00,812 instead of the entitled Rs 9,88,645. Expressing serious concern over the state’s conduct, Justice Harkesh Manuja remarked, “It does not appear to be a bona fide error on the part of the non-applicant/respondent, as such the applicant-petitioner is unnecessarily compelled to approach this Court by filing the revival application.” Consequently, the court attached one-third of the Health Secretary’s salary until compliance is achieved, directing the IAS Branch, Punjab Civil Secretariat, Chandigarh, to enforce the order. The matter is now adjourned to July 28, 2025, for further proceedings, with the case placed on the urgent cause list.



696, Shyamala Srivanya 1333, Gugulothu Akshaya 2149, Malothu Rithika 2159, and Bhanothu Soujanya 2699, achieved preparatory ranks. Instructions from the senior officials of the tribal schools, Bhadrachalam ITDA PO B. The principal commented on this occasion that the continuous supervision of Rahul IAS, the encouragement of former RCO K. Nagarjuna Rao and current RCO Aruna Kumari, and the training of expert teachers helped the children achieve high ranks.

“Ranjith naik Bhukya, Bhadrachalam kothagudem, June 2 (Indian Chronicle): “The tribal children of Bhadrachalam tribal schools have achieved high ranks in the JEE Advanced exam results, showing their unique talent. Bhukya Divya, who studied in the MPC group in the college, secured ST rank 1030, and Jarupula Swathi secured ST rank 1852, said Bhadrachalam Tribal Schools College Principal A. Padmavati. It was revealed that five other students, Bhanothu Bhavyasri

‘Don’t insist on ID’: Delhi HC issues further guidelines on medical termination of pregnancy in minor rape survivors



GNS News Agency, June 2

The Delhi High Court has issued guidelines again to various authorities for “institutional clarity” in hospitals in cases of medical termination of pregnancy of minor victims of sexual assault, directing that identity documents shall not be insisted on during medical examination when brought by the investigating officer after the registration of an FIR. It has also directed to designate nodal officers in government hospitals to coordinate the medico-legal aspects of such cases. Justice Swarana Kanta Sharma issued the slew of guidelines on Thursday while allowing a plea seeking permission for the medical termination of pregnancy of a minor survivor of sexual assault. The latest guidelines – especially for hospital administration – come after the court recorded that in the present case, “the chain of events reveals a troubling picture of delay, miscommunication, and lack of clarity on the part of hospital authorities, all of which culminated in a significant lapse in providing timely medical care to a 17-year-old rape survivor.” Earlier, Justice Sharma had in April issued guidelines to child welfare committees (CWCs) and legal aid authorities.

Issuing further directions to hospital administrations, the court said that in cases where gestational pregnancy is found to be exceeding 24 weeks, “the Medical Board shall be constituted immediately, and without waiting for any specific direction from the Court, the Board shall conduct the necessary medical examination and prepare an appropriate report at the earliest and place before appropriate authorities.” It directed hospital administrations to “make available the latest, updated Standard Operating Procedure (SOPs) and relevant legal guidelines in both Emergency and Gynaecology Departments, and to ensure that duty doctors are briefed and sensitised regularly regarding their obligations under the Medical Termination of Pregnancy (MTP) Act, POCSO (Protection of Children from Sexual Offences)

Act, and guidelines laid down by the Supreme Court and High Courts.”

The court also instructed to conduct quarterly training programmes for doctors, medical staff, and legal officers attached to all hospitals, in coordination with legal aid bodies such as the Delhi State Legal Services Authority and the Delhi High Court Legal Services Committee (DHCLSC). Besides, a nodal officer must be designated in every government hospital to coordinate MTP and medico-legal processes for victims of sexual assault as a single point of contact for CWC, IOs and court. A standardised format for MTP request, consent, ultrasound requisition, and medical opinion must also be made available in all emergency and gynaecology units in both English and Hindi. Issuing directions to the Delhi Police, the court said, the force must ensure that investigating officers (IO) dealing with POCSO and sexual assault cases undergo mandatory training every six months, with a focus on MTP procedures, court orders, and coordination with medical and welfare authorities. Certificates of completion shall be maintained in the officers’ service records. On April 17, Justice Sharma had issued guidelines, especially to CWCs and Delhi High Court Legal Services, to avoid delays in such cases, while dealing similarly with a plea seeking permission to medically terminate a pregnancy in a minor sexual assault survivor exceeding 27 weeks. The court at the time, had laid down that whenever a minor victim of sexual assault, who is found pregnant with a gestational period of pregnancy exceeding 24 weeks, is produced before the CWC and is referred to a hospital for medical examination or medical termination of pregnancy, the concerned CWC shall forthwith inform the Delhi High Court Legal Services Committee (DHCLSC) regarding the case. Upon receipt of such information, DHCLSC shall immediately take appropriate steps to assess whether any legal intervention is required, including the need to approach the competent court seeking an order for medical termination of pregnancy which is beyond 24 weeks in case of a rape victim where she or her guardian seek medical termination of pregnancy, so as to avoid any further delay. Prior to the April 2025 guidelines, the high court had been issuing guidelines through various judgments. In January 2023, it issued guidelines for investigating officers, outlining that survivors of sexual assault shall be medically examined, be presented before a medical board as envisaged under the MTP Act in case consent is given for termination, and the examination report must be presented to the concerned authorities for moving court if necessary. It had also directed the constitution of medical boards at hospitals.

Long struggles The emergence of Telangana state is the result of the sacrifices of martyrs.

“ITDA PO Rahul” “Ranjith naik Bhukya, Bhadrachalam kothagudem, June 2 (Indian Chronicle): “The emergence of Telangana state is the result of long struggles and the sacrifices of many martyrs, and Telangana has completed 11 years as the 29th state and entered its 12th year, said ITDA PO Rahul. On Monday, the Telangana formation celebrations were held grandly at ITDA. First, he unfurled the national flag and paid homage. Later, speaking, he said that the tribals living in the district area, who live with their ancient culture and traditions, are happy to have been given the opportunity to work for all-round development in sectors such as education, medicine, engineering, agriculture, basic facilities, cultivation, drinking water, and self-employment with the aspiration of developing in all fields. Later, the PO explained about the infrastructure provided to the people of tribal villages, ashram schools, and students studying in Gurukuls through ITDA. Providing development and welfare programs to all sections of the society, including tribals. The program was attended by APO General David Gage, DD Manemma, RCO Gurukulam Arunakumari, SV Bhaskaran, HSC Uday Kumar, DTRO F. R. Lakshminarayana, AO Sunnam Rambabu, DTLR Manidhar, AMGO Ramesh, ATDO Ashokumar, GCDO Alivelu Mangatayaru, unit officers, staff, and medical college students.



“Ranjith naik Bhukya, Bhadrachalam kothagudem, June 2 (Indian Chronicle): “On Monday, at the Bhadrachalam Sri Seetha Ramachandra Swamy Temple, in the Antaralayam, the priests presented special pearl-encrusted umbrellas to the grooms, made and donated by devotees from Hyderabad at a cost of Rs. 30 lakhs. The temple doors were opened early in the morning, the Lord Buddha was greeted with good morning, and daily prayers such as worship, aragimpu, sevakalam, nithya homas, nithya baliharanam, and others were performed. Later, the wedding ceremony was held in the Beda Mandapam of the Lord



Bhadrachalam Ramaiah decorated with a pearl“



Buddha. Seshavastras and Tirtha Prasadams were presented to the couples participating in the wedding. Sudarshan Homam for Ramaiah.. Sudarshan Homam was performed for the Lord on Monday at the Sri Seetha Ramachandra Swamy Temple in Bhadrachalam.

First, special prayers were performed for the Lord, and then Homam and other prayers were performed in the Prakara Mandapam according to the scriptures. Similarly, a golden garland was offered to the Lord. A large number of devotees participated in this program.

RBI Monetary Policy Committee likely to go for 25 bps rate cut on June 6 as inflation cools

New Delhi: As the RBI’s Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) is set to meet later this week, analysts on Monday expected the Central Bank to go for a third consecutive rate cut of 25 basis points as inflation continues to remain below the median target of 4 per cent. The Central Bank is projected to cut the repo rate by another 50 basis points (bps) this fiscal (FY26), after the 50 bps cut until April this year. Bank lending rates have begun easing, which should support domestic demand, according to the latest Crisil note. “Improving domestic consumption is likely to support industrial activity. We expect domestic consumption demand to improve, driven by healthy agricultural growth, easing inflation, supporting discretionary spend and income tax relief this fiscal,” it noted.

According to Madan Sabnavis, Chief Economist at

Bank of Baroda, “We do believe that given the rather benign inflation conditions and the liquidity situation which has been made very comfortable through various measures of the RBI, the MPC would go in for a 25 bps cut in the repo rate on June 6”. The commentary on both growth and inflation will be important as there are expectations of revisions in their forecasts for both parameters. “It is also expected that the RBI will detail its analysis on how the global environment would be affecting the Indian economy, considering that the tariff reprieve provided by the USA would end in July,” Sabnavis added. The Reserve Bank has said it will continue to undertake liquidity management operations in sync with the monetary policy stance to keep system liquidity adequate to meet the productive requirements of the economy.

Manohar Lal Khattar’s former media adviser Amit Arya appointed vice-chancellor of Haryana university



GNS News Agency, June 2

Dr Amit Arya, a close confidant of Union minister Manohar Lal Khattar, has been appointed vice-chancellor of Dada Lakhmi Chand State University of Performing and Visual Arts in Haryana’s Rohtak. Arya, a former journalist, served as Khattar’s media adviser when he was the Haryana chief minister. Haryana Governor Bandaru Dattatreya, also the chancellor of the university, announced the appointment through a notification issued by the Raj Bhavan.

“Consequent upon the recommendation of the Government of Haryana, in exercise of the powers conferred upon me by sub-section 1 & 2 of Section 11 of Dada Lakhmi Chand State University of Performing and Visual Arts,

Rohtak Act, 2014, I, Bandaru Dattatreya, Governor of Haryana and Chancellor of Dada Lakhmi Chand State University of Performing and Visual Arts, Rohtak, hereby appoint Dr. Amit Arya as Vice-Chancellor, Dada Lakhmi Chand State University of Performing and Visual Arts, Rohtak, for a period of three years or till he attains the age of 70 years whichever is earlier with effect from the date he assumes the charge of his office,” the notification stated.

“The terms and conditions of the appointment will be determined on the advice of the state government, later on,” the notification added. Arya resigned as Khattar’s media adviser in October 2023 and was soon after appointed senior media consultant under the Central government. Under that appointment, Arya was responsible for promoting the Central government’s schemes and providing recommendations to the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting. He was charged with several states, including Punjab, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Jammu and Kashmir, as well as the Union Territory of Chandigarh. Arya has a PhD in journalism and mass communication from Manav Rachna International Institute of Research and Studies. Hailing from Haryana, he has spent nearly two decades in journalism in Himachal Pradesh and Haryana. He is also an alumnus of Himachal Pradesh University, where he was actively involved in the student movement during his time as a student and served as the student union secretary.

Slow-moving Bengaluru Suburban Railway Project finally gets a special deputy commissioner

GNS News Agency, June 2

Nearly three years after Prime Minister Narendra Modi promised in a speech that the Bengaluru Suburban Railway Project (BSRP) would be completed in 40 months, the Karnataka government on Monday appointed Dr Vasanthi Amar as special deputy commissioner for K-RIDE, the implementing agency of the long-pending project. The development comes amid calls for a full-time managing director to steer the slow-moving project on a war footing.

Currently, K-RIDE, a special purpose vehicle, is headed by managing director (MD) Dr Manjula N, who also holds an additional charge of secretary to government, infrastructure development, ports and inland water transport department. Rail enthusiasts and BJP MPs have been demanding a full-time MD, who is also a technocrat, to undertake the 149 km BSRP network. “I’ve consistently sought for the appointment of a full-time MD for @KridePm to ensure effective management and timely completion of the Bengaluru Suburban Rail project. My 15-Point Action Plan to DCM @DKShivakumar last week also emphasises this, along with multiple interventions in the past,” Bangalore South MP Tejasvi Surya said in a post on X on Monday. I’ve consistently sought for the appointment of a full-time MD for @KridePm to ensure effective management and timely completion of the Bengaluru Suburban Rail project. “With a Special Deputy Commissioner now appointed, I hope serious progress and focused action begin on this long-pending, crucial step for Bengaluru’s urban mobility. But we still press our demand for a full time technocrat MD for the SPV,” he added.

Bangalore Central MP P C Mohan also expressed displeasure over the lack of a full-time MD for the last two years for the Rs 18,600 crore project. “K-RIDE, executing the Bengaluru Suburban Rail project, has had no full-time MD for 2 years. Instead, a 2017-batch officer who has been awaiting posting for years has been made Special Deputy Commissioner. How can such a critical project run on part-time, inexperienced leadership?” the parliamentarian questioned in a post on X on Monday. He also asked, “My questions to the State Govt: Was this an existing post at K-RIDE, or was it specially created to accommodate a junior officer awaiting posting? Is this the seriousness with which a ₹15,767 Cr project is handled? A full-time MD must be ap-



pointed without further delay.”

The BSRP spans 149.348 km across four corridors: Sampige (KSR Bengaluru to Devanahalli, 41.4 km), Mallige (Benniganahalli to Chikkabanavara, 25.01 km), Parijaata (Kengeri to Whitefield, 35.52 km), and Kanaka (Heelalige to Rajanukunte, 46.24 km).

Of all the corridors, only Corridor 2 has seen some progression, yet at a slow pace, with less than 30 per cent of the works completed. The civil work tender was awarded to Larsen & Toubro (L&T) on August 26, 2022, for Rs 859.97 crore. However, L&T has reportedly hinted at pulling out of the project due to land acquisition hurdles. L&T has cited the non-availability of land as a primary reason for halting work. Approximately 28.56 acres of private land and 91 acres of railway land are required for Corridor 2, but delays in land handover by South Western Railway and K-RIDE have stalled progress. Private landowners have obtained court stay orders, and some demand higher compensation, further complicating acquisition. The 7.4 km section between Chikkabanavara and Yeshwantpur as part of Corridor 2 was targeted for completion by 2025 end, with the full corridor expected to be operational by December 2026. However, with the current pace of work, K-RIDE is doubtful of meeting its deadlines. As for the rolling stock, the initial public-private partnership (PPP) model for procuring 306 rail coaches failed due to a lack of bids. A new equity model with 50:50 funding (Rs 2,135 crore from Karnataka, awaiting Union railway ministry approval) has been okayed by the Karnataka Cabinet in November 2024. Tenders are ready but await the central government order and Railway Board approval.

Following Gujarat govt order, Surat primary edu office submits records of govt primary schools ‘to prevent disputes, encroachments’

GNS News Agency, June 2

For the first time since India’s Independence, the Surat District Primary Education Office (DPEO) has initiated the process of registering government primary schools in various villages with the state’s land records and revenue department. These schools will also be assigned “uniform names” based on their respective villages for clearer identification. The Surat DPEO has submitted records for 896 government primary schools to the revenue department to move the process forward.

A few days ago, the State Primary Education department in Gandhinagar issued a directive to all district primary education officers in Gujarat to register all district panchayat-run schools and their grounds on the government’s land records. The letter stated: “The grounds and structures of district panchayat-run schools must be measured and condoned with barbed wire. In case of encroachment by private individuals, the District Primary Education Officer must coordinate with district collector officials for removal. All such schools must be officially recorded in the state’s revenue records.” Following this, the Surat DPEO began identifying schools located on barren land, grazing land, forest land, donated land, and other types of land across the district. On Monday, the DPEO submitted detailed data for 896 schools to the Surat District Collector for registration with the revenue department. Speaking to The Indian Express, Surat DPEO official Arun Agrawal said, “In the past, many schools were built on land donated by village elders or wealthy individuals without formal documentation. As land values rose, some donors’ descendants began seeking to reclaim the land. To prevent future legal disputes or encroachments, the state government is ensuring all school properties are officially registered.”

According to the data, the 896 schools are located in nine talukas: Bardoli, Choryasi, Kamrej, Mahuva, Mandvi, Mangrol, Olpad, Palsana, and Umarpada. Of these, revenue records (village forms 7/12 and 8A) have been submitted for 706 schools. Currently, only 268 schools are officially listed in the revenue records; the rest are pending registration.

So far, 292 schools lie on barren gram panchayat land, 143 on state-owned grazing land, 135 on unused govern-



ment land, 35 on forest land and 106 schools lie on donated land. Mandvi taluka has the highest number of schools (198), followed by Mangrol (120). Choryasi has the fewest with 32 schools. Agrawal said, “This is the first time since Independence that government primary schools are being registered... We submitted the data for all 896 schools to the district revenue officials. All school principals and taluka primary education officers were involved, and we were the first to complete and submit this data.” He added, “We plan to give the schools uniform names: ‘District Panchayat Education Committee Surat-run (village name) primary school.’”

Interstate drug peddling racket busted in Nizamabad

Nizamabad: An interstate drug-peddling racket was busted by Bodhan Rural police, who arrested four individuals and seized 30 kilograms of Alprazolam worth Rs. 3 crore.

The police also seized products from Surya Prabha Pharma Chem worth Rs. 4 crore at MIDC in Satara, Maharashtra. These arrests and seizures were made under the direct supervision of the Telangana Anti-Narcotics Bureau (TG ANB), with details of the case shared by Nizamabad Commissioner of Police, P. Sai Chaitanya,

Fact-finding probe into HPPCL engineer’s death reveals toxic workplace, show-cause notice for casual leave, threat message



GNS News Agency, June 2

Inquiry by a fact-finding committee into allegations raised by the wife of HPPCL chief engineer Vimal Negi that he was being harassed at work has highlighted the humiliation he faced from senior officers, a show-cause notice issued for availing casual leave, a threatening message, and toxic workplace conditions, among others.

The body of Himachal Pradesh Power Corporation Limited (HPPCL) chief engineer Vimal Negi, who went missing on March 10, was found on March 18 at Bhakra Dam in Bilaspur district. His wife Kiran had alleged that Negi’s seniors at work had harassed him over the last six months and demanded a CBI probe into his death, a request denied by the state government.

The inquiry conducted by Additional Chief Secretary (ACS) Onkar Sharma revealed a threatening message sent to Negi — “Aap problem mein aa jaoge (You will land in trouble)” — from the then director (electrical) Desh Raj in February, demanding that he reduce the delay in the Pekhumbella Solar Power Project in Una from 45 to 23 days, besides the toxic work conditions for women employees at the HPPCL Corporate Office in New Shimla. Sharma submitted his report before Justice Ajay Mohan Goel of the Himachal Pradesh High Court on May 20. The findings were cited in the court’s detailed order dated May 23, in which Justice Goel directed that the police investigation into the matter be transferred to the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI). Speaking to reporters on Monday, Chief Minister Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu said: “I had asked ACS Onkar Sharma to conduct a fact-finding inquiry into the allegations. When the officer submitted the report, I told him to once again confront the officials against whom allegations were raised by HPPCL employees.”

Sharma, however, declined to re-examine the officers while replying to the state power secretary that he had been directed to conduct a fact-finding probe, and that cross-questioning or confrontation was appropriate only during a formal departmental inquiry. He submitted the report directly to the high court, bypassing the office of the Advocate General Anup Rattan. In his report, ACS Sharma noted: “There is evidence on record that Desh Raj, director (Electrical), used to humiliate and use unparliamentary and foul language towards the late Vimal Negi. Almost all witnesses stated that Desh Raj’s behaviour created a toxic environment at the HPPCL Corporate Office in Shimla. Employees submitted representations regarding the hostile work atmosphere, but no concrete action was taken by authorities.”

Desh Raj, in his statement to the ACS, had claimed

‘That would not be appropriate’: Karnataka minister M B Patil on Chandrababu Naidu’s bid for HAL facilities in Andhra Pradesh



Patil said that Karnataka, which contributes 65 per cent to the national defence and aerospace industry, would also seek sanction for a defence corridor in the state during meetings with Defence Minister Rajnath Singh.

GNS News Agency, June 2

In light of reports that Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu has proposed that Bengaluru-headquartered Hindustan Aeronautics Limited’s (HAL’s) production units for the Light Combat Aircraft (LCA) and the Advanced Medium Combat Aircraft (AMCA) be relocated to Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka Industries Minister M B Patil has said such a move would be “inappropriate”. The Andhra Pradesh chief minister, whose Telugu Desam Party is a part of the NDA alliance headed by the BJP, has reportedly proposed the creation of a defence corridor in Andhra Pradesh with production facilities for HAL’s indigenous fighter aircraft, which are currently being produced and developed in Bengaluru facilities. “Requesting the setting up of a unit in Andhra Pradesh as part of HAL’s expansion plans is understandable, but asking to transfer the existing Bengaluru operations is not justifiable,” Patil said on Monday. “To my understanding, Chandrababu Naidu may not have asked for shifting Bengaluru operations. He might have only requested the establishment of a new unit there. However, if he has indeed requested the relocation of operations from Bengaluru, that would not be appropriate,” Patil said in a media statement. “The reported development regarding Chandrababu Naidu’s proposal at the NITI Aayog meeting, seeking the relocation of HAL, will be discussed with the chief minister and the chief secretary to the government,” he added.

Patil said that Karnataka, which contributes 65 per cent to the national defence and aerospace industry, would also seek sanction for a defence corridor in the state during meetings with Defence Minister Rajnath Singh. “I will visit New Delhi shortly to urge the Centre to approve the defence corridor project for Karnataka,” he said. While the (defence corridor) project was sanctioned to Uttar Pradesh and Tamil Nadu two years ago, we did not oppose its allocation to other states. However, we wish to highlight that Karnataka qualifies for the project purely on merit — not political influence,” Patil said. BJP MPs in Karnataka, like Chitradurga MP Govind Karjol, have claimed that Chief Minister Siddaramaiah’s absence at the NITI Aayog meeting last week had resulted in Naidu pushing for relocation of HAL

that he had a friendly relationship with Negi. However, the probe contradicted this claim. “The conduct of Desh Raj is not appreciable under the circumstances,” the report noted. “A public office is considered a second home, and mutual respect is essential. In this light, the treatment meted out to a senior officer like Vimal Negi was unwarranted, both by Desh Raj and then MD Harikesh Meena, IAS.”

Referencing the testimony of Manish Chaudhary, DGM (electrical), the report stated: “He was Member Secretary of the Extension of Time (EOT) Committee, chaired by Vimal Negi, to assess delays in the Pekhumbella Solar Project. He and Negi were called by Desh Raj while finalising the draft proceedings of the Committee meeting held on February 27–28, 2025, and were pressured to reduce the delay period from 45 to 23 days. Desh Raj even threatened them, saying, ‘Aap problem mein aa jaoge.’” While the inquiry confirmed that Negi had been served show cause notices even for taking casual leave, the ACS did not find evidence supporting the claim that leave was routinely denied. “The deceased submitted a detailed reply explaining that he had to leave early for Rampur and had emailed at 6.15 am and called the Director (E) at 10 am. Even so, an explanation was demanded—reflecting non-cooperation. Moreover, the urgency for his presence in office on October 18, 2024, was not clarified in the notice,” the report said. Another troubling detail from the inquiry revealed that Desh Raj frequently summoned Negi from his second-floor office to the fifth floor, where he was made to stand for hours with files and was not even offered a chair. “Witnesses further revealed that employees often worked 11 to 14 hours a day. Biometric records showed that women employees were present in the office even after 9 pm. While some women stated they didn’t mind working late, they pointed to the lack of basic facilities like transportation.”

The report pointed out that the then HPPCL Corporate Office Managing Director Harikesh Meena, when asked about the situation, stated: “I am not aware as to what arrangement was available in HPPCL office for conveyance of lady officer who used to sit in the office late hours”. Similarly, Desh Raj, “while being confronted during his examination qua the aforesaid situation stated that it was for the Estate Department to provide for transportation of lady officers,” the report stated. “The tone and tenor of these two officers goes to show that they are hardly bothered about the well-being and safety of lady officers. Even these three officers, namely Harikesh Meena, IAS, Shivam Pratap Singh, IAS, and Desh Raj are not aware as to how long their subordinate employees remained seated in HPPCL, Corporate Office, Shimla,” it added. Regarding Negi’s health, the report noted: “Vimal Negi joined the HPPCL Corporate Office on June 15, 2024, upon promotion as Chief Engineer/General Manager. A prescription slip from Mahatma Gandhi Medical Service Complex, Khaneri, Rampur Bushahr, shows he sought treatment on July 1, 2024, at 11.44 am for depressive illness, with symptoms of depression and palpitations. It is unclear whether this condition predated his promotion or emerged afterward. He subsequently went on medical leave from July 1 to 22, 2024. This timeline merits further expert investigation.” After Negi’s death, a First Information Report (FIR) was registered under charges of abetment to suicide. Desh Raj was suspended, and Harikesh Meena was transferred from HPPCL.

production facilities in the NDA-ruled state. On Tuesday, the defence ministry announced that Rajnath Singh had approved the AMCA Programme Execution Model, with the Bengaluru-headquartered Aeronautical Development Agency (ADA) executing the programme through industry partnership. The execution model approach provides equal opportunities to both private and public sectors on a competitive basis. They can bid either independently or as joint ventures or as consortia. The entity/bidder should be an Indian company compliant with the laws and regulations of the country,” the defence ministry said in a statement. “This is an important step towards harnessing the indigenous expertise, capability and capacity to develop the AMCA prototype, which will be a major milestone towards Atma Nirbarta in the aerospace sector. ADA will shortly issue an expression of interest (EoI) for the AMCA development phase,” the defence ministry statement said.

The AMCA is a multi-role, light aircraft which is part of the progression from the LCA, which was designed and developed by ADA and is now being produced by HAL. Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL), initially Hindustan Aircraft Ltd, was started on December 23, 1940, in Bengaluru by Seth Walchand Hirachand Doshi with capital support provided by the then Government of Mysore. Although it has production facilities in Maharashtra, Uttar Pradesh, Kerala and Goa, HAL is synonymous with Bengaluru. The first aircraft, Harlow PC-5, was assembled under American licence and flown in August 1941. A year later, the Indian government became the one-third shareholder of the company and took over its management. In 1951, the Indian government placed HAL under the administrative control of the Ministry of Defence. HAL was a maintenance base for all aircraft on the Southeast Asia command during World War II. American warplanes like the Mustang, Liberator, Spitfire and the Hurricanes were serviced at the HAL facilities in Bengaluru. HAL produced the first Indian designed and built trainer aircraft called the Hindustan Trainer 2, which was the mainstay of the basic training stage of the Indian Air Force (IAF) for over 30 years. In the early 1950s, they started licensed production of the Vampire, which was again the mainstay of the jet fighter fleet of the IAF for about 15 years. The company has produced the GNAT fighters under license and the first Indian fighters, the HF-24 Jet Fighter Marut. In the early 1960s, HAL designed the Kiran trainer, which has served the IAF for over five decades. In the late 1970s, HAL started licensed manufacture of the British-French Jaguar fighter aircraft and the Russian MiG 21s, and later in the 1980s, the MiG-27 aircraft as a follow-on project. In recent years, HAL has been the principal partner of ADA in the LCA-Tejas project, which has major orders from the IAF. HAL has also designed and developed a range of helicopters in recent years, like the Advanced Light Helicopter, Light Combat Helicopter, and Light Utility Helicopter. New factories have been opened at Kasaragod in Kerala, Tumkur in Karnataka, and Goa to meet increased production requirements for the defence forces. HAL has also supplied structures for GSLV Mk III, Mars Mission and human crew module for the Indian Space Research Organisation.

‘Treating her like she’s a criminal’: Bombay HC pulls up govt, Pune college for rustication, arrest of student over Operation Sindoor post



GNS News Agency, June 2

Hearing a plea by a 19-year-old student from Pune who was rusticated by her college after a social media post amid Operation Sindoor and later arrested and jailed, the Bombay High Court on Tuesday pulled up the Maharashtra government and Sinhgad Academy of Engineering for the action taken against her. Sinhgad Academy of Engineering in Pune had rusticated the second-year Information Technology student on May 9 after an FIR was registered against her at the Kondhwa police station in Pune. She was arrested on the same day and is currently lodged in Yerawada jail.

Seeking direction from the Bombay High Court to quash the rustication, the student sought that she be reinstated and be allowed to appear for the semester exams that were to begin from May 24. Hearing her plea on Tuesday, a vacation bench of Justices Gauri V Godse and Somasekhar Sundaresan said that she should be released from jail to appear for exams. She has already faced consequences for her post, and as she has expressed remorse, she needs to be reformed, the court said. The court asked her lawyer to file a criminal petition seeking her release, which will be heard later in the day. The Pune college’s rustication letter stated that while the institution recognised the right to free expression, it also expected students “to exercise such rights responsibly and within the bounds of the law”. It further said that the student’s posts on her social media account “have been deemed to undermine the repu-

tation of the college and may incite disharmony within the campus community and society”. In her plea, filed through advocate Farhana Shah, the student claimed she was rusticated in an “arbitrary” manner without issuing any show-cause notice or any opportunity to be heard and the same was in violation of the principles of natural justice and infringed upon her fundamental rights under Articles 14, 19(1)(a) and 21 of the Constitution.

The petitioner contended that she had merely re-posted the Instagram post without any ill-intention and had immediately apologised. During the hearing, Justice Godse orally remarked to the lawyer representing the institute: “What is this? What kind of conduct is this? Someone expresses something, you want to ruin the life of a student? How can you rusticate like this? Did you call for any explanation? We understand you want to take some action, but you cannot refrain her from appearing for exams. Let her appear for the remaining papers.” After the lawyer representing the college said that the action was taken considering “national interest”, the bench went on to remark: “What national interest? This is an age to make mistakes and rectify. She has already faced consequences. What impact will a student’s comment have on national interest? She has suffered enough. You are treating her like a criminal. She accepted she made a mistake and removed it. You need to reform her. You need to help her, or you want to convert her into a criminal?”

After the college’s lawyer said that it supports students, the bench said that the institution could hold an inquiry, but its action should be with the intention to reform the petitioner. “Educational institutions should not do this. You are supporting her so that she gets converted into a criminal? What kind of approach is this,” the bench questioned the college. The court was informed that the sessions court is likely to hear the student’s bail application on Wednesday, May 27, but she has to appear for an exam on the same day. After Additional Government Pleader P P Kakade submitted that she can appear for exams with police escort while being in custody, the bench responded: “She is not a criminal. She cannot be asked to appear with police around her, and she has to be released (from custody).” The court allowed Shah to file a criminal plea seeking her release and sought a government lawyer to take instructions from the police and posted a hearing later during the day.

Karnataka BJP expels party MLAs Shivaram Hebbar and S T Somashekar for 6 years over ‘indiscipline’

GNS News Agency, June 2

The BJP’s Central Disciplinary Committee Tuesday expelled two party legislators, A Shivaram Hebbar and S T Somashekar, for six years for “repeated violations of the party discipline”. The action against the BJP MLAs was based on their response to a showcase notice issued by the party Committee on March 25 this year.

Before this, the Bharatiya Janata Party expelled fire-brand party MLA Basangouda Patil Yatnal from its ranks for six years in March this year. Though both were ministers under the erstwhile BJP rule, Hebbar and Somashekar were on the fringes of the party after the Congress came to power. They were previously in the Congress, and had joined the BJP during the 2019 ‘Operation Lotus’ which saw the defection of 17 Congress and JD(S) MLAs. The two MLAs, especially Somashekar, caused an embarrassment for the state BJP unit by defying party diktats. In the Karnataka Assembly, the Yeshwantpur MLA backed several Bills tabled by the Congress government, which the BJP had opposed. He had also refused to walk out with the BJP legislators during their protests inside the House.

The trouble for the two started in February 2024 when Somashekar cross-voted for Congress candidates during the Rajya Sabha polls, and Hebbar abstained. Their rebellion was an agenda for the state core committee during its meeting held in December 2024, as they had “identified themselves with the Congress”. Somashekar and Hebbar, who are three-time MLAs, had also backed Congress candidates during the 2024 Lok Sabha elections. Though this had not ensured victory for Congress candidates in con-



stituencies, which they were part of, it had attracted the wrath of the BJP leadership. Somashekar was once considered close to Chief Minister Siddaramaiah. He was associated with Deputy CM D K Shivakumar, a Vokkaliga leader like himself, since Congress came to power in 2023. Somashekar had served as the chairman of the Bangalore Development Authority during the year-long Kumaraswamy regime between 2018 and 2019. Post his switch to the BJP, he held the cooperation portfolio in the B S Yediyurappa and Basavaraj Bommai cabinets. Hebbar hails from Yellapur in the Uttara Kannada district of the state. He, along with Somashekar, is said to have felt sidelined after the BJP lost the recent Assembly elections, and Yediyurappa’s influence on the state unit of the party waned. With the two expulsions, the strength of the BJP in the Karnataka Assembly declined to 62. While three MLAs were suspended this year, former CM Basavaraj Bommai had quit as MLA after he won the Lok Sabha polls in 2024.

PCMC’s draft development plan favours rich and influential, alleges former standing committee chief Seema Sawale

GNS News Agency, June 2

As the Pimpri-Chinchwad Municipal Corporation (PCMC) has published a revised draft development plan and invited feedback, a major objection has come from none other than Seema Sawale, a former chairperson of the civic body’s standing committee. She has accused the administration of trying to protect the land of bigwigs, including builders. In her objections sent to the PCMC, Sawale alleged that the draft development plan was heavily in favour of the rich and influential and the builders’ lobby, which she said had been calling the shots in Pimpri-Chinchwad for quite some time now. Sawale alleged that the PCMC was trying to save influential people’s land within the blue flood line of the Pavana, Indrayani and Mula rivers.

“The contours of the map of Maharashtra water resources department and those of the PCMC’s draft DP do not match. The contours have been changed heavily in favour of the bigwigs to help them save their land from falling into the jurisdiction of the blue flood line,” she alleged. Sawale alleged that there was a difference in some places when the map of the irrigation department regarding the markings of the blue flood line and the marking as per the PCMC’s draft development plan were compared. “Especially in areas like Moshi, Chikhli, Pimple Saudagar, Rahatni, and Kiwali the markings in the maps of the state irrigation department and the PCMC’s DP do not match. The PCMC contours should have been drawn based on the map prepared by the irrigation department. The blue flood lines are different at some places,” she said. Sawale, who belongs to the BJP, which ruled the PCMC in 2017-2022, said, “On one hand, the PCMC administration demolished 36 bungalows in Chikhli which fell under the blue flood line of the Indrayani river, on the other hand, the administration seems to be going all out to protect the land of the rich people by changing the flood line of the rivers. This



is a classic example of the corrupt practices being employed by the civic administration.”

Sawale said she had written to Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis. “I have urged the chief minister to investigate the matter and file an FIR,” she said.

Sawale said the water resources department had drawn the contours of the blue flood line of the Pavna, Indrayani and Mula rivers after an inspection. “The markings (blue flood line) were for floods experienced in 25 years and the red line for floods experienced in 100 years. As per the norms, there should be no constructions within the blue flood line of the river,” she said. Sawale said the PCMC draft development plan claimed to have been prepared based on the water resources department’s map but ignored it “to suit the convenience of a select few”. Sawale said that in Chikhli, survey no 1670 and 281; in Moshi, survey no 58, 59, 60 and 75, 76, 77; in Rahatni, survey no 105, 102, 100, 101 and 99; and in Pimple Saudagar, survey no 182; in Kiwale, survey no 55 and 56, have been put outside the blue flood line of the rivers. “These areas are within the blue flood line of rivers in the irrigation department map,” she said.

Society manager forges sign of panel members in Mumbai, withdraws Rs 1 crore



GNS News Agency, June 2

The Mumbai police on Sunday booked the manager of a co-operative society for allegedly forging cheques and withdrawing Rs 1.03 crore from the society’s account. The accused, identified as Inicet Elias (50), is alleged to have forged signatures of office bearers and transferred money in an account he created using documents of the husband of the woman, who worked as a cleaner at the building. According to the FIR, the incident took place at the Readymoney Premises Co-operative Society in Worli that has 56 commercial units. The secretary of the society filed a complaint stating that in 2011-12, they had hired a building manager to carry out various financial and administra-

tive functions of the building. Since June 2024, the manager had become irregular at work citing personal reasons.

In December 2024, the secretary received a message on his phone from the Canara bank where the society had an account, that a cheque was being dishonoured due to a mismatch of signature. Surprised, he enquired with the other committee members if they had issued any cheque, to which they replied in the negative. On checking their bank account, they found multiple unauthorized withdrawals made using bearer cheques from the society account. After realizing what had happened, the secretary approached the Worli police station where an FIR was registered against Elias on charges of criminal breach of trust, cheating and forgery. The funds were allegedly diverted to an account at Bank of Maharashtra in the name of one Dinesh Khawariya, who they knew was the husband of the society’s cleaner. When they questioned him, he said that his documents had been taken by Elias by promising to get his loan approved from the bank. The police also found that Elias had linked his own mobile number to the account even though it had the name of Khavriya. Elias then withdrew the money for his own use, the complaint said. After realizing what had happened the secretary approached the local Worli police station where an FIR was registered against Elias on charges of criminal breach of trust, cheating and forgery. Senior inspector of Worli police Nilesh Patil said that they have registered an FIR and will be probing the allegations made in the complaint. No arrests have been made in the case.

Karnataka govt mulls legal action against BJP’s Ravikumar over his comments against IAS officer; MLC says he has apologised

GNS News Agency, June 2

The Karnataka Government will explore legal action against BJP MLC N Ravikumar for his controversial remarks against IAS officer and Kalaburagi Deputy Commissioner Fouzia Taranum, Deputy Chief Minister D K Shivakumar said Tuesday. This came a day after the Kalaburagi police booked Ravikumar for the comments he made against the award-winning 2015-cadre IAS officer during a protest rally held in the city last Saturday. The First Information Report (FIR) was filed based on a complaint filed by a Kalaburagi resident at the Station Bazar Police Station.

Responding to media queries, Shivakumar said there was no option but to initiate legal action against Ravikumar. “The government and the party will take it very seriously,” he said as he demanded a response from Leader of Opposition R Ashok and BJP state president B Y Vijayendra. “This is not a small issue. The entire Karnataka government stands behind her,” the DyCM said, adding that a lot of IAS officers had met him earlier in the day over the remarks made by the BJP MLC. Ravikumar was booked for his remarks that Taranum “might have come from Pakistan”. In videos that went viral on social media, he can be heard saying, “The DC madam is listening to what they (the Kharge family) say. I don’t know whether she comes from Pakistan or is an IAS officer here. Listening to your applause, I think she might have come from Pakistan,” Ravikumar said during the protest.

When contacted, Ravikumar told The Indian Express



he had apologised for his remarks made against the IAS officer, adding that a detailed letter of apology would be issued soon. BJP state president Vijayendra said Ravikumar had already apologised for the incident. “This is a closed chapter,” he said. The IAS Officers’ Association in Karnataka condemned Ravikumar’s remarks, and said it stood in solidarity with the officer. Taranum was one of the 22 recipients of the Best Electoral Practices Award conferred by the President of India in January this year. The IAS officer also won the Excellence in Governance Award, distributed by The Indian Express, earlier this year in the category of Jury Special Awards for comprehensive development in the district. She was awarded for her initiative in marketing Kalaburagi Roti as a brand and reintroducing millet as a staple in the region.

Maharashtra’s first heliport to come up at Hadapsar Gliding Centre in Pune: Union MoS Murlidhar Mohol

GNS News Agency, June 2

Maharashtra’s first heliport will be built at the Hadapsar Gliding Centre in Pune along with an aviation gallery, Pune MP and Union Minister of State for Civil Aviation Murlidhar Mohol said. According to data from the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA), Pune has the largest helicopter fleet in the country due to tourism, business and other activities in the western region of Maharashtra. Therefore, Mohol said, the heliport will be built with planning and necessary infrastructure. The gliding centre at Hadapsar is spread over 230 acres. Currently under the control of the DGCA, the property is being transferred to the Airports Authority of India (AAI). The centre has been used by gliding trainees and aviation enthusiasts for decades. The DPR for the new project will be prepared after AAI takes over the gliding centre, said Mohol.

“On March 4, 2022, the Department of Skill Development and Information Technology of the Ministry of Civil Aviation decided to transfer this land and assets for a period of 99 years. This land will be given to the Airports Authority of India at a nominal rate of Rs one per year. There is an intention to set up a heliport to bring about a major change in the aviation infrastructure of this area and to promote helicopter-based services,” the minister said. Mohol added that a world-class aviation gallery will also be set up



at the gliding centre. The gallery and museum will provide interactive and educational information and will include research on old aircraft to modern aircraft, simulators, historical information and digital displays.

“The (heliport and aviation gallery) project is under consideration and no proposal has been made yet. However, after the construction of a heliport at this place, it will be useful for medical services, tourism, emergency services, and business travel,” Mohol said, adding, “Geographically, this place is important and can become an important hub for civil aviation. We intend to set up two such heliports in Pune district. The search for the second place is underway.”

‘Unacceptable’: Delhi Police Commissioner issues directions to personnel against posting reels in uniform

GNS News Agency, June 2

Sanjay Arora, Commissioner, Delhi Police, has issued directions to all deputy commissioners of police (DCPs) and other unit heads to “sensitise” personnel against posting reels and videos in uniform on social media platforms. According to a memorandum issued by the Commissioner’s office, a copy of which is with The Indian Express, such instances will constitute “abuse of uniform” and are “unacceptable”. It also shared a list of police personnel found to be making reels or putting out videos in uniform on social media.

The memorandum, dated May 24, referred to Delhi Police’s social media policy and guidelines issued in August 2023. “It has been reported that in spite of the said instructions, a lot of police personnel have been found making and posting reels/videos on various social media platforms while wearing uniforms,” it read, adding that such acts are in violation of the social media policy and guidelines. “You are requested to ensure that the police personnel under your control, as per the list enclosed, are properly sensitised and made aware that they have to distinguish between their personal and professional lives. Such instances of abuse of uniform on social media are unacceptable,” it stated. Arora



asked the officers to comply with the directions by June 15. As per the social media guidelines, “police personnel shall not comment, post, transmit, or disseminate any confidential information relating to the guilt/innocence/ pending trial of any suspect or arrested person... police should not post comments that are inflammatory/derogatory towards victims, suspects or any other individual or group.” The guidelines further state that the police cannot post anything against “national interest” or internal security, adding, “The content can’t be illegal, obscene, derogatory or something that violates conduct rules.”

Bangladesh Army at odds with government on Myanmar corridor



GNS News Agency, June 2

The armed forces of Bangladesh will not be party to decisions that may harm the country’s national security, a spokesperson of the Bangladesh Army said Speaking at a press briefing in Dhaka, Lt. Col. Shafiquel Islam hinted at divergence with the interim government’s initiatives to start a humanitarian corridor to Myanmar’s Rakhine province and said that the Bangladesh Army will “not compromise” on the matter.

“The Army will not compromise on issues related to the corridor, national security and national sovereignty. After 5 August 2024, the Army has coordinated with everyone for the sake of the country,” said Lt. Col. Islam, expressing opposition to the Mohammed Yunus-led interim government’s proposed idea to create a “humanitarian corridor” to the conflict-torn Rakhine province of Myanmar. The press briefing from the armed forces of Bangladesh came days after the Army Chief, General Waker-Uz-Zaman, in a meeting with Commanding Officers on May 21, demanded that elections in Bangladesh be held in December this year. Reflecting on General Zaman’s speech, Lt. Col. Islam warned against mob violence in Bangladesh. “Stern action

will be taken if anyone tries to organise mobs,” he said.

General Zaman had expressed opposition to the creation of the so-called “humanitarian corridor” that was being planned to connect Chittagong with the Rakhine province of Myanmar amidst apprehension that the corridor might turn into a security challenge, as it would entail partnering with non-state actors such as the Arakan Army in a region that is noted for arms and drugs smuggling. General Zaman had said that the interim government had taken crucial decisions without consulting the armed forces of Bangladesh.

The National Security Adviser to the interim government, Khalilur Rahman, on May 21 had said that the interim government was “not under pressure” from the U.S. or China for the creation of the corridor but has discussed it with the United Nations. “The UN Secretary-General inquired about Bangladesh’s ability to provide aid to Rakhine. Bangladesh has informed the Arakan Army, through the UN, that aid distribution must be impartial and not used for military purposes,” Mr. Rahman had said during a press conference at the Foreign Service Academy in Dhaka. Apart from the armed forces, the idea of the corridor with Rakhine has evoked strong criticism from multiple stakeholders, including political parties. “Since all other aid delivery avenues are unviable due to conflict, Bangladesh turned out to be the only feasible option,” Mr. Rahman had said. General Zaman had indicated strong disagreement with the interim government in this regard and said that the corridor is “completely unacceptable”. In the backdrop of his remarks on the corridor, the Army Chief received support from Bangladesh Nationalist Party that also backed General Zaman’s call for election by December. “He has spoken in support of democracy in Bangladesh,” said BNP’s standing committee member Amir Khosru Mahmud Chaudhury at an event in Dhaka on Monday.

All you need to know about: drug addiction



In a January advisory, the US Surgeon General urged cancer warnings for alcoholic drinks and called for guidelines on alcohol consumption limits to be reassessed. The General’s warnings are also important in light of the addictive effects of consuming alcohol, and how contemporary society perceives that addiction and how contemporary science treats it. Most of us know someone who has battled a drug addiction. It’s not unusual to hear the refrain: “it’s all in your mind, the day you decide you want to quit, you will come out of it”. In reality, addiction is not a moral failure. Like diabetes, hypertension, thyroid dysfunction, and coronary artery disease, addiction is also a medical illness.

Drug addiction is characterised by a compulsive drive to imbibe the drug (e.g. alcohol) despite serious adverse consequences, loss of control over intake, and a negative emotional state during abstinence. Emerging lines of evidence have found that drug misuse changes the brain in profound ways, leading to disrupted behaviour. What starts as mere experimentation often turns into frequent use. Since a variety of brain circuits is affected, drug use turns into compulsive behaviour. Brain changes produced by addiction are progressive, long lasting, and persist even after years of drug use discontinuation. The evidence today suggests the brain areas governing reward, motivation, inhibitory control, and self-awareness, undergo progressive structural and functional changes. Addiction can be conceptualised as a cycle of three stages. Each stage represents the malfunctioning of a network of interacting brain circuits: the basal ganglia in the binge-intoxication stage, the extended amygdala in the withdrawal-negative affect stage, and the prefrontal cortex in the craving stage. Addiction vis-à-vis neurodevelopment

Adolescence is a period of experimentation and tumult. Normal adolescent behaviour such as risk taking, novelty seeking, and heightened sensitivity to peer pressure increase the likelihood of experimenting with drugs. Biologically, these risky behaviours reflect the immaturity of the neural systems governing executive control and emotional regulation. The frontal lobes and the connections between them don’t fully develop until the age of 25. Pre-clinical, animal, and human studies have all shown that drug exposure during adolescence results in different neuroadaptations from those that occur during adulthood. The adolescent period is uniquely sensitive to long-term alterations by chronic alcohol and drug exposure. Persons who start using alcohol and drugs early in life are thus more vulnerable to alcohol use disorder.

Binge intoxicationThe first stage of addiction is binge intoxication. Drug use triggers large surges of dopamine and opioid peptides, which has a reinforcing effect that surpasses the magnitude and duration of natural reinforcers like food and sex. Brain areas governing reward processing and emotional regulation essentially become hijacked. The dopamine neurotransmitter doesn’t only signal reward: it is a modifier of motivation and a predictor of reward. Based on the magnitude and duration of dopamine-mediated activity in the brain, information about learning, decision making, stimulus-response, and approach behaviour is conveyed to deeper brain structures. Large, abrupt and large increases in dopamine predict reward. Lower, slower increases sustain effort and attention. The brain responds even to aversive stimuli or to the absence of an expected reward by decreasing the amount of dopamine released. This influences subsequent behaviour to not dedicate efforts to non-rewarding stimuli. People addicted to cocaine show significant dopamine increases even in response to drug-conditioned cues, like the sight or smell of a drug or drug-related advertisements. Drug-conditioned cues can trigger a person to use drugs. This is called cue reactivity. Drug-conditioned cues work by associating a drug with a specific sight, smell or taste, causing a person to use drugs when they see, smell, or taste the associated cue. Surprisingly, in people with an addiction (but not in non-addicted individuals), drug-conditioned cues elicit greater dopamine release than the consumption of the drug itself. We don’t respond in this way to natural reinforcers like food and sex because drugs qualitatively and quantitatively enhance brain dopamine by a factor of five to 10 over natural reinforcers. The dopamine surge produced by natural reinforcers also reaches a point of satiety, unlike drugs of abuse. Overall,

drug-seeking behaviour is entrenched through neuroadaptations that involve a host of neurotransmitters in key brain areas.

The second stage of addiction is the withdrawal-negative affect stage. Say drug use starts off through impulsive experimentation and transitions to compulsive intake. The transition is aided by positive and negative reinforcement. Negative reinforcement strengthens drug-seeking behaviour by alleviating the negative emotional state, which in fact was in fact first precipitated by the absence of drug use. Neuroadaptations in the brain’s reward, executive, and stress systems drive drug intake despite adverse consequences. The dysregulation of the hypothalamic-pituitary-adrenal (HPA) axis, a key driver in the brain stress system, is widely implicated in addiction. Withdrawal from addictive drugs produces an activated HPA stress response. But repeated withdrawals blunt the stress response. Addictive drugs prime the brain to excessively release dopamine and opioid peptides. As a way to restore the internal milieu, the brain’s dynorphin system releases less dopamine, which then produces negative emotions. Addiction can thus be viewed as a reward-deficit disorder.

Emerging research also links an individual’s compromised ability to process and learn from disappointments as being central to the addictive process. The third stage of addiction is the preoccupation anticipation, a.k.a. craving, stage. The frontal brain circuits govern inhibitory control and executive function. Chronic intermittent drug use selectively damages these areas, resulting in poor decision-making that can then perpetuate the vicious addiction cycle. An imbalance between the brain circuits that underlie reward and conditioning and those that underlie emotional control and decision-making contributes to loss of control in addiction.

Drug-induced dopamine increase inherently motivates the individual to procure more of the drug irrespective of whether the effects are perceived to be pleasurable. Many addicted persons have told this author they seek drugs even though they no longer get the ‘high’. This happens because stimuli or environmental changes that are arousing elicit an attentional behavioural switch, which affects the motivation to seek an anticipated reward. Neutral stimuli previously associated with a drug become salient and increase dopamine by themselves to elicit a desire for drug use.

Tesla’s monthly sales in Europe plunge by half as backlash against Musk runs deep

London: Tesla sales across Europe plunged by half last month even as growth in the electric car market picked up pace, according to data released Tuesday. The numbers are the latest indication of how much the Tesla brand is suffering because of the backlash against billionaire CEO Elon Musk over his far-right views. Sales of Tesla vehicles in 32 European countries tumbled 49% to 7,261 in April from 14,228 in the same month the previous year, according to the figures released by the European Automobile Manufacturers’ Association, or ACEA. At the same time, sales of battery-electric vehicles by all manufacturers rose about 28%. Meanwhile, sales of gasoline and diesel powered cars slumped. The figures, which cover the European Union’s 27 member countries and five other nations outside the bloc, back up early data from Sweden, the Netherlands and Denmark released at the start of this month that had pointed to a sales collapse. Tesla has been reeling from protests and boycotts over Musk wading into politics, but it also faces other factors including an aging model lineup and intensifying competition from rival electric vehicle brands, particularly from China. US President Donald Trump’s trade war has also turned Europeans off buying American brands. In recent days, Trump threatened to impose a 50% tariff on EU goods, accusing the bloc of being “very difficult to deal with,” before agreeing to delay the duties until July.

In one sign that Tesla appears to be losing ground to cut-price Chinese brands, sales at China’s SAIC zoomed up 54% in April, according to the ACEA figures. SAIC owns a slew of auto brands including UK-based MG, known for its low-cost EV models. Tesla is also suffering because it had to shut down factories for several weeks this year while upgrading its best-selling Model Y sport utility vehicle, pinching supply. For the first four months of the year, Tesla’s European sales fell roughly 39% to 61,320 while the continent’s auto market as a whole showed little change during the same period, according to the data. For April, car sales in the EU edged up 1.3% from the previous year, “showing signs of recovery despite the ongoing unpredictable global economic environment,” the group said in a press release.

India pushing back ‘illegal’ immigrants to Bangladesh



GNS News Agency, June 2

As many as 160 undocumented migrants from Bangladesh were flown on an Indian Air Force (IAF) plane to Agartala from Ghaziabad on Sunday (May 25, 2025) to be sent across to the neighbouring country, a senior government official told. The special flight took off from Ghaziabad and landed at the Agartala airport on Sunday (May 25, 2025). The migrants included women and children who were detained by the Delhi Police from outer Delhi last week during a drive to identify illegal immigrants. The official said that the transportation is in line with the government’s decision to send the undocumented migrants to Bangladesh rather than wait for the deportation process which is “lengthy”.

Following the Pahalgam terror attack on April 22, 2025, the Union Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) has asked the States to intensify the drive against undocumented migrants from Bangladesh and Myanmar. The Hindu reported first on May 14 that the government was sending the migrants across the Bangladesh border for over the past one month. More than 500 migrants have been sent across the eastern border so far. On May 17, 2025, around 140 undocumented migrants from Rajasthan were flown to Agartala on an Air India plane and sent to Bangladesh. Earlier, on May 4, 2025, two Air India planes transported 300 undocumented migrants, including 200 women and children, who were earlier detained in Gujarat, to Agartala and subsequently sent to Bangladesh via the land border.

On April 23, 2025, the Foreigners Regional Registration Office (FRRO) under MHA intimidated the Kolkata Po-

lice that 80 undocumented migrants from Delhi were being brought by train to the city from where they were to be taken to the border for being handed over to the Border Security Force. On May 10, 2025, Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma said at a press conference in Guwahati that the government had decided to implement the “push back” mechanism to check infiltration instead of going through the legal route.

The detainees are different from the Bangladeshis who either overstayed their visas or who entered the country legally. The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said on May 22, 2025 that India has asked Bangladesh to verify the nationality of 2,369 “illegal migrants” so that they can be deported. MEA said that some cases have been pending for more than five years. Explaining the process, another government official said that all government departments have been assigned responsibilities. The police across the country have been conducting drives to identify undocumented migrants following which the FRRO is informed. In Delhi, after the migrants have been detained, they are taken to two detention centres located at Bakkarwala and Inderlok in north-west and west Delhi respectively.

“The FRRO arranges for their transportation, they are then handed over to the Border Security Force,” said the official. Once they are detained, their biometrics are taken and stored with the MHA and Indian documents procured by them fraudulently are cancelled. “The biometrics are being captured to ensure that if they manage to enter the country again, they are not able to register again for documents such as Aadhaar. Their details are shared with the Aadhaar authorities who have been asked to prepare a blacklist,” said the official.

On Monday (May 26, 2025), Brigadier General Md. Nazim-ud-Daula, director of the Military Operations Directorate of the Bangladesh Army, said at a press conference in Dhaka that “push-ins are unacceptable”. “BGB (Border Guards Bangladesh) is handling it efficiently, and if needed, the army will step in under government instruction. For now, BGB is managing well, within international protocols,” he said, according to Daily Star, Bangladesh. After political changes in Bangladesh in August 2024, on the directions of MHA, the States started a crackdown on illegally staying foreigners in the country. The drive intensified after the Pahalgam terror attack.

Fingerprints may also wrinkle uniquely

We use many features of our bodies to identify ourselves in government records. Fingerprints in particular are widely used, from unlocking phones with sensors to validating Aadhaar cards. But fingerprints can also be fickle. For example, if you spend an hour in the pool, a fingerprint sensor may no longer be able to read yours. This is because wrinkles will have formed on your fingertips. Unlike raisins, which swell in water, the skin on our fingers contracts, creating a wrinkling pattern on the tips of our fingers. The discovery of this mechanism over two decades ago challenged the idea that wrinkles form when the skin on the finger swells. Upon further probing, scientists found that the shrinking may have evolved to help humans grip objects better underwater.

The wrinkling happens because when you are in water, the nerves in your fingertips send signals to the brain, which asks the blood vessels in the fingertips to contract. When Binghamton University associate professor of biomedical engineering Guy German wrote about this for a children’s science magazine, a curious student asked: “Do the wrinkles always form the same way?” This led him to investigating whether the wrinkled pattern is as unique as the fingerprint. In a study published in May in the Journal of the Mechanical Behavior of Biomedical Materials, German and graduate student (recently graduated) Rachel Laytin reported just that. The team found that the pattern is the same for an individual regardless of how many times it is forced to wrinkle. In their test, team members immersed hands in 40° C water for 30 minutes. Then they mapped the wrinkles and compared them to patterns formed 24 hours later, when the test was performed again. There were only a few small differences.

While fingerprints are two-dimensional motifs, wrinkling



patterns are three-dimensional because they have trough-like low points and groove-like high points. Fingerprints are personal and unique. Even identical twins do not have the same fingerprint. What explains the near-uniqueness of wrinkling patterns? If wrinkles occur because blood vessels beneath the skin have been constricted, then the network of these blood vessels must be unique in all of us. According to German, “The size and distribution of blood vessels is well known to vary across individuals. However, not enough studies have been performed to definitively say they are different for all humans.” If the wrinkles can be used to identify people, it could be used in place of fingerprints, too, especially when law enforcement officials have to identify cadavers found in water, and to quickly identify victims following water-based disasters like floods and tsunamis. One gap is that there doesn’t seem to be a relationship between wrinkle patterns and fingerprints. Until such a mapping is found, the wrinkle pattern will constitute a separate instrument of identification — something government agencies could record after collecting one’s fingerprints as well.

Russia seizes Ukrainian border villages as its massive bombing campaign slows



GNS News Agency, June 2

Russian forces have taken four border villages in Ukraine’s northeastern Sumy region, a local official said on Tuesday (May 27, 2025), days after Russian President Vladimir Putin said he had issued an order to establish a buffer zone along the border. Meanwhile, a Russian bombing campaign that had escalated in recent days slowed overnight as far fewer Russian drones targeted Ukrainian towns and cities. Moscow’s invasion

has shown no signs of stopping despite months of intense U.S.-led efforts to secure a ceasefire and get traction for peace talks. Since Russian and Ukrainian delegations met in Turkey earlier this month for their first direct talks in three years, a large prisoner exchange has been the only tangible outcome, but negotiations have brought no significant breakthrough. Between Friday and Sunday, Russia launched around 900 drones at Ukraine, officials said, amid a spate of large-scale

bombardments. On Sunday night, Russia launched its biggest drone attack of the 3-year war against Ukraine, firing 355 drones. From Monday to Tuesday, Russia fired 60 drones at Ukraine, the Ukrainian air force said Tuesday. Russia’s Ministry of Defense claimed its air defenses had downed 99 Ukrainian drones overnight over seven Russian regions. In Sumy, Russian forces are trying to advance deeper after capturing villages, Oleh Hryhorov, head of the Sumy regional military administration, said in a

statement.

Ukrainian forces are endeavouring to hold the line, he said. Residents of the captured villages were evacuated earlier, and there is no immediate threat to civilians, Mr. Hryhorov said. Mr. Putin visited the Kursk region last week for the first time since Moscow claimed that it drove Ukrainian forces out of the area last month. Kyiv officials have denied the claim. Ukraine seized a pocket of land in Kursk last August. The long border remains vulnerable to Ukrainian incursions, Putin said. He said he told the Russian military to create a “security buffer zone” along the border but provided no public details of where the proposed zone would be or how far it would stretch. Mr. Putin said a year ago that a Russian offensive at the time aimed to create a buffer zone in Ukraine’s northeastern Kharkiv region. That could have helped protect Russia’s Belgorod border region, where frequent Ukrainian attacks have embarrassed the Kremlin.

Dementia — the urgent need for India to invest in elder care

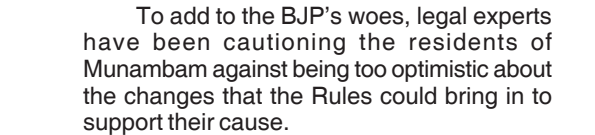


As per National Family Health Survey - 5 data, under-nutrition in children is rampant -- 36% stunted, 19% wasted, 32% underweight -- while among adults, 31.7% of women and 28.6% of men in urban areas and 19% of women and 18.8% men in rural areas were obese. The Dietary Guidelines for Indians (DGIs) developed by the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR)-National Institute of Nutrition (ICMR-NIN), Hyderabad, and released last year, said that 56.4% of total disease burden in India could be attributed to

A previous global survey by ADI revealed that a shocking 80% of the public still incorrectly believes that dementia is a normal part of ageing rather than a medical condition. "In a value-driven society such as India, where intergenerational support and family ties are strongly embedded in cultural norms, help-seeking behaviour for dementia remains low. The idea of using care facilities or depending on care homes is often perceived as a failure to fulfil familial responsibilities and is associated with stigma. The absence of proper support networks for caregivers greatly increases the financial, emotional, and physical

To add to the BJP's woes, legal experts have been cautioning the residents of Munambam against being too optimistic about the changes that the Rules could bring in to support their cause. They say no Rule can prescribe anything which has not already been mentioned in the parent law. Rules, they argue, are the enabling provisions of the parent law; they are nothing but specific instructions for the implementation of a law. Meanwhile, the new chairperson of the Waqf Tribunal, T.K. Minimol, who was a district and sessions judge serving in Thrissur, will have to consider afresh the litigation regarding Munambam, initiated two years ago. The constitutional challenges raised regarding the 2025 Act have left the Kerala Waqf Board, which is on an extended term, in a confused position. The term of the present Board, which is headed by a nominee of the CPI(M), ended on December 19, 2024. The Kerala High Court

Establishing such a policy, the paper noted, required extensive consultations among various stakeholders and organisations, including government bodies, healthcare professionals, researchers, and individuals living with dementia and their caregivers.



Much like the residents of Munambam, the Kerala government too is waiting for the legal battle to be over to decide its next steps, both legal and political. With the local body elections, considered the semi-finals to the Assembly polls to be held next year, around the corner, the State government is treading a careful path. It does not want to antagonise any sections of society.

Build to serve suburban commuters, this network was meant to ease traffic and support daily travel. But in reality, it's overcrowded, unreliable, and neglected. According to Dr. Velmurugan Senathipati of the Central Road Research Institute, despite its wide reach — especially in NCR's rural areas — the Delhi local carries just 0.5% to 3% of commuter traffic, far below the ideal 6-7%. Passengers report waiting over an hour, 15 times longer than the metro, only to board jam-packed coaches. Sarita Sethi, a government employee commuting from New Town, Faridabad to Okhla, states, "My commute should ideally be 25 minutes but it's always nearly an hour long due to unscheduled halts as express trains are prioritised." Nikhil, a railway employee, says, "There are too many passengers and too few trains."

Forget about sitting, during evenings, you can't even stand in the train." Unlike the Metro, enforcement of women-only coaches is lax in the local. Mrs. Sethi says, "Men often enter the ladies coach brazenly. Safety and theft are constant concerns. When the train's late in the evenings, the journey from the station to home can easily become a nightmare." Dr. Velmurguran's study confirms this insecurity, as women make up just 14.6% of local train passengers. Is the metro a better alternative? The local train service in Delhi is much more affordable than the metro. Dr. Velmurguran's research shows that nearly 40% of suburban rail passengers earn less than ₹5,000 a month. For them, the local train is not just a choice, it's the only option they can afford. A local train ride from Greater Noida to Delhi costs just ₹15, compared to ₹90 by metro or ₹69 through a bus-metro combo, excluding last mile connection fares. Over a month, that's ₹750 by the local versus a staggering ₹4,500 by metro. Moreover, a Monthly Season Ticket (MST) brings costs down to just ₹270 a month or ₹9 a day. Additionally, local trains have a dedicated vendors' bogey, widely used by dairy farmers to transport produce to markets like Sadar Bazaar and Chandni Chowk. But even this advantage is fading. Amit, a dairy farmer from Ajayabpur village in Greater Noida, says, "We had to stop using the local because delays were spoiling the produce. My friends now either rely on road transport or have quit the trade altogether, it just isn't profitable anymore." These concerns have driven passengers to explore more reliable — though far costlier — alternatives, such as private buses or personal vehicles. What should be done?

Do not write off Trump’s America



In the aftermath of Donald Trump’s resounding victory in the U.S. presidential elections, with a stunning Electoral College triumph of 312 votes to 226, the Indian commentariat appears to be divided between those lamenting the demise of Liberal America and those celebrating the rise of a right-wing transactional leader who might be “good for India”. Both sides, however, appear to think that the America, over which Mr Trump will preside, has given one more sign of its irresistible decline, as the world becomes increasingly multi-polar and China continues its inexorable rise. For them, Mr. Trump’s victory merely sets the seal on an America more divided against itself, more insular, more xenophobic, more racist and misogynist and less inclined to engage with the world than at any time since the Second World War.

The core elements are still strongI am not prepared to write America off quite so quickly. For one thing, the fundamental elements of American global power remain unchallenged. It is still the world’s largest, most diverse and most innovative economy. Its military budget dwarfs those of the rest of the planet’s countries combined. It has a remarkable level of energy security, with its own domestic sources of oil, gas, solar and wind power, and seems to be gradually expanding its nuclear capacity as well. Its labour force may have priced itself out of the manufacturing business but American labour productivity and its talent for business and entrepreneurship remain incomparable. Its capital markets are thriving and stable, defying every doomsday prediction since the Great Depression. It has more billionaires than in any country on earth; the U.S. dollar remains the world’s benchmark currency; and the average working American is still better off than the average worker almost anywhere else in the world.It is still a land that wields an unparalleled influence over global culture — as the home of Coca-Cola, Starbucks, Levi’s, McDonald’s, Disney, Hollywood, CNN, Google, Microsoft, and Nvidia, it sets the global cultural agenda in ways that no one else comes remotely close to approaching. The “unipolar moment” that lasted from roughly 1990 to 2010 may have passed, but these factors mean that whatever degree of multi-polarity may be dawning, it is very much amongst second-order powers jostling for space with each other, rather than truly competing with the United States for global dominance.

It is of course true that the couple of decades of absolute dominance — politically, militarily, economically, and technologically — of the world by the United States of America have passed. This was an era in which Washington faced no near-term rivals for global power and influence, and one in which the defining feature of international politics was that America held sway over world affairs, and usually had its way. But in the last decade or so, it has become clear that the U.S. was no longer going to be uncontested in any of these domains. The first, largest, tallest, biggest everything — from skyscrapers to planes — used to be in America. That is no longer the case. There are also the undoubted weaknesses with which America is now reckoning. Its industrial base has been weakened by decades of over-reliance on imports from China. Its public debt is out of control and is expected to rise to 122% of GDP by 2034. It is already the case that America spends more on public debt interest than on defence, even though its defence budget is larger than that of the rest of the world combined. Its public, as the recent election showed, is increasingly resentful of the country’s own globalist elites, has rejected cosmopolitanism and multiculturalism, and wants to return to a more insular and arguably xenophobic insularity. Its

Nagaland’s biggest tourism fair, a window to the state

7The Hornbill Festival, Nagaland’s iconic cultural and tourism fair that is annually held from December 1 to 10, has evolved into a celebration showcasing the diverse and vibrant cultural and traditional heritage of the tribes of Nagaland.In its 25th year, the festival was conceived at a time when the state was slowly returning to normalcy, following the signing of a ceasefire agreement between the Naga armed group Isak-Muivah-led National Socialist Council of Nagalim and the Centre, after having been through insurgency for over five decades. The long-drawn insurgency had not only hit normal life with daily hours of curfew across the state, it had also badly impacted tourism.“A few of us traveled with the then chief minister of Nagaland SC Jamir to international tourism events and Nagaland was not known anywhere,” recalled Thangji Mannen, former state tourism secretary. She said the festival idea was conceived as an event to promote the cultural richness of Nagaland. Jamir saw it as an event with the potential to become a “window to Nagaland”.

The festival was named after the Hornbill bird given its association with the socio-cultural life of the Nagas through folklore, dances, songs, and usage of the magnificent bird’s feather as motifs on ceremonial attires and men’s headgear. In the first few years, the festival was a five-day event held at Khouchiezie, a fair ground in the heart of the state capital Kohima. The state government acquired a plot of land from the southern Angami villages of Kigwema and Phesama, located about 10 km from Kohima, and turned it into the main venue for the growing event in 2003. The picturesque sloping hillock was named the Naga Heritage Village, Kisama, a combination of the two donor villages. Tribal morungs (huts) of all the 17 recognised tribes were constructed at the venue, each placed strategically that altogether they represent the shape of the map of Nagaland. After the festival was shifted to Kisama, the government extended the festival duration to seven days. Over the years, the festival became popular, attracting visitors from different districts, states as well as foreign tourists, prompting a further extension of the festival to 10 days. The annual carnival is often called the “festival of festivals” in the north-eastern state. It marks the culmination of all the Naga tribal festivals held according to the state’s rural calendar, providing a closer look at the Naga culture and way of life. It promotes the diverse Naga ethnicity and brand Nagaland through traditional art, food, dances, music, tribal rituals and indigenous games, crafts, highlighting Naga textiles and designs. The festival now attracts tourists from across India and abroad; In 2023, the state tourism department recorded 1.5 lakh footfalls. The state government invests ₹5-6 crores every year on the festival. According to an independent study, a Report on Economic Assessment of Horn-

appetite for global adventure has shrunk dramatically and might increasingly prompt American administrations to withdraw from their current engagements across the world and cease to make the major efforts required to manage and defuse international conflicts.The rise of ChinaAnd then there is China. Roughly around the 2008-09 financial crisis, pundits recognised that there had emerged on the global scene the spectre of Beijing. China’s “peaceful rise” for the last quarter of a century, fuelled by American investment in its industries and burgeoning export trade for its manufactures, has culminated in its supplanting the U.S. as a manufacturing and industrial power, rivaling it in economic size and exceeding its surpluses, as well as challenging it in new cutting-edge technologies such as 5G. Under the assertive autocracy of Xi Jinping, China has emerged, after decades of uncontested U.S. hegemony, as the other aspiring hegemon — and it has the resources to make the Americans sweat. No wonder many American thinkers have called for policymakers to evolve a comprehensive strategy to counter China, much as George Kennan’s famous “Long Telegram” from Moscow in 1946 led to the birth of the “containment strategy” that hemmed in the Soviet Union.

Such a strategy, by definition, will require the U.S. to stay engaged, if only to preserve its dominance in world affairs. Mr. Trump’s first term demonstrated that he was no isolationist. His initiatives in promoting a “grand bargain” involving the U.S., Israel, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates and other moderate West Asian powers, did indicate a willingness to pursue a new regional compact that would isolate Islamic extremists. (The “I2U2” among Israel, India, the U.S. and the UAE, which was part of this vision, has been rendered dormant by the Gaza conflict, but will certainly be revived once that war is brought to an end.) His withdrawal from the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA)/nuclear agreement with Iran, his imposition of extremely rigorous sanctions on that country, and the American assassination of Iran’s intelligence chief, Qasem Soleimani, suggest a willingness to be belligerent in pursuing adversaries deemed to be hostile.

Mr. Trump has made it clear, especially through the trade war he launched against China, that a United States led by him will not permit Beijing to establish itself as the unchallenged Asian hegemon. To this end, Mr. Trump is likely to prioritise strengthening the Quad (India, Australia, Japan, the U.S.), and should India prove skittish in this regard, the new “Squad” (in which the Philippines replaces India in the quartet), could be energised.

Mr. Trump understands that if China is allowed to gain unchallengeable dominance over east and central Asia, the resources and markets it would command would enable it to seriously challenge American strategic and economic interests. A struggle for influence in this part of the world will certainly ensue over the next few years and India will be called upon to define its stand in relation to it.An Indian responseNew Delhi will have to carefully juggle some crucial choices: how to define its uneasy relationship with a China that continues to threaten its borders, even while India’s import dependence on that country grows to record levels each year; how to manage its close relationship with a Russia that is increasingly becoming a client state of Beijing; how to manage its friendship with Iran at a time when Israel’s war with Hamas and Hezbollah and the U.S.-led attacks on the Houthis render Iran increasingly a regional undesirable; and how to defend its own strategic autonomy in a world where the freedom of manoeuvre we have so far enjoyed among all these actors is narrowing. The U.S. under Donald Trump will undoubtedly seek to contain China, limit Russia, disempower Islamic Iran, and further isolate North Korea — the new “axis of evil” identified by Washington — while it promotes Israel and whips Europe into shape. U.S. support for India will be contingent on how adroitly India manages to navigate its own relationships with these countries so that it is seen as willing to go along with, or at least not undermine, these objectives.Not only is it unwise to write off Trump’s America — in light of these considerations — we should take it very seriously indeed.Shashi Tharoor is the fourth-term Congress Member of Parliament (Lok Sabha) from Thiruvananthapuram,



bill Festival, the Hornbill Festival in 2023 generated approximately ₹131 crore. The state government has approved ₹100 crore to upgrade infrastructure in Kisama for 2024-25. The festival has over the years hosted the country’s top political dignitaries including the president and the prime minister of India, foreign diplomats as also film stars. The ongoing edition is showcasing a collaborative cultural experience with the US, UK, Japan and Peru as international partners while Sikkim and Telangana are the partner states.

India to get \$1.17 billion worth helicopter equipment from US

Washington: The Biden Administration on Monday notified the Congress of its decision to approve the sale of MH-60R Multi-Mission Helicopter Equipment and related ones at an estimated cost of \$1.17 billion.The proposed sale will improve India’s capability to deter current and future threats by upgrading its anti-submarine warfare capabilities, the Defense Security Cooperation Agency said in a notification to the Congress.The Biden administration’s approval of sale of major defense equipment to India comes weeks ahead of its completion of its four-year term. President-elect Donald Trump would be sworn in as 47th president of the United States of America on January 20, 2025.According to the notification, India has requested to buy 30 Multifunctional Information Distribution System-Joint Tactical Radio Systems (MIDS-JTRS).It also included advanced data transfer systems; external fuel tanks; AN/AAS 44C(V) forward looking infrared (FLIR) systems; an operator machine interface assistant;

Why India must uphold stringent standards in cosmetics



With rising affluence and the influence of the Instagram generation, India’s demand for cosmetics has witnessed an unprecedented boom. This surge in interest is no longer confined to the affluent, but has permeated the middle and even lower-middle segments of the market. The sector has seen a proliferation of blockbuster direct-to-consumer (D2C) brands and startups, each eager to capture a share of this expanding market. As more small and medium enterprises (SMEs) and startups vie for attention, it is crucial that consumers are not misled by substandard products or exaggerated claims. Ensuring the highest quality and safety of cosmetics is paramount, and this responsibility falls squarely on the Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS), the apex body regulating industry specifications.

However, BIS now faces a significant threat from those advocating the replacement of its time-tested vertical standards with a broad, horizontal approach. If implemented, this shift would not only affect the domestic cosmetics industry, it would result in substandard products coming into the market, at cost to the customer. It is essential that India upholds its stringent, product-specific standards to protect both its industry and consumers.India’s existing vertical standards, meticulously crafted by the BIS, operate under the stringent regulations laid out in the Drugs and Cosmetics Act, 1940, and the Cosmetic Rules, 2020, and are designed to safeguard the quality, safety, and performance of cosmetic products. BIS standards—such as IS 2888 for toilet soaps, IS 13498 for bathing bars, and IS 4199 for liquid soaps—have been carefully crafted to meet the specific needs of the Indian market. These standards are product-specific, ensuring that each category of cosmetics — from soaps to skincare and haircare — meet the requirements tailored to their unique formulations. This approach has not only nurtured consumer trust but also fostered the growth of a vibrant, homegrown cosmetics industry, especially among SMEs and startups.

Menstrual health literacy: Empowering women through education

Menstrual health education is about more than just biology; it’s about creating empowerment, equality, and respect for women and girls everywhere. Imagine a world where talking about menstruation is normal, not hidden. In this world, every girl can attend school without fear, every woman can talk about her period cycle with respect, and can walk freely, knowing her body brings pride instead of shame.But in reality, about 88% of teenage girls have little or no information about menstruation in India. In most cases, when menuration starts, it is often seen as a “curse” or a sickness, according to Child Rights and You (CRY). This lack of knowledge is not limited only to India. Globally, 1.8 billion women menstruate each month, yet over 500 million lack access to the right products or privacy needed to manage their period cycle responsibly. These figures represent real lives affected, chances missed, and dreams put on hold due to a lack of knowledge and resources about menstruation. For these girls, understanding menstrual health could change their lives from struggle to opportunity.Menstrual health literacy is more than just basic information. For many, it serves as a pathway to liberation, assisting them in respectfully managing their health and making their voices heard. In resource-limited areas, the lack of menstrual health education keeps women and girls trapped in poverty and disadvantage. This issue extends beyond not having sanitary products. Imagine a young girl in a rural area where discussing menstruation is taboo and she lacks access to appropriate products and hygiene knowledge. Without menstrual literacy, her teenage years are filled with worry, confusion, and low self-esteem. However, with the right education, she can seize the power to make informed health choices, advocate for her rights, and escape the cycles of poverty and silence that have persisted for generations.The wonderful news is that progress is finally happening. In India, the government’s Menstrual



Hygiene Management (MHM) Scheme offers free sanitary pads to girls in public schools, which allows them to stay in school and participate in their education. Globally, the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (UN SDGs) have accentuated menstrual health as essential for gender equality, understanding that menstruation is a fundamental human rights matter. These efforts are important, but they are just the beginning. True change needs collective action to eliminate the obstacles and stigma related to menstrual health.The deeply ingrained shame surrounding menstruation is one of the biggest problems that women have to deal with. To many girls, menstruation is something to hide, fear, or avoid because it makes them feel awful about their bodies. Community, family, and school are excellent places to start for knowledge and learning, though. Imagine if parents, teachers, and boys were also taught about periods. They would be partners in the fight against shame. If all girls went to schools like this, no girl would have to be embarrassed about having her period, and women would see it as an important and normal part of life.Beyond education, access to resources is also crucial. Period poverty, the inability to afford menstrual products, keeps millions of girls home from school every month, stalling their education and their futures. Period poverty isn’t just an issue of missing school—it’s a barrier to progress, a thief of dreams. Organisations worldwide are working energetically to guarantee ac-

cess to menstrual products, clean facilities, and hygiene education so that no girl’s education and potential are disrupted just because of her menstrual cycle. This fight against period poverty is not a stopgap solution; it’s about giving young women the chance to build a better future.With knowledge about menstrual health, women and girls can take control of their health and lives. They understand how to handle their menstrual cycles, identify symptoms that require medical help, and seek treatment without feeling embarrassed. In communities that support menstrual health education, old cultural taboos, and harmful myths are fading away, creating a positive space where girls can confidently manage their health. Picture a world where every girl understands her body’s changes, allowing her to stand strong, aim high, and chase her dreams without fear. This change not only benefits individual health but also unlocks potential as it creates a positive impact that ultimately strengthens the entire community.Empowering women through menstrual health literacy is also a step toward breaking down long-lived gender barriers. When girls and women have the resources, knowledge, and trust to manage their health, they can participate more fully in school, work, and public life. This simple change can open doors that can lead to better representation in leadership, improved economic stability, and a stronger voice in society.Menstrual health literacy is a wise investment in our future. Empowered young women will remain in

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

What is the One Nation One Subscription explained



The story so far: The Union Cabinet on Monday, November 25, 2024, approved the 'One Nation One Subscription' (ONOS) initiative for centralised access to research articles and journal publication for government higher education institutions and research and development (R&D) laboratories of the central government. The central government has allocated ₹6,000 crore for ONOS until 2027. All higher education institutions under central or State governments and R&D institutions of central government can avail the benefits of the initiative through a national subscription.

What is ONOS?

ONOS is a plan to consolidate researchers' subscriptions to prominent academic journals and other similar publications. Once in place, the ONOS initiative will provide access to journal articles to all individuals in India for one "centrally negotiated payment". The ONOS will replace individual institutional journal subscriptions. Subscriptions to scientific journals are a costly affair. According to research conducted by S. Chakraborty of the National Institute of Plant Genome Research, New Delhi, and other researchers and published in Current Science in April 2020, India spent around ₹1,500 crore on subscription for electronic and print journals in 2018. Institutions also spent around ₹30-50 crore on access to SCOPUS and Web of Science, which are popular citation databases. "One is looking at very large numbers in terms of financial outlays," the paper noted.

In a response to a query raised in the Lok Sabha in

August 2023, Subhas Sarkar, then Minister of State for the Education Ministry, said the Indian government spent around ₹995 crore on journal subscriptions in 2022. This included "the spending by the ten library consortia funded by different ministries/departments and self-subscriptions by individual government academic and R&D institutions". Overall, the total expenditure for 2019-2022 was estimated to be around ₹2,985 crore, Mr. Sarkar said. The ONOS initiative is also expected to include concessions on fees that authors have to pay to have their work published in open access journals. History of the scheme ONOS was recommended as one of the objectives of the Science, Technology, and Innovation Policy 2020 to facilitate knowledge-sharing on an "equal partnership basis". A plan for ONOS was presented at a stakeholder consultation in August 2021, which was endorsed by the concerned ministries. Another round of negotiations for ONOS took place on October 11-12, and October 25, 2023. The negotiations were held with 41 publishers, which included journals and citation databases, according to the Office of the Principal Scientific Advisor. Popular STEM and social science publishers like Elsevier, Springer Nature, Taylor and Francis, and Wiley were a part of the process. In his Lok Sabha response in 2023, Mr. Sarkar said a core committee had been constituted to implement ONOS. This committee consists of a secretary each from the Ministry of Education and the Department of Science and Technology, and a scientific secretary, and will be chaired by the Principal Scientific Advisor of the government of India.

Challenges of implementation The ONOS core committee notified two more blocs for the transition to ONOS: the planning and execution committee (PEC) and the cost negotiation committee (CNC). The PEC includes library consortia coordinators and representatives from government academic and R&D institutions.

The main responsibility of this committee is to prepare a strategy to implement ONOS. The CNC is responsible to finalise membership terms and conditions and pricing details for the subscription. Its members are from the negotiation committees of the existing library consortia.

Why is there a row over climate finance?



The story so far: The 29th edition of the Conference of Parties (COP), arguably the most important of the UN's climate conferences, was scheduled to end on November 22, after 11 days of negotiations, and take a collective step forward in addressing rising carbon emissions. However, deliberations are expected to carry on beyond the deadline with several sticking points outstanding.

What is the significance of COP29?

Going into the talks, developing countries had stated that at least a trillion dollars per year from 2025-35 would be necessary to meet emission targets. This was seen to be the New Collective Quantified Goal (NCQG) on climate finance which refers to money that will be given to developing countries by developed countries to help the former meet their goals to transition away from the continued use of fossil fuels and curb greenhouse gas emissions. Developing countries have been repeatedly saying that the figure should be "trillions of dollars." To this end, developed countries have mobilised and transferred \$115 billion in 2021-22 — a controversial clause that has yet to be resolved in the universal agreement — but per the Paris Agreement, a new target higher than \$100 billion must be agreed upon by 2025. The talks in Baku were expected to conclusively agree upon a number but there continues to be a sharp split between developed and developing countries on the quantum and other basic aspects of what this NCQG should look like.

What do developing countries want?

This block of countries include China, India and the Group of 77 countries. There are also other coalitions such as the Like Minded Developing Countries (LMDC), Least Developing Countries (LDC), Small Island Developing Countries (SIDS) etc. Nearly all developing countries fall into one or multiple groupings and while they have differences, they are largely agreed on the point that it is the developed countries that should pay the bulk of climate finance. More importantly, they specified that this money had to be provided not only to help countries meet their Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC) but also buffer against existing threats of climate change, and make good for climate damage already wrought. The NDCs are targeted, voluntary plans by all countries to reduce carbon emissions by certain quantities until 2030. The NCQG, the developing countries say, should also reflect contributions by devel-

oped countries on the basis of their historical contribution to existing carbon concentrations in the atmosphere as well as their per capita GDP. To put this in perspective, it is important to note that even if all countries fulfilled their stated voluntary commitments, it would as of now only translate to a 2% cut, and this year — the latest scientific assessments suggest — carbon emissions will likely increase 0.8% over 2023.

What does the developed world say?

However developed countries, led by the European Union, say these demands are unreasonably high. They aver that "all actors" (read countries) should collectively work to hike up climate finance to \$1.3 trillion per year by 2035. While agreeing that they must "take the lead" they have only a set a goal of \$250-300 billion by 2035 per year. Moreover this would consist of a "variety of sources," including "public and private, bilateral and multilateral, and alternative sources." This suggests that another major demand of the developing world, of ensuring most of the money is in the form of grants or low-cost loans, remains unmet.

Have any concrete agreements been made?

A week before the conference began, China had petitioned the Presidency of COP29 to discuss "climate-change related unilateral restrictive trade measures" at the conference. This is an unusual request as trade issues are discussed on forums such as the World Trade Organization. China proposed this as part of a grouping of countries called BASIC (Brazil, South Africa, India, China).

The petition is primarily directed at a European Union proposal called the Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM), which imposes a tax on products imported into the EU that don't conform to carbon-emission norms required by the Union. The CBAM is currently operating in a "transitional phase" but will come into full effect from January 1, 2026. The first day of the conference saw an agreement on carbon markets to be supervised by the UN. Such a market would allow countries to trade carbon credits — certified reductions of carbon emissions — among themselves and whose prices are determined as a consequence of emission caps imposed by countries. The market itself follows from a section in the Paris Agreement, called Article 6. Sub-sections within the Article spell out how countries can bilaterally trade carbon among themselves (Art 6.2) and participate in a global carbon market (6.4). Though most of the necessary nuts and bolts to make operational such a carbon market, supervised by a United Nations body, were in place since 2022, there were several niggles, particularly on ensuring that the carbon credits generated are genuine and its antecedents are transparent. While there is criticism among environmentalist groups that enough discussions on this didn't take place, this is supposed to be a mechanism to facilitate climate finance. India has been discussing bilateral deals to trade carbon with several countries. An agreement such as the one in Baku could be a catalyst, and activate India's own carbon-trading market.

How should India tackle its diabetes load?

The story so far: On International Diabetes Day (November 14), a paper published in The Lancet, based on a global study, recorded over 800 million adults living with diabetes, with more than half not receiving treatment. According to the study, the total number of adults living with either Type 1 or Type 2 diabetes in the world has surpassed 800 million — over four times the total number in 1990. Of this, over a quarter (212 million) live in India, with another 148 million in China. The estimate came as a bit of a shock, because the last scientific countrywide estimate by the Indian Council of Medical Research-INDIAB study last year had pegged the number at slightly over 100 million.

Why is there a discrepancy in numbers?

The nub of it is in the means used to measure blood sugar, experts have pointed out. The Lancet study, conducted by the NCD Risk Factor Collaboration (NCD-RisC), along with the World Health Organization (WHO), used data from over 140 million people (18+ years) culled from more than 1,000 studies in different countries. They estimated trends from 1990 to 2022 in diabetes prevalence and treatment for 200 countries and territories. As such they had to use what was available as data in these nations — picking fasting glucose or HbA1C or a three-month glycated haemoglobin average. The ICMR study, however, used a fasting measure and a two-hour post prandial value to come up with the number of people who have elevated blood sugar levels. It is the use of differing measures to estimate diabetes that has led to the variation. V. Mohan, chairman, Madras Diabetes Research Foundation, Chennai, who was part of the ICMR-INDIAB study says, while a number of countries have moved to measuring HbA1C, India still sticks to the measure of the fasting and two-hour post prandial readings with an Oral Glucose Tolerance Test (OGTT) as the gold standard. "If they had taken the OGTT values alone, then the number would be half of what was recorded," he says. "Using HbA1c, they preferred a single cut-off point to determine diabetes — 6.5 %. Even in those with normal glucose, a small percentage will spill over into the 6.5% HbA1c value, depending on whether individuals are 'fast' or 'normal glycators'. Glycation is influenced by many things, including anaemia, and advancing age. Someone who is nondiabetic too, but is older, may have a high A1C value. In some earlier studies, when we used HbA1C, we found a doubling of the figures," he adds, reasoning out why the OGTT figures are considered the gold standard. However, he adds that a global study the size of what was attempted as part of this exercise would have to use the information already available in countries, and not all nations have OGTT fasting and post prandial values. Anoop Mishra, chairperson, Fortis CDOC Hospital for Diabetes and Allied Sciences, adds that sources of data are multiple here, thereby giving rise to apparent differences in total numbers. Also, he adds that Type 1 diabetics are a small proportion of the total diabetes cases in India, and it is Type 2 diabetes that poses problems for the future.

What are the areas of concern?

Whether 100 million or 200 million, the fact remains that India already has a large number of people requiring treatment for their diabetes, and who, as a consequence are prone to several life-threatening complications involving the heart, eyes, kidneys, and peripheral nervous system. Quibbling over numbers apart, the Lancet study must be seen as yet another reminder that in India, diabetes has grown — and is growing — across populations, and efforts should be made on a war footing to both prevent diabetes and treat persons with the condition. Another aspect that the study highlighted was the lack of access to treatment for people with diabetes. Senior author of the paper, Majid Ezzati, of the Imperial College, London, says: "Our study highlights widening global inequalities in diabetes, with treatment rates stagnating in many low-and middle-income countries, where numbers of adults with diabetes are drastically increasing. This is especially concerning as people with diabetes tend to be younger in low-income countries, and in the absence of effective treatment, are at risk of life-long complications, including amputation, heart disease, kidney damage or vision loss, or in some cases, premature death."

No country in the world can afford to treat patients when the complications of diabetes set in, explains Dr. Mohan. "Even if we assume we have 100 million people with diabetes and 20% of them move to kidney failure, then that is 20 million people who will need a kidney transplant. How are we going to help all those people?" Dr. Mishra invokes a war metaphor, to stress the urgency of the fight ahead for challenges that might seem, like the labours of Hercules, impossible to achieve and yet only require near superhuman effort. "Unless war-like efforts, using mass



media for raising awareness on nutrition, physical activity, are put in, and more legal provisions to cut down carbs and sugar-sweetened beverages, it will be a tall order to keep the numbers from rising," he says. Speaking ahead of World Diabetes Day, International Diabetes Federation Peter Schwarz spoke about prevention as the primary, crucial aspect in this game: "My heart is beating for prevention. And then the next step is prevention, and then prevention again." Dr. Mishra adds that nations such as India have a duty to focus on the vulnerable, lower middle class, semi-urban and rural people. "We have to majorly educate women since they are prone to obesity post pregnancy and have a heightened risk at menopause. We need to cut off the rising trend of obesity, [Abdominal obesity has been identified as one of the key causes of diabetes among Indians] with all these efforts. A long-term vision for about 10 years is required," he explains.

What can individuals do?

The Lancet paper identifies obesity and poor diets as important drivers of the rise in Type 2 diabetes rates. Diabetes rate was either already high or increased more in some of the regions where obesity was or became prevalent between 1990 and 2022, compared to many high-income countries, especially those in the Pacific and western Europe, where, in general, obesity and diabetes rates did not rise or rose by a relatively small amount. The writing is on the wall: a measure of mindful eating and exercising have a proven effect in preventing diabetes, and controlling blood sugar levels. The challenge for governments, however, is to make it possible for people to exercise these healthy choices, and for people to demand it of their rulers. As Anjana Ranjit, a collaborator on the ICMR-INDIAB study, says: "We need to see more ambitious policies that restrict unhealthy foods, make healthy foods affordable. Opportunities to exercise must be ensured, besides promoting safe places for walking and exercising, including access to public parks and fitness centres, subsidies provided for healthy foods and free, healthy school meals."

An experience unworthy of the franchise

This year has been a year of experimentation within the real-time strategy genre, with game makers exploring new takes, from the unremarkable Elder Scrolls: Castles to the highly impressive Heroes of History. Joining this lineup is Age of Empires Mobile, developed by TiMi Studio, the team behind Call of Duty Mobile. With TiMi promising a 4X experience aimed at introducing younger generations to the charm of the iconic franchise, fans had high expectations. Unfortunately, the result is a mishmash of game modes, offering little more than a glorified city builder that is weighed down by an endless stream of microtransactions. The heart and soul of Age of Empires (AoE) is unmistakably absent. The game begins with the tale of a holy sword that must be charged, following Princess Josephine on her quest to establish an empire. Right from the opening sequence, the game abandons the classic AoE controls in favor of a dated city-builder system, reminiscent of Clash of Clans. As you summon heroes and construct buildings to raise an army, it becomes evident that the game leaves no room for strategy, tactics, variety, or even basic army formations. Across the many game modes on offer, originality is scarce — you're either engaged in auto-battles or playing as Princess Josephine in combat sequences reminiscent of the classic Demon Star. While it's hard to justify playing a real-time strategy game that requires no actual strategy, it's equally important to acknowledge that the game does offer several game modes. Unfortunately, none of them are enjoyable or worth your time. In this scattered approach, what remains is an over-cluttered UI/menu system that provides little to no guidance on how to navigate or play the game effectively.

The Hows, Whys and the What Nows

Now that the Byju's chapter has come to a sad close with the founder himself declaring that the company is worthless, it is time to examine what went wrong with juggernaut ? What does this teacher's journey teach us? Are there any early warning signals to watch for in the future to avoid such episodes from recurring, which leave a lot of employees unemployed, a lot of debts unpaid and several investors a lot poorer?

The damage and repercussions of such big failures are not yet fully understood by the sector but readers must keep in mind that while it might be the most prominent, Byju's is far from alone: many companies in the K12 edtech space have shut shop post pandemic and several have been in a rocky boat including large players like Unacademy and Vedantu. Layoffs have been a daily feature and several companies have been scrambling to keep themselves afloat. As per industry estimates, at least 25 Indian edtech startups, including all seven edtech unicorns, have fired close to 15,000 employees in the last couple of years.

This is a dramatic change from 2020 and 2021 when these very same businesses were the darlings of the media and money was flowing like water into the sector. The more aggressive players went onto a frenzied growth trip and on a shopping spree. But the bubble burst after the pandemic ended and many are now struggling with the new reality. It is worth examining how much of this debacle is self created and how much is outside anyone's control. Are there steps new entrepreneurs can take early in the game to ensure they don't end up the Byju's way or are debacles such as this inevitable? As the pandemic tightened its grip on India and the world in 2020, a lot of the K12 companies stared at a never before opportunity. Here was a country with 250-odd million school going children at home staring at a future ahead with no avenues for learning or entertainment. No matter which segment a company was previously operating in, this was too juicy an opportunity to let go by. A few things happened in combination to set off what we witnessed. The availability of cheap money made it possible so practically everyone entered every possible space and segment available: companies that were specialising in tutoring jumped headlong and with virtually no preparation into test prep or those who were focussed on math and science learning enhancement honed into coding and other fields. Buy, buy, buy became the mantra. In the case of Byju's for instance it bought White Hat Jr., Akash and Great Learning and while the latter two do have value even today, the first was probably not the ideal buy for the company in hindsight. Similar mistakes were made by almost everyone vested in the game. Almost all the players who have been in trouble have three or four factors in common. One, almost all started out with the kernel of a strong idea or proposition, which attracted a lot of easy money that was available at the time. It is the hunger to grow faster that has led some players astray or made them lose focus on their core proposition.

As a result, a chunk of the free cash in the hands of the founders went into securing or buying businesses which they felt could help them achieve a far higher revenue than organic growth would allow. Some of these buys added value and some boomeranged. Several of them were egged on by investors who had little on their mind barring how to quadruple their investment in as short a time frame as possible. Even at the time this frenzy was unfolding, many in the space warned that these good times may not last but these were brushed aside or ignored by those who could only see dollar bills. A large chunk of the money was also spent on indiscriminate hiring with extravagant salary packages, which had little to do with the new recruits previous experience or expertise. Industry representatives and others point out that even as one feels some sympathy for fired employees, they too are culpable as many of them left their more stable and perhaps lower paid jobs for the lure of better pay packages and ESOPs even as they knew that the boats they were boarding were rockier and in some cases far less ethical in approach. An almost equally large amount was being spent by these companies on drumming up deci-

bel levels so full page advertisements in dailies, sponsoring events that got them the maximum eyeballs like the IPL and other cricket related event, and videos and short clips on YouTube and other platforms exhorting customers to try their offerings became quite the rage. The fuzzier the business model and weaker the proposition on offer, the higher the amounts squandered on advertising and luring customers. Then, almost all these businesses were losing money, almost like it was going out of fashion. In many cases, the losses were so many multiples of the revenue of the company and many serious players in the sector and external observers were circumspect even back then on how such losses could ever be covered. They never were. An indiscriminate quest for growth led to them spending large amounts on acquiring businesses. Where they couldn't add a new vertical they saw a rival doing well in, these companies bought smaller fish to fill any possible gaps, often at valuations that made little sense. As these companies kept going in for a new series of funding at stratospheric valuations, the promoters or founders fell prey to their own game, began to believe in their own invincibility and felt that they were "too big to fail". Lower revenues, poor returns and other uncomfortable truths were brushed under the carpet with an overriding belief that all these small problems could be fixed at some stage. The hype that had been created around whatever they were offering strengthened this belief.

Some external factors too have added to the pain of the K-12 edtech industry. Other than the drying up of easy money, a return to the normal world of physical classes and interaction has made many parents aware of how important social and peer interaction is for any learning to happen. The same is true for tutoring and test prep. This has meant a return to physical classes across segments and many pure online players have ventured into physical classes, albeit belatedly. Another reason why higher ed edtech players don't face the same problems as K-12 is their market reach and accessibility. Many of the players can offer their programmes and courses across the globe with equal ease as syllabus or language barriers are far lower. Players like Simplelearn and Emeritus have 60% and 75% of their present learners overseas. This is also a luxury K12 doesn't enjoy since children typically follow the national curriculums and pedagogies and these vary widely across countries. Even before the pandemic, the value proposition for this segment was weaker since a lot of high quality free content (Khan Academy and similar offerings) is also available, both through a range of government and private platforms. Many experts in the education sector believe that the K12 dilemmas and problems have not been solved effectively by any player in India or globally as yet. Last but not the least, children are by nature more fickle and harder to discipline than those in the age groups that the higher-ed players target. Getting a child hooked and remaining there is a Herculean task as any parent will testify. Word of mouth only takes you so far unlike with an adult who sees his contemporary better his situation after finishing an upskilling course or learning a new one. Neither are children interested in keeping up with the Joneses especially when it comes to learning math nor are they beset with anxieties for the future to the same degree. This ensures that the cost of acquiring and retaining a new learner is much higher for the K12 space.

Can it be avoided in the future?

The bubble that was created in the edtech sector was the sum of many parts and it is unlikely that all the same parts will come together to create a similar situation. However, founders and new entrepreneurs need to keep a few things in mind. A good idea is the biggest security you have. Sell your idea only when you have absolutely no other avenues for organic growth. Bring on an investor who sees value in the core proposition and is not looking only to grow his money 5X or 10X in as quick a time frame as possible. Use the money raised to grow in a disciplined fashion, finding a healthy rate of growth that doesn't make you trip upon your own pace.

Assam to offer 60% subsidy over Central incentives to electronic component firms



The Assam government will offer additional subsidies to the tune of 60 per cent over incentives approved by the Central Government to eligible applicants of the recently announced Rs 23,000 crore electronics components manufacturing scheme, the state's Chief Minister, Himanta Biswa Sarma told

The "top-up" incentives by the state are a way to attract the electronics manufacturing industry in the state, where a semiconductor assembly and testing plant of the Tata Group is already under construction. "On May 10, Assam announced a scheme for electronics component manufacturing... Whatever will be the eligible amount that successful companies get from the government of India, we will top that up by another 60 per cent. So, if the Central Government has approved an incentive of Rs 100 for a company, the Assam government will give an additional Rs 60," Sarma told this paper during an interaction. In March, the Union Cabinet had cleared a Rs 22,919 crore incentive scheme for manufacturing electronic components, spread over a period of six years. The scheme aims to deepen India's presence in global value chains, while increasing

domestic value addition in the country. Beyond direct monetary subsidies, the Assam government will also offer companies free land in the upcoming Ratan Tata electronic city, an industrial complex the state is aiming to build in Jagiroad. Sarma said that they are currently negotiating a loan from the Asian Development Bank to develop the area.

"We will also give eligible companies free land in the Ratan Tata Electronics City. Because of Tata's upcoming semiconductor plant in the state, a lot of the supplier-side industry will be co-located there. Those suppliers can also supply to electronics components manufacturers... Whatever taxation burden we have, as far as the Assam government is concerned, we'll address that also. And finally, companies would need certain social infrastructure too, and we'll provide that as well," Sarma said. Asked whether internal and external security challenges in the North-East region could discourage industries from being set up in Assam, Sarma said, "You have states like Gujarat, which are very near to Pakistan, and yet the industry is thriving there. People believe that India is capable of protecting its citizens and industries from any kind of external challenges... I think external challenges don't count, because as a nation, we are capable of answering any external threats... Internally, if you notice the progress in Assam in the last five years... we are one of the most peaceful states today. People are setting up industries, and doing business," Sarma said. The state government also wants to encourage Assamese talent in the state and elsewhere to join its electronics industry. "We have a very good human resource base because we have an IIT in Guwahati, an IIT in Guwahati, a good network of engineering colleges, and the Government of India has also declared the National Institute of Electronics & Information Technology (NIELIT) a deemed university," Sarma said.

Microfinance loan delinquencies jump 163% to Rs 43,000 crore in FY2025

The microfinance sector in India is experiencing a significant surge in delinquencies, with portfolio at risk (PAR), or loans overdue for over 31 days, jumping by 163 per cent to Rs 43,075 crore in the fiscal year ended March 2025, up from Rs 16,379 crore in the previous year. This rise in delinquencies reflects the growing stress in the small borrower segment. Significantly, the microfinance industry's gross loan portfolio (GLP) fell to Rs 381,200 crore as of March 2025, marking a 13.9 per cent fall from Rs 442,700 crore a year ago.

Data from CRIF High Mark, a credit information bureau, shows that PAR in the 31-180 days overdue bucket has gone up to 6.2 per cent during FY2025 as against 2.1 per cent in the same period of last year. PAR in the 180 days plus bucket has jumped from 1.6 per cent to 5.1 per cent during the fiscal. "PAR of 91-180 days and 180 plus days (including write-offs) continue to rise, particularly among banks and small finance banks, followed by NBFC-MFIs, highlighting persistent challenges," the agency said.

According to CRIF High Mark, higher-ticket loans above Rs one lakh have experienced an uptick in all delinquency buckets as their share in POS expands, highlighting the need for greater caution. However, its delinquency is much lower than the lower-ticket sizes, it said. Rating firm CRISIL said lending to over-leveraged borrowers was the primary factor that resulted in higher delinquencies for microfinance institutions in the last fiscal. Resultantly, the reported delinquencies in 90 plus DPD (days past due) bucket are estimated to have more than doubled to 6.0 per cent as on March 31, 2025, from 2.4 per cent as on March 31, 2024.

Microfinance loan delinquencies jump 163% to Rs 43,000 crore in FY2025 Increased borrowing from multiple sources has led to excessive debt burdens among borrowers. Further, external economic shocks and income uncertainties have impacted repayment capacities, financial sector officials said. The decline in microfinance gross loan portfolio reflects a deliberate and calibrated shift by lenders to manage emerging stress, especially in light of regulatory developments and evolving collection practices. Despite a seasonal rebound with disbursements rising 12.2 per cent Q-o-Q to Rs 71,500 crore, the year-on-year (Y-o-Y) figures remain subdued with a 38.0 per cent decline, signifying an industry-wide emphasis on quality focused originations, according to CRIF High Mark, a credit information bureau in India.

Increased borrowing from multiple sources has led to excessive debt burdens among borrowers. Further, external economic shocks and income uncertainties have impacted repayment capacities. State-level data revealed notable contractions in Tamil Nadu and Karnataka portfolios, influenced by anticipated ordinances and increased regulatory intervention on collection practices. However, West



Bengal emerged as a bright spot with a 1.5 per cent Q-o-Q rise in portfolio size, CRIF High Mark said. Overall, the industry-wide trend indicates consolidation, with a visible moderation in borrowers maintaining multiple credit relationships, it said. The number of active microfinance loans declined from 16.1 crore in March 2024 to 14.0 crore in March 2025. Borrowers with 5 or more lender associations now constitute only 4.9 per cent of the total book, down from 9.7 per cent a year ago, it said. A key trend highlighted in the report is the growing shift toward higher-ticket loans. Portfolio for loans above Rs 1 lakh grew by 38.5 per cent Y-o-Y, whereas those in the less than Rs 30,000 segment were at -8.0 per cent Q-o-Q and -35.9 per cent Y-o-Y, underlining a shift away from smaller-ticket lending typically associated with this segment," CRIF High Mark said.

Amid these shifts, the sector remains on a path of long-term sustainability. While current indicators suggest cautious lending and persistent stress in parts of the portfolio, improvement in early-stage performance and a gradual move towards higher-quality credit segments are encouraging trends, CRIF High Mark said. Ramkumar Gunasekaran, Director and Head of Sales at CRIF High Mark, said: "Lenders are making conscious choices that favour resilience, stability and long-term impact. The 12.2 per cent Q-o-Q rise in disbursements to Rs 71,580 crore this quarter, despite broader moderation, reflects continued demand and a disciplined credit approach." "As institutions recalibrate and regulatory frameworks evolve, we are confident that the sector is laying the groundwork for stronger and more inclusive growth. With continued focus and collaboration, we remain hopeful that the coming quarters will bring renewed momentum," he said. It said NBFC-MFIs experienced a relatively smaller decline in GLP this quarter, down 1.8 per cent QoQ, supported in part by increased originations during the JFM period. However, on a YoY basis, the contraction has been more pronounced, with GLP dropping by 18.2 per cent, accompanied by a moderate reduction in overall market share. Among other lender types, SFBs are also witnessing a significant contraction, declining by 5.4 per cent Q-o-Q and 19.9 per cent Y-o-Y.

NITI Aayog proposes concessional loan scheme for medium-sized firms

A new report by NITI Aayog has proposed a concessional loan scheme for India's medium-sized enterprises, arguing that these firms face higher capital costs than both large and small companies. The report titled 'Designing a Policy for Medium Enterprises' released Monday also called for streamlining research and development (R&D) efforts and expanding cluster-based quality testing to help medium firms scale and become more export-competitive.

The latest push to support medium-sized firms with cheaper credit comes after the definition of 'medium' was broadened in the Union Budget 2025. Until April 1, medium enterprises were defined as those with a turnover between Rs 50-250 crore and investment of Rs 10-50 crore in plant and machinery. The revised thresholds—Rs 100-500 crore in turnover and Rs 25-125 crore in investment—have expanded the category to cover more firms. "Medium Enterprises receive much lesser priority sector loans, compared to micro enterprises. Additionally, the interest rates for Medium Enterprises are on average 4% higher than for larger firms, making capital more expensive," the report said. It proposed a dedicated financing scheme under the Ministry of Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSME) to allow medium firms to avail loans at concessional rates, capped at Rs 25 crore, with a maximum of Rs 5 crore per request. The report also suggested launching a medium enterprise credit card with a pre-approved limit of up to Rs 5 crore at interest rates aligned with market rates.

From over 6 crore registered MSMEs in India, medium enterprises are only 0.3 per cent, the report said. However, average employment per entity is significantly higher

amongst medium firms at 89 people, compared to 19 for small and 6 for micro. Medium firms also account for 81 per cent of all MSME investment in R&D. R&D push and testing support for medium firms To boost R&D, the report recommended reserving 25-30 per cent of the Self-Reliant India (SRI) Fund for exclusively financing projects by medium firms. The SRI Fund has an allocated of Rs 10,000 crore from the Centre and Rs 40,000 crore from private equity. Since its launch in 2021, a total of Rs 4,885 crore has been invested in MSMEs.

"Adopt EU type funding mechanism in which the government after due process will identify a set of major R&D gaps and invite proposal from the Medium Enterprises to bridge those gaps," it also said. On quality testing, the report noted key challenges faced by medium enterprises. "Limited access to affordable, sector-specific testing facilities forces them to rely on distant or private testing centres, increasing operational costs, certification delays, and barriers to global market entry," it said. It recommended extending the Micro & Small Enterprises Cluster Development Programme (MSE-CDP)—which, among other benefits, provides access to shared testing infrastructure—to medium enterprises as well. Formal employment key for skilling At the report launch, NITI Aayog's Vice Chairperson Suman Bery said focussing on skilling and medium enterprises together is crucial. "On the labour market side, we need to make the transition from informal employment, which is typically associated with micro and small enterprises, to formal employment, associated with the medium enterprise sector. It is with formal employment that firms get an incentive to invest in the training of their workforce," Bery said.

The pleasing whiff of good bugs - where microbiology and perfumes meet



The human skin is home to millions of bacteria that help regulate pH levels, dryness, oil content, and more. We also have plenty of data on the skin microbiome | Image used for representational purpose only The human skin is home to millions of bacteria that help regulate pH levels, dryness, oil content, and more. We also have plenty of data on the skin microbiome | Image used for representational purpose only | Photo Credit: Getty Images For someone who has been battling bad bugs for his entire professional life, life has produced an interesting deviation for Abdul Ghafur, infectious diseases expert. He has now begun engaging with the good bugs too, in particular looking at the skin microbiome to see what perfume is right for you. That's right. The perfume type has to be at ease with your skin microbiome, for it to actually work. Otherwise, multiple applications and overexposure to the chemicals in the perfumes might turn sour, at the least, and at the extreme, even turn harmful for humans.

"We think of bugs as being all 'bad', but that is not true at all. About 99.999 % of bugs are either neutral or good for us. It's only 0.001 % of bugs that are 'bad', rather, disease causing," Dr. Ghafur hastens to clarify. While his profession hitherto has set him up arms akimbo, against the disease-causing critters, his passion has more recently set him on the side of the good ones!

"I am a connoisseur of perfume. And I've always wondered why some perfumes work for some people, but not for others. No two people have the same skin microbiome, and that's why a perfume that smells divine on one person may not work the same on another. The secret lies not just in the perfume, but in how your skin's bacteria interact with its ingredients," he explains. If a certain perfume does not work, "people just keep changing their brands frequently, or they think they have to apply more, spray liberally, or use the perfume multiple times. All of which cannot be good, because these perfumes are essentially a cocktail of chemicals that can impact the skin, cardiac health and may also be carcinogenic," he adds. That is what led him to studying what determines why perfumes work or not. "It's skin chemistry, basically. The human skin is home to millions of bacteria that control the pH level, dryness, oil content etc. And we have plenty of data on these skin microbiome," he explains. Sweat itself has no odour, it's just salt and water, it is the skin bacteria that lend the smell to sweat.

As far as body odour goes, there are three key groups of enabler bugs: Propionibacterium acnes that is found in areas with the lubricating sebaceous glands (face, back,

chest, arm pit, groin), they contribute to a stronger body odour with a musky smell. The second is Micrococcus, which is found on various parts of the body, and its main role is to convert the sweat into ammonia and sulfur compounds, giving body odour a stronger and sharper scent. Finally, there is the Lactobacillus, which is found in the face, scalp, armpits, and groin. While it does not significantly contribute to body odour, instead does the opposite - helps prevent overgrowth of odour-producing bacteria. The olfactory pathway is the neural route the brain uses to process smells. It starts with odorant molecules being detected in the nose, travels to the olfactory bulb, and then projects to various brain regions, including the olfactory cortex, amygdala, and hippocampus, where smells are interpreted, associated with emotions, and linked to memories The olfactory pathway is the neural route the brain uses to process smells. It starts with odorant molecules being detected in the nose, travels to the olfactory bulb, and then projects to various brain regions, including the olfactory cortex, amygdala, and hippocampus, where smells are interpreted, associated with emotions, and linked to memories | Photo Credit: Dr. Abdul Ghafur

The concentration of skin microbiome is influenced by food, the environment and weather changes, but the percentage composition of the main bacterial group remains the same for an individual for a long while. There are specifications on where certain types could be used, for instance, floral notes should be used on the wrist, which is a dry area, musky scents on the neck, which is comparatively moist. Integrating skin microbiome analysis into fragrance science

There is a lot of information available about the skin microbiome from a health perspective, but literally none of that has been adopted by the fragrance industry. "But we have information, so we need to extrapolate our insights and findings to understand the personalisation of perfumes for individuals," Dr. Ghafur says. The evolution of a fragrance over time, dividing it into three main scent layers: top notes (initial impression), middle notes (heart), and base notes (lasting scent) The evolution of a fragrance over time, dividing it into three main scent layers: top notes (initial impression), middle notes (heart), and base notes (lasting scent) | Photo Credit: Dr. Abdul Ghafur He has now taken up skin microbiome metagenomic testing for other connoisseurs of perfumes. "We are not recommending testing for everyone. There is no viable business model for routine, expensive metagenomic testing before choosing a perfume. Our goal is to share valuable insights from microbiome and VOC (Volatile Organic Compound) research and how they can be applied conceptually to fragrance use," he says. Some people do spend lakhs on perfumes, and knowing what works for them will be helpful. All they need is a gentle skin swab—rubbing a cotton bud softly on the skin, and this swab is then used for skin microbiome metagenomic analysis to identify the unique bacterial profile of your skin. Recent consumer surveys, he adds, have shown an increased interest in safe and microbiome-friendly products. "Several deodorants are already microbiome friendly, but that kind of orientation for perfumes is missing. We must remember, if deodorants are a song, then perfume is like a symphony," Dr. Ghafur says. Clearly, we need to take care of the symphony as well.

When every second counts – how to be emergency ready in times of health crises

Medical emergencies don't announce themselves. They arrive without warning. It could be a sudden, unbearable pain in the chest, slurring of speech in the middle of a conversation, a child going into convulsions, acute abdominal pain, a fall or an accident. The first moments in an emergency are critical, and any hesitation or delay in treatment increases the risk to life

Emergency Medicine Day, observed every year on May 27, is an acknowledgment of the dedication and expertise of emergency medicine specialists who provide life-saving care in time. At the same time, there is a need to equip ourselves with knowledge so that we are better prepared to recognise an emergency when it happens and take immediate action. First aid and life support training, offered by Apollo to schools, colleges, police personnel, metro employees and many other groups, empower citizens to act swiftly. When every second counts, being prepared can save lives. Consider the story of Kumar, a 48-year-old father of two. As he was getting ready for his early morning run, he felt an unfamiliar tightness in his chest. At first, he thought it was gas, as his stomach was empty. But the tightness intensified as he descended the stairs. He began to feel nauseous and experienced difficulty in breathing. That was when the thought of a heart attack crossed his mind. Feeling increasingly uncomfortable, he took the lift back up and woke his wife.

She took one look at his face and realised the seriousness of the situation. She immediately recalled the Apollo emergency number – 1066. The ambulance arrived within 15 minutes, and after a quick assessment, the paramedics moved the patient to the ambulance. An electrocardiogram was performed and sent to the hospital even as the ambulance was en route. This "pre-alert" shaved crucial minutes off the golden hour, tipping the balance between full recovery and permanent disability. Based on the ECG and other transmitted data, the hospital's medical team was ready to treat the patient on arrival, with the cath lab already prepped. In less than 45 minutes from the phone call, tests had been completed and the blockage in one of the main arteries supplying blood to the heart had been relieved through a procedure called angioplasty (primary PCI). The emergency response protocol ensured that his condition was stabilised in a timeframe that met and exceeded the international benchmark for golden hour management.

Heart attacks often present with symptoms beyond chest discomfort. Cold sweat, breathlessness, or a heaviness radiating down the arm or into the jaw are red flags. Strokes, too, demand urgent action. Sudden weakness on one side of the body, slurred speech, abrupt confusion or blurred vision should trigger a "FAST" response: check the face – is one side drooping, test the arm – is there weakness, and listen to speech – is there slurring or difficulty? Time is of the essence; call for help immediately so that treatment can commence at the earliest.

Awareness of symptoms must be matched by awareness of where to go in an emergency. An "emergency-ready" hospital should offer advanced life support ambulances staffed with trained paramedics who can stabilise patients en route, and round-the-clock teams of physicians and nurses trained in emergency medicine who can handle life-threatening conditions. On-site diagnostics such as CT or MRI are vital to identify stroke types, and cath labs must be available to relieve coronary blockages or perform mechanical clot removal where applicable. Equally important is rapid access to specialists—cardiologists, critical care



Emergency Medicine Day is observed annually on May 27 to raise global awareness about the vital role of emergency medical services, professionals, and systems in saving lives during urgent medical situations

specialists , infectious disease specialists , neurologists and trauma surgeons—who can treat the patient without delay.

An ideal emergency department must adhere to international triage protocols to ensure that the most critical patients are attended to first. Staff should receive ongoing training in ACLS, ATLS and paediatric life support, with regular drills until each action becomes instinctive. From door-to-balloon time in heart attacks to door-to-CT in strokes, every interval should be measured and benchmarked against global standards, with a commitment to continuous improvement. Innovation and technology with empathy Within the emergency room, efficiency must be matched with empathy. It is a time of high stress for patients and their families. Clinical teams must be patient as they explain each step to anxious relatives, offering reassurance through gentle words while providing expert care.

Technology is transforming emergency medicine. Telemedicine allows community health centres to connect with urban specialists, guiding treatment through video links. Smart ambulances, enabled by 5G, are redefining emergency care by transmitting real-time data and monitoring patients during transit. Equipped with ventilators, defibrillators and ECG machines, these ambulances deliver life-saving care even before reaching the hospital. A hospital's emergency department must be equipped to handle all types of emergencies. From trauma following accidents to severe allergic reactions, diabetic crises to acute appendicitis, or strokes to heart attacks, the response must be based on evidence-backed clinical pathways. Standardised protocols ensure calm and coordinated responses even in high-pressure situations. A shared responsibility

This Emergency Medicine Day, let us all share in the responsibility. Let us identify the nearest hospital with emergency services and save the helpline number on our phones. Let us learn to recognise the early signs of medical distress so that we can seek help without delay. You may never face an emergency yourself—but you could be the one whose prompt action saves a loved one, or even a stranger. Let us resolve to stay aware and be prepared, because in an emergency, the golden hour can mean the difference between life and death. When every second counts, readiness saves lives.

It was a bit of a wake-up call: Mumbai Indians' Ryan Rickelton after loss to Punjab Kings



Mumbai Indians opener Ryan Rickelton said that Monday's loss to Punjab Kings will act as a wake up call to the team, adding that they have what it takes to win the Eliminator. Mumbai let go of a golden chance to secure a place in Qualifier 1 when they lost to Punjab Kings by 7 wickets. "They outplayed us... so it was a bit of a wake-up call. It's not the end of the world. In all honesty, the team is clicking very nicely we just need to sharpen up one or two

Shreyas Iyer spills the secret behind his success formula with Ricky Ponting

things on the field'. So yeah, all these things have culminated in a great way and I'm kind of ecstatic that everything is working." Having began the tournament at No 3, Shreyas demoted himself to No 4 and in turn promoting Josh Inglis to one down. The Australian opener has maximised it to his advantage and Shreyas explained the rationale behind the move. "Our plan was that since he loves to play new ball, he was the only batsman we were chopping and changing right from the game he played. So I wanted him to play more deliveries as much as possible. And we know he can be destructive and he can change the momentum of the game. It worked like wonder for us. Obviously, he's a big-match player and we saw that today. So yeah, fantastic attitude and I hope that he keeps continuing with the same," Shreyas said.

'Convinced that Vinicius will show his best version in the national team': Brazil coach Carlo Ancelotti

"The national team needs these players, who have charisma, personality, talent," the coach said. "In modern soccer, you have to also have posture, compromise, sacrifice. And Casemiro does have that, as many of those in the squad do. That is key to prepare for the World Cup," he added about Casemiro, returning to the side after almost a year and a half. The 65-year-old Ancelotti charmed about 200 media in the press conference. On a stellar club career including a record five Champions League titles and national titles in Italy, Spain, France, England and Germany: "After 40 years I still don't know what makes teams win. I know I want players in a comfortable position on the pitch." On vacation plans: "I want to enjoy this country. Rio, I don't know yet. I've never been to the Christ Redeemer." On the World Cup: "Brazilian society wants me to deliver a first World Cup title after 24 years. I know. What a tall order."

‘Finishing top two is just half job done’: Punjab Kings batter Shashank Singh after sealing Qualifier 1 berth



The Shreyas Iyer-led side has been on a roll this season, finishing on 19 points with nine wins in 14 matches. The Kings are slated to face one of Royal Challengers Bengaluru or the Gujarat Titans in the Qualifier 1 contest on May 29. Shashank Singh, one of the two players PBKS retained before the season, hailed coach Ricky Ponting and skipper Iyer for transforming Punjab's team culture this edition. Before their Punjab reunion, the coach-captain duo have previously worked together at the Delhi Capitals when they led the franchise into the final for the first time in 2020. Shashank recounted how Ponting and Iyer had made their intentions clear from day 1 of the season itself, emphasising that every member of the Punjab Kings contingent will be treated with equal respect and maintained their word. "Day 1, Ricky Ponting and Shreyas both told us,

‘Finishing top two is just half job done’: Punjab Kings batter Shashank Singh after sealing Qualifier 1 berth

made their first play-offs since 2014, which was the last time they made the final as well. "I'm obviously very pleased for the group," Ponting told the host broadcasters after the match. "It's a lot of hard work that goes into being able to achieve something like this as a team. I think it's pretty obvious to see that this is a really talented team that are all on the same page and heading in the same direction. I mean, yeah, it's a great achievement till now but really, if you look back, we haven't achieved anything yet. That's the one thing I've been saying to the players since the moment we qualified," he added.

City boy Alankrith Rapole makes it to England under-19 tour

Well, this gifted young cricket talent from the city's Boduppal locality, incidentally, happens to be the only one from Telangana to be in the Indian squad (he is one of the stand-bys who will be travelling with the team) for the forthcoming India under-19 tour with Ayush Mhatre leading the side. "It is a huge opportunity for sure. Ready for the challenges ahead and to prove whenever I get a chance to represent India as I enjoy the job behind the stumps and in front of the wicket with the bat too," said a confident Alankrith, who has been playing for Hyderabad in the Cooch Behar Trophy (under-19) for three years, hitting two centuries and a couple of crucial fifties.

Significantly, Alankrith is a self-made product under the mentorship of his father, Amit Kumar, who played only Club-grade cricket. "Ever since he started playing at the age of 12, I somehow felt that he had the spark and many of those who watched him train were of the same opinion. This made me doubly determined to let him pursue the game with passion," says the proud father, Amit.

Neeraj Chopra signs a new deal with Audi India

Chopra, whose historic javelin throw at the Tokyo Olympic Games captured the nation's imagination, now partners with Audi India – a brand globally renowned for its engineering excellence, relentless innovation, and forward-thinking design. The partnership celebrates the shared values between the athlete and the brand – world-class performance, explosive speed, and iconic stature. "At Audi, we stand for those who push boundaries – those who are not just defined by performance, but by the relentless pursuit of excellence. Neeraj Chopra is the embodiment of that spirit. Determined and iconic, his journey from ambition to achievement mirrors Audi's progressive DNA. His focus, speed, and unmatched performance make him a natural extension of our brand – a symbol of what it means to lead, not follow," said Balbir Singh Dhillon, Head, Audi India. Neeraj, who followed up his Olympic Gold with top spots at the Asian Games, Commonwealth Games, and World Championships, would later win Silver at the 2024 Paris Olympic Games, said he had always admired Audi – not just for the cars, but for what the brand stands for.

“As an athlete, these values resonate deeply with me.

‘Unni Mukundan assaulted me for praising Tovino Thomas’ Narivetta’: Former manager alleges actor is ‘frustrated’ about post-Marco career



Vipin Kumar, who claims to have worked with Unni Mukundan for six years, alleged that the actor came to his apartment complex and assaulted him in the parking lot. Unni Mukundan is yet to comment on the allegation of assault made by his now-former manager Vipin Kumar. Malayalam actor Unni Mukundan has come under fire after his former manager accused him of assault. According to the complainant, Unni physically assaulted him within the premises of his apartment complex and used abusive language. A complaint has been filed at the Infopark Police Station, and according to the latest reports, a case has been registered against the actor.

Vipin Kumar, who claims to have worked with Unni for six years, alleged that the actor came to his apartment complex, demanded that he come down from his flat, and assaulted him in the parking lot. In a video posted by Asianet News on YouTube, he is heard telling the media, “He also used abusive language. I have filed a complaint. I had been working with him for six years. I stayed in that job despite

facing teasing and such behaviour from him. He has been frustrated in recent times due to various reasons, including the lack of good projects since Marco and the failure of his most recent film, Get-Set Baby, at the box office. Also, although Sree Gokulam Movies had initially agreed to produce Unni’s directorial debut, they later opted out. All of this has contributed to his growing frustration. He often takes out his frustrations on those around him, which is why many people who once worked with him are no longer associated with Unni. How long can I endure all this?” Although Vipin alleged that Sree Gokulam Movies withdrew from the Unni Mukundan project, the announcement post is still available on the production company’s official Instagram handle, casting doubt on his claim.

Vipin then went a step further and alleged that one of his recent social media posts praising Tovino Thomas’ Narivetta angered Unni and prompted him to carry out the assault. “I am a promotion consultant who has been working in the industry for 18 years. I handle PR work for other movies and actors as well. I have worked on around 500 films. As part of Narivetta’s promotions, I posted a note on social media praising the movie. Unni did not like it. He phoned me that night and fired me from the manager position. I said ok. It’s after that that he came over and assaulted me,” Vipin added. He also claimed that the actor broke his glasses by stomping on them. According to Mathrubhumi, he approached the police after seeking medical treatment at a hospital. The complainant and the actor had a strained professional relationship for quite some time, the publication reported, citing police sources. Unni Mukundan is yet to comment on the matter. Following the massive success of Marco, which was marketed as “India’s most violent movie yet”, Unni rose to national fame. Grossing Rs 102.55 crore worldwide, the Haneef Adeni directorial became the actor’s most successful film. While Marco sparked discussions about its glorification of on-screen violence and gore, there was also a concerted effort on social media to portray Unni as a rising superstar. However, his next film, Get-Set Baby, failed at the box office, casting a long shadow over Unni’s supposed stardom.

Aryan Khan’s series is ‘unbelievable’, his chemistry with dad Shah Rukh Khan is ‘mindblowing’, says celebrity photographer

Aryan Khan, who is making his debut as a director and showrunner later this year, has kept the details of his Netflix series tightly under wraps. Titled ‘The Ba***ds of Bollywood’, the show’s premiere date is yet to be revealed but the likes of Dharma Productions head Karan Johar, Netflix CEO Ted Sarandos and actor Saif Ali Khan have already started showering their praise on the show, even though the audience is yet to see the first glimpse of the show. Now, celebrity photographer Avinash Gowariker has also praised Aryan’s show and shared that Aryan and his father Shah Rukh share “crazy chemistry.”

In a chat with Bollywood Bubble, he said, “I just love Aryan. I love his energy, his confidence, his swag and I was so looking forward and hoping that he becomes an actor but he has become a director.” He then praised Aryan’s show and said, “What a series he has made! I was lucky to see some parts of it. It’s unbelievable what he has done. He’s too cool, he’s too talented.” Avinash Gowariker then spoke about Shah Rukh Khan’s relationship with his sons and said, “Shah Rukh’s relationship with him (Aryan Khan) is mind blowing. Shah Rukh and AbRam’s also. Normally, it’s father and daughter, mother and son. But there is some crazy chemistry of Shah Rukh and Aryan and the way they look.” Previously, Karan Johar, in a chat with Raj Shamani, shared, “I don’t know if I’m even supposed to say this, but I have huge belief in Aryan Khan’s directorial tal-



ent. I don’t want to say anything about his Netflix show, because he’ll get very angry, but all I’ll say is this: watch out. If there is a King, there will be a Prince. I can say this with confidence, because I’ve seen the show. He has an individualistic voice as a director. He’s not anything like you’d expect Shah Rukh Khan’s son to be. He’s his own person. He works quietly, he doesn’t carry the baggage of his father, he doesn’t carry the weight of his legacy. He works hard; he works 20 hours a day. He is a rare personality type.”

Sonu Sood breaks silence on helmetless bike ride after video sparks debate: ‘It was part of the script’



Actor Sonu Sood found himself in an unusual situation after facing backlash for posting a video in which he is seen riding a bike without a helmet. The Spiti police took note of the video and stated on X (formerly Twitter) that they would look into the matter and determine the appropriate course of action. In response, Sood shared another video from Spiti, this time wearing a helmet while riding.

The actor posted the video on his Instagram Stories and the caption read, “Safety first, we always abide by the laws, an old clip without the helmet was part of the script, so kindly ignore. Ride safe, ride smart and always wear a helmet.” In the video, Sood is seen riding alongside his crew in a compilation of clips showing him traversing the valley on a bike. The video seems to be old and even the Spiti police have talked about this fact saying, “According to preliminary information, the video appears to be from the year 2023. The task of investigating the authenticity has been handed over to DySP Headquarters, Kyelang.” Sonu Sood, known for his philanthropic work and past role as a road safety ambassador, is facing intense scrutiny due to the contradiction between his public image and the viral video. Apart from the video on his Instagram handle and the caption along with it, the actor has not made any official statement regarding the controversy. Fans have expressed disappointment and called for accountability. One user on X wrote, “So will @himachalpolice take any action on

@SonuSood for riding naked without a helmet in Spiti? No protective gear, no clothes—God knows what he’s trying to promote. Are celebrities above the law?” On the professional front, Sood was last seen in Fateh, which marked his directorial debut. The film also starred Jacqueline Fernandez, Naseeruddin Shah, Vijay Raaz, and Dibyendu Bhattacharya.

Vijay Antony’s ‘Maargan’ has already broken even, discloses producer Dhananjayan

Chennai: Well known producer Dhananjayan has disclosed that director Leo John Paul’s eagerly awaited investigative fantasy thriller ‘Maargan’, featuring actor Vijay Antony in the lead, has already broken even before its release. Speaking at the trailer launch event of the film, Dhananjayan said, “This film will emerge as a very big success. The reason for that is, not many in the industry know that I have seen all of Vijay Antony’s financials. He has disclosed many secrets to me. Vijay Antony Film Corporation is a company with a 100 per cent success rate. Commercially, not a single film of theirs has faced failure. He has only been delivering successes.” The producer then went on to disclose that Maargan’s digital rights, satellite rights and Hindi dubbing rights had all been sold for a good sum. “Theatricals has again fetched a good sum. This film has already broken even at the table and anything that it makes in theatres, based on the response the audience gives, will only be a profit.” Stating that he had already watched the film ‘Maargan’, the producer said, “I have worked with Leo John Paul in two films in which he was the editor. Initially, I did not expect this film to be so good. But on getting to watch the movie, I was so impressed that I told Vijay Antony, please don’t give a break. Let’s continue watching the movie.” The producer also said that this film would be a socially responsible thriller. Talking to IANS about the genre of his film, well known editor Leo John Paul who turns director with this film, said, “

Ananya Panday shows a glimpse of the ‘world around her’



Mumbai: Ananya Panday took to social media to offer her fans an intimate glimpse into the world around her. Taking to Instagram, the actress shared moments that reveal a fresh and personal side of her life. The ‘Kesari Chapter 2’ actress posted a series of pictures and wrote, “Some of meeee and some of the world around meeee.” Her posts include solo pictures, candid moments with her furry friend, and stunning shots of beautiful landscapes.

In the first shot, Ananya is seen flaunting her makeup and hairstyle as she looks straight into the camera. In the next, she is seen posing with her hand resting on her face. Her collection of photos also features a cute picture of her

cousin Alanna Panday’s son, River, along with some delicious cookies. Meanwhile, Ananya Panday recently grabbed attention with a heartfelt tribute to her father, veteran actor Chunky Panday, at the Zee Cine Awards 2025. She performed some of his classic hits, including the lively number ‘Main Tera Tota, Tu Meri Maina.’

The performance saw Ananya shining brightly on stage, supported by a dynamic group of dancers. The highlight came when Chunky Panday joined her mid-performance, turning the tribute into a truly special father-daughter moment. Sharing the moment on Instagram, the proud father wrote, “This is the First time I got to Perform at an International Film Award function Thank you @zeecineawards and my Darling @ananyapanday what a Surprise So Proud of you Love you forever.” In the video, Ananya is seen performing one of her father’s iconic songs, backed by a lively group of background dancers. The energy on stage escalated when they brought Chunky Panday up to join her.

On the work front, the ‘Student of the Year 2’ actress was last seen in ‘Kesari: Chapter 2’ alongside Akshay Kumar and R. Madhavan. Ananya Panday is set to star in Vivek Soni’s upcoming film ‘Chand Mera Dil.’ Produced by Karan Johar, Adar Poonawala, and Apoorva Mehta under the Dharma Productions banner, she will be sharing the screen with Lakshya, known for his role in ‘Kill.’ In addition to this, Ananya is also gearing up to return as Bella Chowdhary in the web series ‘Call Me Bae’ for its second season.

Shana Naidu, Kirana Naidu, Janana Naidu: Watch Sunil Grover’s desperate attempts to enter Rana Naidu season 2



As fans gear up for season 2 of Karan Anshuman and Suparn Verma’s action thriller show Rana Naidu, Sunil Grover ‘auditioned’ to play the lead role in the new instalment, much to the chagrin of Rana Daggubati. On Tuesday, Netflix India dropped a hilarious video “Rana Naidu vs Shana Naidu: Who will make it to season 2?”

The video starts with Daggubati performing action stunts in typical Rana Naidu fashion, before someone abruptly calls “Cut!” When Daggubati angrily asks, “Who called for cut,” Grover pops up dressed exactly like Daggubati, in a white shirt, dark suit, and even sporting the same moustache and beard. He introduces himself as Shana Naidu, the “asli hero” of season 2. Grover keeps mimicking Daggubati, who calls him a “low-res version.” Grover

proposes to Daggubati that he’d bring more tameez (manners) to season 2 as he’s the most shareef (well-behaved). When Daggubati doesn’t relent, Grover presents multiple options for the season 2 lead: Haryana Naidu, Kirana (shopkeeper) Naidu, Bandana Naidu, Aana Naidu, Jana Naidu, Banana Naidu, and Fulana Naidu, but Daggubati doesn’t seem pleased.

Grover then pulls out the card he saved for the last: A Deepfake message from Daggubati’s uncle and co-star Venkatesh Daggubati, asking Rana to let Shana be the season 2 lead. Rana doesn’t fall prey, and makes Grover “Rawana Naidu.” At the end of the video, Grover pops up again, cross-dressed, proposing “Janana (woman) Naidu,” before Rana makes him run away. Grover often cross-dressed as Gutthi on The Kapil Sharma Show. Now, he appears an Engineer Chumbak on The Great Indian Kapil Show, hosted by Kapil Sharma, season 3 of which will premiere on Netflix India on June 21. Meanwhile, Rana Naidu season 2 will drop on the platform on June 13. An official adaptation of popular American series Ray Donovan, the show brought together the real life uncle-nephew duo for the first time. It follows the life of Rana Naidu (Rana), the go-to guy for everyone in Bollywood when they have a problem, and his tense equation with estranged father Naga (Venkatesh). In season two, Rana Naidu embarks on one last job to secure his family’s future before getting out of the ‘fixing’ business for good, but soon finds himself entangled in conflicts with his loved ones – and the looming threat of a ruthless underworld figure from his past. Season 2 also stars Arjun Rampal, Surveen Chawla, Kriti Kharbanda, Dino Morea, Abhishek Banerjee, and Sushant Singh.

Juhi Chawla’s husband Jay Mehta recalls being ‘almost destroyed’ by debt trap, made a ‘small investment’ of \$75 million in KKR during ‘a difficult time’



Shah Rukh Khan purchased his cricket team Kolkata Knight Riders in 2007 but he wasn’t the sole owner of the company. To date, SRK owns the team along with his Red Chillies Entertainment partner Juhi Chawla and her husband Jay Mehta. When the trio bought the team, they brought a lot of glamour to a new format of cricket and soon after, even though there team wasn’t the best performer, they were getting all the limelight, thanks to the superstar owner. In an earlier interview, Jay spoke about investing in the team and said that even though people around him told him he “crazy” about making this investment, he was confident that this would work.

In a chat shared on Institute for Management Development IMD’s YouTube channel, Jay was asked to share some words of wisdom after his many years of business experience and he shared, “First of all, don’t take on too much debt because we got into a debt trap and it almost destroyed us. Secondly, you have to build a great team, try and hire the best people and going forward... I think, again curiosity, reading a lot, learning about business practices, things like that. Keeping yourself informed about what’s going on and keeping yourself ahead of the curve. I think those are important things.”

Jay said that his business was going through a difficult time when he got a chance to invest in cricket and so he, along with his other partners, made an investment of \$75 million to buy KKR. “In between all this, when we were also going through the difficult times, I got an opportunity to invest in cricket. Everybody said you are crazy, completely crazy. I said, ‘look, I really believe in this. I want to do it’. When the auction came up, it was like a \$75 million acquisition and I had partnered with a friend of mine to do

this but other people were actually taken the document and not understood the business model and when you looked at the business model, it was a cash flow model,” he said. Jay shared that the investment was “very small” but he believed that this format of the fame was going to become big. “So the investment was very small and I really believed that okay, this is really going to turn around and cricket is going to become big, like American football in the US, or football in Europe. So I took a punt, invested in it and it’s inarguably the best investment I have made,” he said.

Ace director Mani Ratnam trashes reports that he is to do a film with Naveen Polishetty next

Chennai: Ace director Mani Ratnam has now trashed news reports and rumours doing the rounds in the industry that he will next be working on a romantic story featuring Telugu actor Naveen Polishetty and Rukmini Vasanth in the lead.

During a video interview with a film journalist, Mani Ratnam was asked about news reports that had begun doing the rounds that after the release of his upcoming film ‘Thug Life’, scheduled to hit screens on June 5, he would begin work on a breezy romantic film featuring the Telugu actor. “Even that is news to me,” the ace director said with a laugh. “I have no clue what you are talking about,” he added. When the interviewer asked if there would be a next film, he replied, “Hopefully.” On whether he had locked on to his next script, he said, “I am thinking. Working on a couple of scripts. Don’t know what will fall into place. What looks promising today may disappear the next morning. Working at it.” Meanwhile, the director is busy promoting his upcoming film Thug Life, featuring Kamal Haasan in the lead. The film will also feature actors Silambarasan, Trisha, Joju George, Ashok Selvan and Abhirami in pivotal roles.

Kamal Haasan plays a character called Rangaraya Sakthivel Naickan in this film, which director Mani Ratnam’s production house Madras Talkies had described as “an epic tale of power, rebellion, and triumph.” The film has music by A R Rahman and cinematography by Ravi K Chandran. It has editing by Mani Ratnam’s trusted editor Sreekar Prasad and stunts by the stuntmasters, Anbariv.