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Ephedrine laced with Cocaine worth Rs.1 cr seized from gang in Hyderabad

Hyderabad: In a major drug bust, the Balanagar SOT officials, along with the local police, nabbed a gang which includes a police constable from Andhra Pradesh, while allegedly planning to sell Ephedrine laced with cocaine at Jaya Nagar in Kukatpally on Monday. The arrested individuals have been identified as: Gunasekhar, a serving police constable and drug supplier from Tirupati; U. Surendra, a job aspirant from Tirupati; D. Haribabu Reddy, Ch. Mercy Margaret, Shaik Mastan Wali, and Devaraju Yesu Babu, all from Bapatla; and Appanna, a drug peddler from Bengaluru.

Private firm cheats investors to tune of Rs. 100 cr promising high returns in stock market

Hyderabad: A private firm from the city has reportedly cheated investors to the tune of over Rs 100 crore by promising high returns for their investments in the stock market. As per available information, the management of The Penguin Securities, Ganesh Nagar, Chintal, Jeedimetla, managed to convince investors that investing in the stock market would fetch them high profits. Believing their deceptive words, about 1,500 people invested in the company, with the total investment amounting to over Rs 100 crore. Bonds were also given to the investors to make them believe the investments and returns were genuine.

India not invited to G7 meet in Canada "yet another big diplomatic bungle": Congress

GNS News Agency, June 3

New Delhi: The Congress on Tuesday said India not being invited to the G7 meeting in Canada is "yet another big diplomatic bungle" after the "blunder" of allowing the US to "mediate" between India and Pakistan. Canada is hosting the summit from June 15 to 17, which is expected to deliberate on pressing challenges facing the globe, including the Russia-Ukraine conflict and the situation in West Asia. For the first time in six years, Prime Minister Narendra Modi is unlikely to attend the upcoming G7 summit to be held in Canada's Alberta province, people familiar with the matter have said. It is learnt that Ottawa is yet to send an invitation to the Indian Prime Minister for the summit, but Modi, in any way, would have skipped it as such a visit would have required a lot of groundwork considering the current state of ties between the two sides, said the people cited above.

Congress general secretary, communications, Jairam Ramesh, said the G7 Summit of the presidents of the USA and France, the Prime Ministers of the UK, Japan, Italy and Canada, and the Chancellor of Germany is taking place in Kananaskis in Alberta, Canada, from June 15. The presidents of Brazil, Mexico, South Africa and Ukraine and the Prime Minister of Australia have also been invited to the summit, he noted. "Before 2014, G7 was actually G8 for many years and had included Russia. Dr Manmohan Singh would be invited for G8 Summits, where his voice would be heard. It was at one such



summit in Germany in June 2007, where the famous Singh-Merkel formula for climate change negotiations had been unveiled," Ramesh said in a post on X. He said the tradition of inviting Indian Prime Ministers continued after 2014. "But now, for the first time in 6 years, 'Vishwaguru' will not be in attendance at the Canada summit. Whatever spin may be given, the fact remains that this is yet another big diplomatic bungle – after the blunder of allowing the US to overturn decades of Indian foreign policy by mediating between India and Pakistan and allowing American authorities to call for continued talks at a 'neutral site,'" the Congress leader said in his post. The India-Canada relations had hit rock bottom following then Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's allegations in 2023 of a potential Indian link to the killing of pro-Khalistan separatist Hardeep Singh Nijjar.

Sikkim landslip: Three dead, six security personnel missing as landslip hits military camp

GNS News Agency, June 3

Three soldiers were killed and six others reported missing after a landslide struck an Army camp at Chaten in northern Sikkim's Lachen late Sunday evening. A man died in central Assam's flood-hit Hojai district on Monday, taking the death toll in rain-induced disasters across the eight northeastern States to 38. A Defence Ministry statement said four personnel were rescued after the landslide struck the Chaten camp at 7 p.m. The bodies of Havaldar Lakhwinder Singh, Lance Naik Munish Thakur, and porter Abhishek Lakhada were recovered throughout the night. "Rescue teams are relentlessly working round the clock under extremely challenging terrain and adverse weather conditions to locate and rescue the six personnel who remain missing," the statement stated. The Sikkim government reported landslides at multiple places, which disrupted the movement of vehicles and left tourists stranded. The State's Director General of Police, Akshay Sachdeva, said 1,678 tourists were evacuated on a relatively sunny Monday from northern Sikkim's Lachung and Chungthang towns, where they were stranded for two days. Some 115 tourists remain stuck at Lachen.



clothes, utensils, duplicate documents, each item will be provided by us and after the floods subside, we will also rebuild their houses," he said. Floods and landslides have so far killed 11 people in Assam, nine in Arunachal Pradesh, six each in Meghalaya and Mizoram, three in Sikkim, two in Tripura, and one in Nagaland. Nine tourists from Odisha and West Bengal continue to remain missing after the vehicle they were travelling in fell about 1,000 feet into a swollen Teesta River on May 29. Among the missing is Odisha BJP Mahila Morcha leader, Itishree Jena. The floods in Manipur have affected some 20,000 people. Continuous downpour along with overflowing rivers and breaches in embankments, flooded vast swathes of the Imphal Valley. Officials said 3,365 houses were damaged. The government set up 31 relief camps in Imphal East district. More than a hundred people moved into relief camps in the hill district of Senapati, which has been reeling under a devastating flood. In Nagaland, a major landslide along National Highway-2 disrupted traffic between Nagaland and Manipur. The incident occurred near the Naga Heritage Village, Kisama. In Tripura, the India Meteorological Department (IMD) issued an orange alert for heavy to very heavy rainfall over Khowai, West and South Tripura districts and a yellow alert for the remaining five districts till Tuesday morning. Altogether 10,813 flood-affected people were lodged at 66 relief camps. According to an official report, 219 houses were damaged, either fully or partially, in Gomati, Khowai, Sepahijala, South Tripura, and North Tripura districts.

Telangana Tourism Minister dismisses Miss World controversy as opposition propaganda



GNS News Agency, June 3

Hyderabad: Amid ongoing criticism over controversies during the recent Miss World pageant, especially allegations made by Miss England, Milla Magee, Telangana Tourism Minister Jupally Krishna Rao dismissed the issue, calling it false propaganda by the Opposition. "Nothing happened, and there was no issue at all. No committee was constituted. If there really was a problem, why did 108 participants continue in the competition?" the Minister questioned at a press conference on Tuesday. However, contradicting his earlier denial, the Minister admitted that an internal enquiry had been conducted by Tourism Special Secretary Jayesh Ranjan.

When asked why the State government was not releasing CCTV footage related to the alleged incident, he said the matter was being handled by the Miss World organization, and the State government had no involvement. The Minister also alleged that Opposition parties were running a malicious campaign by claiming that Rs 200 crore was spent on the event. He clarified that only Rs 31 crore was actually spent, of which Rs 21 crore came from sponsors.

The remaining Rs 12 crore, he added, was also a committed sponsorship amount yet to be paid. Regarding the dinner hosted at Chowmahalla Palace, he stated that the cost was Rs 8,250 per plate plus taxes, contrary to exaggerated claims made by the Opposition.

Devotees rush increases at Tirumala, to take 15 hours for Sarvadarshans

The influx of devotees at Tirumala continues unabated, with countless pilgrims eagerly awaiting their turn for darshan. Currently, 29 compartments are accommodating devotees seeking the free Sarva Darshan, which takes approximately five hours to complete during time slot.

Land prices, registration charges to soar in Telangana as Congress pushes for money

GNS News Agency, June 3

Hyderabad: Owning a home in Telangana may become more expensive from next month, with the Congress government approving a steep hike in land market values and registration charges across the State. The revision, pending since last year, is expected to come into effect by the end of June or early July, potentially putting home ownership further out of reach for many. Sources said the government has cleared proposals submitted by the Market Value Revision Committees, recommending a 50 to 60 per cent hike in the market value of both agricultural and non-agricultural lands. In addition, registration charges are likely to increase by another two per cent from the existing 7.5 per cent of the property value. Market values of land were previously revised in 2021 and 2022, with agricultural land seeing hikes of up to 150 per cent and real estate plots up to 100 per cent, compared to pre-State formation levels. However, registration charges had remained unchanged.

With revenue from the Stamps and Registration Department dipping to Rs 14,307 crore in 2024-25 and real estate activity slowing down, officials see the price revision as a necessary revenue boost. The move is projected to generate an additional Rs. 10,000 crore, helping the government aim for a revenue target of Rs 25,000 crore this



financial year. "Land value has increased steeply over the last decade since State formation, but the market valuation used for registrations has not kept pace. This has resulted in substantial losses to the government exchequer," a senior official from the Stamps and Registration Department said. However, critics argue that the move could disproportionately affect middle-class families and first-time homebuyers. They caution that the government's push to fill revenue gaps may undermine affordability in the housing sector.

Pakistan wants to bleed India by thousand cuts, we drew new redlines to combat terror: Gen Chauhan

GNS News Agency, June 3

Professional militaries are not affected by temporary losses as the overall outcomes are much more important than such setbacks, Chief of Defence Staff Gen Anil Chauhan said on Tuesday. The top military commander said that Pakistan has been following an approach of bleeding India by thousand cuts but New Delhi drew a completely new redline against cross-border terrorism by conducting the Operation Sindoor. In an address at the Savitribai Phule Pune University, Gen Chauhan appeared to reject criticism against him for acknowledging that India lost an unspecified number of combat jets during the initial phase of the operation. "When I was asked about losses on our side, I said these are not important as results and how you act are important," he said. "It would be not very correct to talk about losses and numbers," he said, responding to a question.

"In war, even if there are setbacks, you need to maintain your morale," he said adding losses are not important but outcomes are. The Chief of Defence Staff highlighted various elements of war including politics and violence and noted: In Operation Sindoor too, war and politics were happening as a parallel kind of phenomenon. Gen Chauhan also made a mention about Pakistan Army chief Gen Asim Munir "spewing venom" against India and Hindus just weeks before the Pahalgam attack to emphasise that Islamabad's approach has been to "bleed India by thousand cuts". What happened in Pahalgam was profound cruelty towards victims, he said. The thinking behind Operation Sindoor was that state-sponsored terrorism from Pakistan has to stop and that country should not be able to hold India hostage to terrorism. India is not going to live under the shadow of ter-



ror and nuclear blackmail, Gen Chauhan said. On India's military offensives, he said Indian armed forces carried out very deliberate precision strikes on Pakistani targets and some of them were as narrow as two metres. Explaining the process of the understanding on cessation of hostilities, he said Pakistan planned to carry out its counter operations against India for 48 hours but it folded up in about eight hours. And they wanted to talk, he said, highlighting the impact of Indian strikes. Pakistan's decision to talk to India on May 10 stemmed from realisation that it will suffer more if its operation continues, Gen Chauhan said. Around 1 am on May 10, Pakistan aimed to get India to its knees in 48 hours as multiple attacks were launched, he said. Pakistan's operation that they thought would continue for 48 hours folded up in about eight hours and they wanted to talk, he added. When the request for talks and de-escalation came from Pakistan, we did accept it, Gen Chauhan said. On India's overall approach, he said, "We have raised the bar; we have connected terror to water, we have drawn a new line of military operation against terror."

KTR vows support for Indian students in the United States



GNS News Agency, June 3

Hyderabad: BRS working president KT Rama Rao assured Indian students in the United States that the party would establish a legal cell and support them in times of distress. He suggested them to understand the local conditions and legal framework, stressing that awareness is the key during their stay abroad. "We understand the emotional and financial toll when students are forced to return abruptly. The BRS NRI wing of USA would provide legal support to students where needed," he reiterated.

Interacting with Telugu students at the University of Texas at Dallas, Rama Rao felt that students arriving in America with hopes for higher education should not suffer unduly for mistakes arising from lack of awareness. He emphasised the need for students to familiarise themselves with the US laws and evolving societal norms. The BRS working president advised students not to chase mere grades but to focus on long-term life goals. Rather than just chasing jobs, he asked them to strive for bringing change in the world and contribute meaningfully to society. He encouraged Indian youth abroad to innovate and compete globally, asserting that India must lead in innovation. Citing his

father K Chandrashekhara Rao's political journey, Rama Rao reminded students that real change requires risk and persistence. He recalled how the BRS chief resigned from all his posts, to realise the dream of Telangana State, notwithstanding the naysayers. "KCR's fight for Telangana is proof that dreams need courage. People who discouraged him, are now showering praises for his achievements," he said. Urging a reversal of brain drain, he called on students to return to India post-education and become job creators rather than being mere job seekers.

Telangana Jagruthi to stage Maha Dharna over notices to KCR on Kaleshwaram project

GNS News Agency, June 3

Hyderabad: Telangana Jagruthi, led by its president and MLC K Kavitha, will hold a Maha Dharna near Indira Park on Wednesday from 10 am to 1 pm, protesting against the Congress government's notices to BRS president and former Chief Minister K Chandrashekhara Rao over the Kaleshwaram project. Terming the notices a political conspiracy, Kavitha said the protest would highlight how Chandrashekhara Rao transformed Telangana's agricultural landscape by diverting Godavari river waters and turning barren lands fertile. She accused the Congress of targeting the former Chief Minister in an attempt to divert public attention from its governance failures.

Indian Chronicle

English Daily

Readiness, not panic: On India and COVID-19

The lessons of the past should serve as a good guide, especially the learnings from three years of COVID-19. The country's COVID-19 dashboard has seen some activity in recent weeks, and the total number (since January 2025) of COVID cases is currently at 3961 (as on June 2, 2025, 8 a.m.), and the number of deaths recorded as 32. While a figure in 1000s seems a bit alarming, it is still a small number in a country with a population of over 1.4 billion. It is also important to take a look at the full picture. Not all States have had a day-on-day hike in numbers testing positive for COVID, and all hikes are still in the single or low double digits. Also, 2,188 people have been discharged since, underlining what experts have been saying as the curve rose this year: that the variants causing infection now are Omicron subvariants and that they are neither more transmissible nor do they cause worse disease than in the past.

While panic and anxiety might be unwarranted, a sense of caution and precautionary approach are advisable, particularly for those with vulnerabilities and co-morbid conditions. Experience from the pandemic is that people with other pre-existing co-morbidities are disproportionately affected by COVID-19 infection. Common comorbidities include hypertension, diabetes, cardiovascular diseases, obesity, and kidney diseases, and advancing age (post 60 years). People with these conditions must start masking up in public places, and hand wash regularly. Former World Health Organization Chief Scientist Soumya Swaminathan has said the recent immunity from the pandemic will stand in good stead, but again, to take possible precautions including giving boosters or vaccine shots, especially to the vulnerable.

Calcutta High Court to hear petition against SSC notification for fresh recruitment of 35,726 teachers

GNS News Agency, June 3

teachers Under the 2016 rules, academic qualifications carried 35 marks, the written test was worth 55 marks, and interviews were allotted 10 marks. Under the 2016 rules, academic qualifications carried 35 marks, the written test was worth 55 marks, and interviews were allotted 10 marks.

A petition was filed Tuesday before the Calcutta High Court's vacation bench of Justice Partha Sarathi Chatterjee to challenge the latest notification issued by the West Bengal School Service Commission (WBSSC) for the recruitment of 35,726 teachers. The petitioner Lubana Parveen, who was one of the almost 26,000 teachers appointed in 2016 by the SSC who lost their jobs this year after a Supreme Court judgment, alleges that the notification violates directives previously issued by the apex court. The matter is expected to be heard on June 5. According to advocate Firdous Shamim, the Supreme Court did not authorise the "creation" of a new recruitment rule that allocates 10 marks for teaching experience. Effectively, he claims, the rule means that the sacked teachers would sit for an exam of 90 marks while other applicants would appear for an exam of 100 marks.

He said that the 2025 recruitment process "should adhere to the rules from 2016". Under the 2016 rules, academic qualifications carried 35 marks, the written test was worth 55 marks, and interviews were allotted 10 marks. However, under the new rules of 2025, academic qualifications have been reduced to 10 marks, written test marks increased to 60, and 10 marks each are allotted for interviews and lecture demonstrations. Shamim claims that the new rule introduces 10 marks for "teaching experience" which "disadvantages candidates without prior experience". He alleged that the interview shortlist was previously prepared based on a total of 90 marks; now, it is based on 70 marks. Additionally, he claims that the candidate-to-post interview ratio has been changed from 1:1.4 (140 candidates for 100 posts) to 1:1.6 (160 candidates for 100 posts), further deviating from the original recruitment procedure. On May 30, the WBSSC issued a notification for recruiting 35,726 teachers for state-aided schools, following a Supreme Court directive to do so by May 31. According to the notification published on the WBSSC website, 23,312 teachers are to be recruited for classes 9-10 and 12,514 for classes 11-12 in secondary and higher secondary schools, respectively.

This follows the Supreme Court's April order terminating the employment of 25,753 teaching and non-teaching staff in government-aided secondary and higher secondary schools, as it found the 2016 recruitment panel "tainted". The court later clarified that "untainted" individuals among the dismissed employees would continue to receive salaries until December, while 1,804 individuals were permanently barred from returning to service. On April 17, the Supreme Court directed the state government and the WBSSC to file affidavits by May 31 which would detail the fresh process to fill the resulting vacancies.

Southwest monsoon to brings rains in AP and Telangana

GNS News Agency, June 3

The Southwest Monsoon is making its presence felt in the Telugu states, with the Meteorological Department issuing an alert for rainfall across Andhra Pradesh and Telangana. According to a statement from the Amaravati Meteorological Centre on Tuesday, rain is expected in Andhra Pradesh over the next three days. Meteorologists have noted that winds in the lower tropospheric area are blowing from the southwest to the west in Andhra Pradesh - Yanam, leading to the forecasted weather patterns.

On Tuesday, light to moderate rainfall and showers are likely at isolated locations in North Coastal Andhra and South Coastal Andhra Pradesh accompanied by strong gusty winds reaching speeds of 30-40 km per hour. The weather is expected to be hot and humid, creating uncomfortable conditions.

Tata Tea Chakra Gold Gemini Initiates a Consumer Awareness Drive about Tea Quality in Telangana



Hyderabad: Tata Tea Chakra Gold Gemini, Telangana's beloved tea brand, is to launch an initiative to educate consumers about the importance of tea quality and the potential risks associated with adulterated or colored loose tea. "Chemically-colored teas have become common in many markets across the country. It was noted that "tea (finished product/made tea) occasionally contains extrane-

ous colouring materials which are not allowed, called adulterant tea. Occasional reports suggest that sub-standard tea leaves are colored with bismark brown, potassium blue, turmeric, indigo, plumbago, etc., to impart some favorite color or glossiness to the product." Tata Tea Chakra Gold Gemini aims to raise awareness and ensure consumers understand the ill effects of such practices, promoting a shift towards safer, higher-quality packaged tea from a trusted brand.

Tata Tea Chakra Gold Gemini looks to spread awareness among consumers of Telangana about the health risks associated with artificially colored tea and how to distinguish between adulterated and unadulterated tea. In its historic efforts, the brand reached over 30,000 households in the region with a door-to-door awareness campaign featuring its cold-water test. Puneet Das, President - Packaged Beverages (India & South Asia), Tata Consumer Products, stated, "At Tata Tea Chakra Gold Gemini, our commitment goes beyond delivering a great quality cup of tea; it extends to ensuring the safety & well-being of our consumers. Our awareness drive aims to educate and empower the people of Telangana about the potential risks of adulterated tea, helping them make informed choices. We encourage everyone to join our mission by choosing trusted, high-quality packaged tea." Dr. Addu Kiranmayi, a well-known nutritionist from Hyderabad, highlights, "Tea is a deeply cherished beverage in Telugu households across the region, often enjoyed multiple times a day. Consuming adulterated tea can pose several health risks, primarily due to the various harmful substances that might be present in these teas. Some potential health effects include diarrhea, nausea, gastric irritation, headaches, and dizziness. By staying informed and cautious, consumers can protect themselves from the adverse effects of consuming adulterated tea and continue to enjoy the benefits of pure, high-quality packaged tea."

"Sanskrit Mahamahopadhyaya" Award for Dr. Kambhampati Sambasivamurthy



June 3, Indian Chronicle Rayalaseema coordinator "Sanskrit Mahamahopadhyaya" Award to Dr. Kambhampati Sambasivamurthy. In 1910, with the noble intention of Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya and under his presidency, the Hindi Sahitya Sammelan, Prayag, Prayagraj, was established in Prayagraj (Allahabad) to promote Hindi and Sanskrit languages and to foster national unity between North and South India. Recognizing the remarkable services rendered for the propagation and dissemination of Sanskrit language and literature over the past 40 years, the Rashtriya Sanskrit University, Tirupati, conferred the highest honorary title of "Sanskrit Mahamahopadhyaya" upon Acharya Dr. Kambhampati Sambasivamurthy on 27-05-2025. The award ceremony was held in Allahabad and was presented by Dr. Sudhir Narayanan, Judge of the Allahabad High Court. "Early Life and Education" Dr. Kambhampati Sambasivamurthy was born in Agiripalli, Krishna District, to Sri Kambhampati Lakshminarayana Avadhanulu and Smt. Venkatalakshmi. Under their guidance, Sambasivamurthy studied Krishna Yajurveda and passed the relevant examinations. At the age of seven, he was adopted by his paternal uncle, Brahmasri Venkata Subrahmanyam, and Smt. Ventasuryakantam of Relangi village, West Godavari District. Under their tutelage, he thoroughly learned and practiced Smarta rituals from a young age. "After completing his schooling up to the tenth standard in Relangi, West Godavari District, he pursued advanced studies in literature at Podagatlapalli village, East Godavari District. He then obtained his B.Ed. (Shiksha Shastri), M.A. (Sanskrit), M.A. (Telugu), and M.Ed. (Sanskrit Shiksha Shastra) degrees from Tirupati Central Sanskrit Vidyapeeth and Andhra Uni-

versity, Visakhapatnam. He also earned a "Diploma in Hindi" from the Central Hindi Directorate, New Delhi. "Career" Dr. Sambasivamurthy began his teaching career as TGT and PGT Sanskrit in Andhra Pradesh Gurukula Schools. Later, he served as a lecturer at the Central Sanskrit Vidyapeeth, Puri, Odisha, under the Rashtriya Sanskrit Sansthan, New Delhi. Subsequently, he worked as an Associate Professor in the Department of Education at Jagadguru Ramanandacharya Rajasthan Sanskrit University. Currently, he is the Controller of Examinations at Rashtriya Sanskrit University, Tirupati. He has also held key administrative roles such as Registrar, Finance Officer, Director, Dean, and Head of Department in various universities. "Research and Publications" Under his guidance, 22 research scholars have been awarded Ph.D. degrees and 6 scholars have received M.Phil. degrees. Dr. Murthy has authored over 20 books in Sanskrit, Telugu, and English, making invaluable contributions to Sanskrit students. His articles and research papers have been published in various journals. He has participated in and presented research papers at over a hundred international, national, and regional seminars, workshops, and conferences, earning the appreciation of scholars. "Awards and Honors" Dr. Sambasivamurthy was honored with an award by the Queen of Thailand, Maharani Maha Chakri Sirindhorn. In recognition of his dedicated service to Sanskrit language and literature, he has received titles such as Vaidika Shiromani, Shiksha Visharada, Sanskrit Shiksha Bharati, and Sanskrit Shiksha Ratnam. "Felicitations" On this occasion, the Vice-Chancellor of Sanskrit University, Acharya Gullapalli Sriramakrishnamurthy, faculty, officials, and university staff congratulated Dr. Sambasivamurthy.

Cyberabad cops arrest constable, 5 others amid bid to sell cocaine mixed with ephedrine; drug worth Rs 1 crore seized

GNS News Agency, June 3

Cyberabad Preliminary investigations have revealed that the alleged mastermind, Gunashekar, a serving police constable with the task force in Andhra Pradesh, proposed the sale of ephedrine for profit. The Cyberabad police Tuesday arrested six people, including a police constable, while they were attempting to sell drugs such as cocaine mixed with ephedrine. According to the police, the accused were intercepted near Jaya Nagar, Kukatapally while they were looking for buyers, and 820 grams of the drug, worth Rs 1 crore, was seized from them. Preliminary investigations have revealed that the alleged mastermind, Gunashekar, a serving police constable with the task force in Andhra Pradesh, proposed the sale of ephedrine for profit. Unnam Surendra, another accused, joined the scheme reportedly lured by the prospect of easy money, the police said. Along with associates Dotherreddy Haribabu Reddy, Chegudi Mercy Margaret, Shaik Masthan Vali, and Devaraju Yesu Babu, they conspired to sell the drug in Hyderabad where the demand for it is high.

According to the police, Surendra collected 820 grams of the cocaine-ephedrine mixture from Gunashekar in Tirupati on May 29, 2025, and then travelled to Hyderabad via Guntur. The group assembled at Jaya Nagar, Kukatapally, to distribute the contraband. On Monday, while the group was moving towards Bhagyanagar in search of potential buyers, a patrolling police team intercepted them due to their suspicious movement and behaviour. Although one of the accused attempted to flee, they were all promptly apprehended. Upon questioning and a subsequent search, the police team allegedly recovered the 820 grams of cocaine-ephedrine, along with a digital weighing machine and the mobile phones used by the accused. The seizure was conducted in strict adherence to procedures under the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Act. Further investigation is underway to identify any other individuals involved in this drug network. The investigation revealed a prior association between Surendra and Mercy, a former employee of Keerthana Finance in Kandukur, Prakasam district, officers said.

Mumbai Customs arrest foreign national at airport for smuggling cocaine worth Rs 52 crore in ortho waist belt



GNS News Agency, June 3

Customs officers on Monday arrested a foreign national at the Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj International Airport in Mumbai for allegedly trying to smuggle cocaine worth nearly Rs 52 crore into India. The accused's plan surprised Customs officers who found that he had concealed the contraband in an ortho waist belt and calf supporters. The accused was subsequently arrested for allegedly smuggling commercial quantity drugs, under the stringent Narcotics Drugs and Psychotropic Substances NDPS Act.

According to the Customs department, its officers from the Air Intelligence Unit (AIU) had received specific intelligence. Following this, the officers on Monday intercepted the suspect at the airport. During search, AIU officers recovered four packets containing white powder, which the passenger had concealed in an ortho waist belt and calf supporters worn by him. Upon testing the recovered substance using a narcotics field testing kit, the samples tested positive for cocaine, a Customs officer said. Around 5,194 grams of cocaine valued at Rs 51.94 crore were seized. The passenger was subsequently arrested under provisions of the NDPS Act. Investigators are trying to obtain details about the foreign-based handlers and associates and also local contact who were supposed to collect the contraband from the accused. Customs officers are also checking the foreigner's travel history to check if he had smuggled narcotics or any other banned or restricted items to India in the past. And also what amount the passenger was offered in lieu of acting as a carrier, sources said. The passenger if found guilty can face a prison sentence of 20 years as seizure of cocaine beyond 100 grams falls in the category of commercial quantity that attracts harsh punishment under the provisions of NDPS Act.

Chandigarh woman loses Rs 11 lakh to online job fraud, 2 arrested

GNS News Agency, June 3

Chandigarh The police have preserved all relevant digital and financial evidence, and further arrests and recoveries are expected as the investigation progresses. (representative image) The cybercrime cell of the Chandigarh Police Friday arrested two men for allegedly swindling Rs 11 lakh from a woman in an online job fraud. The accused have been identified as Sunny and Vijay Kumar, both residents of Singha Devi, Naya Gaon, Mohali.

The FIR dated April 19 originated from a complaint filed by Snigdha Reddy, a resident of Sector 11-B, Chandigarh, who was allegedly cheated while seeking part-time employment online. She received a message via WhatsApp offering easy online tasks, such as liking videos and was subsequently added to a Telegram group where she was promised significant returns on advance payments, as per the complaint. Initially, the complainant invested Rs 1,000 and received Rs 1,300 in return, which created a false sense of trust, according to the police. She was then gradually manipulated into transferring larger sums under the pretext of earning higher profits, they said. Ultimately, she allegedly lost Rs 10,99,520 in the scam. During the investigation, financial and digital forensic tools were employed to trace the fraudulent transactions. The police found that Rs 50,000 was transferred to Sunny's bank account. He confessed to opening the account on commission, having been lured by another accused. Vijay Kumar, on the other hand, allegedly played a key role in introducing Sunny to the wider network behind the scam. During questioning, both accused admitted their involvement and disclosed the name of another prime suspect, who is currently absconding. Efforts are underway to apprehend him, the police said. The police have preserved all relevant digital and financial evidence, and further arrests and recoveries are expected as the investigation progresses.

Konkan Railway launches full-fledged monsoon action plan for smooth travel of passengers

Konkan Railway Chairman and Managing Director Santosh Kumar said one of the most important initiatives implemented this year was the successful installation of flood warning systems at large rivers and viaducts. Konkan Railway Chairman and Managing Director Santosh Kumar said one of the most important initiatives implemented this year was the successful installation of flood warning systems at large rivers and viaducts. (Credit: @KonkanRailway)

The Konkan Railway Corporation Limited (KRCL) has increased its monsoon preparedness to provide secure and uninterrupted travel for passengers, preparing for heavy rains along the Konkan coast. The 740-km Konkan railway track is known for its picturesque but difficult terrain, making it vulnerable to landslides, soil erosion, and waterlogging during monsoon.

To confront all such challenges head-on, KRCL has initiated a full-fledged monsoon action plan with the safety of infrastructure, real-time surveillance, and emergency preparedness as the focus. "The largest relief to passengers is that services will be run without any disruption even in the midst of heavy rainfall — thanks to advanced planning, enhanced safety systems, and increased patrolling," said Santosh Kumar Jha, chairman and managing director of Konkan Railway on Tuesday.

Quality education is possible only through government schools. District Collector Jitesh V. Patil



“Ranjith naik Bhukya ,Bhadradri kothagudem,June 3(Indian Chronicle) :”District Collector Jitesh V. Patil has instructed the district authorities to implement the school walk program in a strict manner so that a large number of students get admission to government schools. On Tuesday, the collector said in a coordination meeting with line department officials at the I.D.O.C. office that school walk programs will be organized in all areas of the district from June 6th to 19th. He said that everyone should be informed about the free textbooks, notebooks, uniforms, digital education, scholarships, and other incentives provided by the government to students studying in government schools, and steps should be taken to admit all of them in government schools. 6 to 14 years. He said that all the school-aged children should be identified and encouraged to go to the nearest school. He said that children who have dropped out of school should be identified and that action should be taken at the field level to re-enroll them in eligible classes by talking to the members of the Amma Adarsh Schools Committee, through women's associations, and their parents. He said that everyone should be made aware of the quality education available in government schools. He said that women's self-help groups, Anganwadi teachers, ASHA workers, village heads, and officials of all government departments should be involved in the Badibata program. The officials should record the reasons for those who do not want to send their children to government schools. Every principal should hold a meeting with parents in the villages and make them aware of the quality education provided by the facilities provided in government schools and ensure that the parents' money is not wasted. He instructed the officials to identify the dilapidated schools across the district in the next two weeks and complete appropriate re-

pairs to them. He said that by the end of this academic year, the construction of boundary walls with mud bricks for all schools across the district will be completed through the Employment Guarantee Scheme. He instructed the officials to complete the production of uniforms in the next five days and provide them to all schools. He instructed the officials to identify children with special needs through Bhavita Kendras and provide them with necessary medical facilities and tests. He instructed them to identify illiterate people above the age of 15 through the Ullasam app and take steps to provide them with education. He said that appropriate plans should be made to achieve 100% literacy in the district. Similarly, in this meeting, he said that as part of awareness on environmental protection, prizes would be given to schools that collected the most seeds through the seed bank under the auspices of the Eco Clubs in the schools.

He wanted to complete 100% plantation in all schools in the district. He wanted to plant basil, chinta, amla, velaga, munaga, and curry leaves in every school. The officials were instructed to create widespread awareness among the people on issues such as Azolla, biochar, compost fertilizer production, construction of ink pits, and construction of farm ponds across the district. In this coordination meeting, the district education coordinators provided awareness to the district officials through PPTs and PowerPoint presentations. Local bodies' additional collector Vidya Chandana, CPO Sanjeeva Rao, MEPMA PD Rajesh, District Education Officer M. Venkateswara Chari, District BC Welfare Officer Indira, Women and Child Welfare Officer Swamalatha Lenina, district education coordinators, Mandal education officers, APMs, and concerned officials, etc., participated in this meeting.

Is Boyinpet Synonymous with Official Negligence?

“Potaraveni Kranti Kumar,“President, Manthani Fisheries Department.”

“PS. Ashokan“Indian Chronicle“Manthani June,3““It is deeply disheartening to observe the persistent apathy shown by officials towards Boyinpet, which falls under the 6th ward of Manthani Municipality. Despite being an integral part of the town, Boyinpet continues to face systematic neglect, as if it does not warrant even the most basic civic attention.“A prime example of this disregard is the main connecting road that links two significant routes within Boyinpet. For over a year, the work on this crucial stretch has progressed at a snail's pace. Nearly two months ago, gravel was haphazardly laid and since then, the project has been abandoned with no signs of further development. With the onset of the monsoon, the gravel has eroded, leaving behind dangerous potholes filled with stagnant water. The road has now become virtually impassable — neither suitable for vehicles nor safe for pedestrians.“This inaction is not only an inconvenience but a serious hazard. The possibility of vehicular accidents has increased manifold, yet the concerned departments continue to remain indifferent. Their failure to anticipate the impact of the rainy season and act proactively is a glaring testament to their inefficiency.“I, on behalf of the residents of Boyinpet, strongly urge the concerned authorities to expedite the completion of the road-works without further delay. Citizens should not be subjected to such hardship due to administrative inertia.“Let this serve as a stern warning — if this pattern of disregard continues, the public outcry will be inevitable. The patience of Boyinpet's residents should not be mistaken for complacency.



Newly approved Navodaya schools in Telangana miss admissions again

GNS News Agency, June 3

Hyderabad: Seven newly sanctioned Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalayas (JNVs) in the state still remain only on paper. The JNVs will not only miss the forthcoming academic year, but they will also not be admitting students for the academic year 2026–27. The Navodaya Vidyalaya Samiti, which recently issued the Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalaya Selection Test (JNVST) 2026 notification, did not include the newly sanctioned seven JNVs for admissions to Class VI for the academic year 2026–27. The central government, on December 6, 2024, approved seven JNVs with one each in Jagtial, Nizamabad, Bhadradi Kothagudem, Medchal-Malkajgiri, Mahbubnagar, Sangareddy, and Suryapet districts. Students and parents anticipated that the admissions process would commence next academic year. However, the recent JNVST admission notification included only the existing nine schools in the state, dashing their hopes.



the identified lands. As per general practice, they submit a feasibility report to the central government. There could have been a communication gap in the central government that resulted in the non-inclusion of the seven new JNVs in the recent notification,” sources said. Presently, there are nine JNVs with one each in Asifabad, Karimnagar, Khammam, Nagarkurnool, Siddipet, Nalgonda, Kamareddy, Rangareddy, and Warangal districts. At least 75 per cent of the seats in a district will be filled by candidates provisionally selected from rural areas of that district. The remaining seats are open, which will be filled on merit from both urban and rural area candidates of the district as per selection criteria. The selection test for Class VI admissions to these schools for the academic year 2026–27 is scheduled for December 13, 2025. The last date to register online for selection via the website <https://navodaya.gov.in> is on or before July 29.

Educationists and parents argue that following the approval from the central government, the Samiti and state government should have immediately initiated the process for the establishment of schools, at least from temporary locations, until the permanent buildings are constructed. “There appears to be a lack of coordination between the Samiti and state government. At least, the schools should have commenced the class work temporarily from private engineering or other colleges,” Kalyani, joint secretary, Kranthi Keen Foundation, told Telangana Today. According to sources in the education department, the state government identified land for the seven JNVs besides proposing temporary buildings.

“A central team recently visited the state and inspected

Telangana to open senior citizen day care centres in every district

GNS News Agency, June 3

Karimnagar: To address loneliness and lack of social engagement among the elderly, the Telangana State government has announced the establishment of day care centres for senior citizens across the State. At least one centre is proposed in each district. With many senior citizens living alone after their children moved away for employment, or settled abroad, a large number of elderly residents are facing isolation and limited social support. While retired persons' associations do exist, they mainly focus on welfare entitlements and do not function as recreational hubs. As a result, there are few dedicated spaces where the elderly can spend their time meaningfully.



Taking note of this issue, BRS working president and former Minister for Municipal Administration and Urban Development, KT Rama Rao, had set up a pilot day care centre for senior citizens in Yellareddy mandal of his Siricilla Assembly constituency in 2022. Based on this model, the State government has now decided to scale up the initiative across Telangana. Apart from two centres each in Hyderabad, Hanamkonda, Rangareddy, and Medchal districts, a total of 37 centres will be established across 29 districts under the Atal Vayo Abhyuday Yojana (AVYAY). A monthly allocation of Rs. 4.61 crore has been earmarked for the maintenance of these centres, with each centre re-

ceiving Rs. 90,000. The Department of Senior Citizens Welfare will oversee operations. Each centre will accommodate up to 50 persons and will feature a kitchen, doctor's room, spacious hall, library, and facilities for indoor and outdoor games. To support physical and mental well-being, centres will provide equipment for exercise, memory games, carroms, chess, meditation, yoga, and monthly medical check-ups. Medicines will be provided free of cost, and nutrition support including Raagi Java, fruit juices, upma, tea, biscuits, and other refreshments will be served regularly.

Journalists should be granted permanent houses.



TWJF State Secretary Karra Anil Reddy “Ranjith naik Bhukya ,Bhadradri kothagudem,June 3(Indian Chronicle) :”TWJF State Secretary Karra Anil Reddy has urged the government to grant permanent houses to journalists who constantly work hard by informing the government and officials about public issues from time to time. He participated in the membership registration program of the Telangana Working Journalists Federation and spoke. He said that the government should take decisions with a generous nature towards journalists, who are a bridge between the government and the people, and take steps to provide education and medical subsidies to the families of journalists. He said that the government should especially focus on journalists working across the Bhadrachalam constituency of

Bhadradri Kothagudem district. He said that all working journalists who have completed higher education and are working with dedication in job creation or public service should be allotted houses, and Indiramma houses should be granted. The government and government officials should take steps so that private schools provide subsidies for the education of children of working journalists working in the scheduled area. TWJF Bhadradi Kothagudem District President Udota Suribabu, Treasurer Doddi Hari Nagavarma, Vice President Thotamalla Ramanamurthy, and members Pushpagiri, G. Laxman Kumar, B. Radhika, M. Sagar, B. Vinod, Maddi Lakshminarasimha Reddy, G. Suresh Rajesh, Naveen, and others participated in this membership registration program.

Paddy drying on roads blamed for fatal accidents in erstwhile Medak

GNS News Agency, June 3

Siddipet: Despite repeated warnings, farmers in the erstwhile Medak district continue to dry paddy on public roads, leading to a string of accidents, of which there were two fatal accidents on Monday alone. The practice being followed by the farmers due to lack of proper drying platforms has become a recurring hazard for road users during the paddy harvesting season.



On Monday, a teenager, Bhanapuram Krathik (16), from Pedda Gottimukkala in Shivampet mandal, died after the two-wheeler he was riding hit a paddy heap at Gomaram. Krathik succumbed to his injuries an hour later. His companion and the pillion rider, Yaswanth, sustained serious injuries and was rushed to the government hospital in Narsapur, where his condition remains critical. In a separate incident the same day, Errolla Balanarasaiah (53), a watchman at Konda Pochamma temple, suffered fatal injuries after his motorcycle struck a paddy heap on the roadside at Itikyala in Jagadevpur mandal. He died on Tuesday while receiving treatment at the hospital.

a teenager, Bhanapuram Krathik (16), from Pedda Gottimukkala in Shivampet mandal, died after the two-wheeler he was riding hit a paddy heap at Gomaram. Krathik succumbed to his injuries an hour later

In yet another mishap on Monday night, Dasari Kiran (30) sustained serious injuries after his bike hit a paddy heap on the Veldurthi-Melluru road. He is currently battling for life at the government hospital in Toopran.

ever, blame the government's failure to provide adequate drying platforms and limited space at procurement centres. They also cited delays in paddy procurement, which force them to store their produce on the roads for extended periods. Meanwhile, road users have urged the government to intervene urgently and end the deadly practice. They called for the formation of a committee comprising officials from relevant departments and farmer organisations to devise a lasting solution.

Medak Superintendent of Police, D Uday Kumar Reddy, stated that farmers had been repeatedly counselled against leaving paddy on roads due to the risk it poses to motorists. Despite awareness campaigns, some farmers continue the practice, citing various constraints. Toopran DSP Narendar Javvaji warned of strict action against individuals found drying paddy on public roads. Farmers, how-

Why it's a Black Environment Week for this PCMC engineer

On June 7, Prashant Raul, an engineer from Pimpri Chinchwad Municipal Corporation (PCMC), will set off on a 15 km walk from Dehu to Alandi to spread awareness about pollution in the Indrayani River, which connects the two pilgrimage sites, and other ecological realities. If the walk comes after World Environment Day, it is for a reason. “Across the world, people get together on June 5 to celebrate World Environment Day with sapling plantations and so on. I do not feel that there is any cause to celebrate, as we have damaged all five elements, from earth to air. This is a time for action. That is why I have initiated the Black Environment Week to draw people's attention to real problems,” he says. Raul, who set up an initiative called Green Army Pimpri-Chinchwad four years ago, is observing Black Environment Week this week, during which he is working towards generating awareness and mobilising people to take steps to save the planet. “Not many people are aware when World Environment Day started and why. There is a lack of awareness that Jeju Province in the Republic of Korea has been chosen as the host location for World Environment Day, or that the theme this year is ending plastic pollution,” he adds.

paid against illegal tree felling – Raul has lodged six FIRs against it– and promoted the “nature island” form of tree transplantation in which small clusters of saplings are planted in barren spaces to encourage afforestation.

After Diwali 2024, Raul conducted 13 Air Quality Index (AQI) walks to capture real-time AQIs in PCMC. The Green Army Plate Bank, which has 22 centres in PCMC, gives out free steel plates, glasses and cutlery in an attempt to reduce single-use waste. The days surrounding World Environment Day have been observed as World Cycling Day and Zero Food Waste Day, among others. Raul has been engaging with people online and offline on the dangers of sound pollution caused by blowing horns, and the great problem of waste. On June 5, he will give a talk in a corporate office on a sustainable lifestyle, and conduct an online session on energy literacy. But, it is during the walk that Raul hopes to connect with the highest number of people. “The Indrayani River is among the most polluted, and I am looking forward to discussions on how untreated sewage is getting discharged in the river, the meanings of biochemical oxygen demand and chemical oxygen demand and how a river dies,” says Raul. India's acute groundwater crisis and air pollution will also be discussed during Raul's walk. “I will be conducting Facebook Live sessions and making videos during the walk to reach more people,” he says.

Raul, who was one of the litigants in the Save Metro Eco Park case in 2024, is an active member of PCMC's environment-conscious groups. The Green Army has cam-

Delhi HC orders protection to MP journalist who fled Bhind following 'abuse, harassment and stripping at police station'

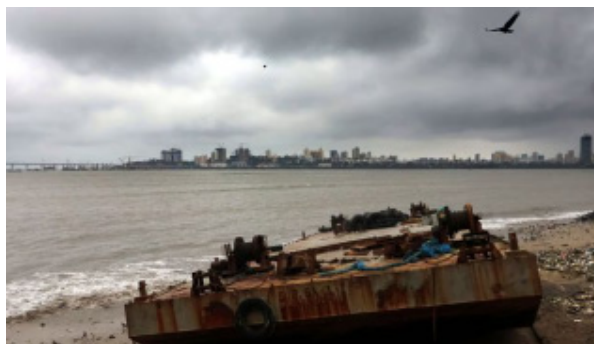


GNS News Agency, June 3

The Delhi High Court Wednesday ordered police protection to a journalist who was allegedly harassed, threatened, and stripped inside a police station in Madhya Pradesh's Bhind earlier this month. While a detailed order is awaited, Justice Ravinder Dudgeja orally said the court will direct the Delhi Police to grant protection to the journalist for "at least two months". Journalist Amarkant Singh Chouhan, Bhind bureau chief of the Swaraj Express news channel, had sought relief from the high court, citing "reasonable threats to his life and personal liberty" as well as that of his family, "particularly at the hands of SP Asit Yadav of Bhind", after having fled to Delhi. According to the journalist, the SP "was displeased about the extensive reporting about the illegal sand mining activities in the Chambal river that are carried out by the sand mafia in connivance with the local police."

While the petition also sought the high court to call for a status report into the incident from the Madhya Pradesh Police, Justice Dudgeja indicated that it would be appropriate to pursue the remedy before the Madhya Pradesh High Court instead. Highlighting the "egregious" facts of the case, advocate Warisha Farasat, appearing for Chouhan, said they shall not press for the status report. According to Chouhan's petition, on May 1, he and another journalist Shashikant Jatav were "invited" to have a cup of tea with Yadav at his chambers, where "they were physically assaulted and battered by SP Asit Yadav and his subordinates." Further, more than half a dozen other journalists were also present in the SP Asit Yadav's chamber, who had all been stripped down to their undergarments before being physically assaulted and battered prior to their arrival," Chouhan added. On May 4, Chouhan and Jatav were on their way from Gwalior to Delhi "to meet (MP) Jyotiraditya Scindia to apprise him of their plight" when they were "picked up by one Saurabh Sharma, another journalist, on the pretext of going to Delhi by road", Chouhan stated. They were then, instead, taken to a nearby dhaba where some police officers were waiting. They took the two journalists to the SP's bungalow to work out a "compromise", and directed that they should no longer pursue the matter of being assaulted by Bhind police officials on May 1, and drop the charges. They were once again summoned by the SP to his office on May 5, "where they were forced to record a video statement in the presence of other police officials, stating that all matters between them and the police have been 'resolved'," the petition stated. The video was then circulated by the Bhind police through WhatsApp with the intention of "destroying the credibility" of the two journalists, the petition contended.

'Timeline of the monsoon doesn't matter. We can expect many days of heavy to very heavy rain'



GNS News Agency, June 3

From no heat wave day to heavy pre-monsoon showers that shattered records, this May has been one for the history books for Mumbai. After experiencing light to moderate showers from the second week of the month, monsoon arrived in Mumbai with a bang on May 26, making it the earliest recorded onset in the past 75 years. With the city experiencing an early arrival of monsoon, Shubhangi Bhute, Director, IMD (Mumbai) and head of Regional Meteorological Centre for Western India, spoke to The Indian Express about the factors influencing the early arrival and what Mumbai can expect going forward.

Q: This year, May has been unique for the city. Why did we see such heavy pre-monsoon showers, and what led to the earliest onset of the monsoon in the past 75 years at least?

Shubhangi Bhute: In May, we did not see any rise in temperatures, with temperatures remaining normal and sometimes, because of rainfall activity, we have also seen that the temperatures have dropped to 32 degree Celsius as well. This month, monsoon also set into Mumbai well in advance, making it the earliest onset in the last 75 years. Earlier, there have been only five occasions (years) when the monsoon set in May, on May 31 and May 29. As well predicted, conditions were very favourable for the early onset. This year, monsoon had set into Andaman well in advance by May 13, then it set over Kerala by May 24, and then reached Maharashtra by May 25. The monsoon onset is declared when all the criteria for the declaration are met, and these include many factors about rainfall requirements, wind field, Outgoing Longwave Radiation (OLR), among others. Besides that, Madden-Julian Oscillation (MJO) is also one of the key contributors. Earlier, MJO was in the eighth phase, and now, it is in the second phase, which is favourable for good monsoons in the Indian region. Furthermore, the neutral phase of El Niño-Southern Oscillation (ENSO), and neutral El Niño are also present. And altogether, these factors have led to the early onset of monsoon in the Indian region.

Q: This time, we saw that the monsoon arrived in Mumbai very quickly, merely two days after it entered Kerala. This is in stark contrast to the normal timeline of at least 10 days. Bhute: We saw that the monsoon advanced very fast. After reaching Andaman on May 13, it entered Karwar almost a week in advance. It reached Karwar and Belgaum by May 24, and then within two days, it reached Mumbai by 26th May.

Besides meeting the basic conditions for the declaration of monsoon in Kerala, the monsoon advancement also depends on two branches — the Arabian Sea and the Bay of Bengal branches. If the Arabian Sea branch on the western coast is very active, with active systems like low-pressure areas, then the southwest monsoon starts setting in from the Arabian Sea side. However, currently, the Bay of Bengal side is very lull. This means that there is no system in the Bay of Bengal to pull the moisture, therefore, monsoon advancement has been delayed on the eastern side. Once a low-pressure area forms in the eastern branch of the Bay of Bengal, the winds will be pulled, and the monsoon will also be covered on the other coast. Presently, while the Bay of Bengal branch was lull, the Arabian Sea was very active with a low-pressure area, which contributed to the pulling in of moisture from the ocean to land. This further contributed to the early advancement of monsoon.

Q: Several reports and weather observers have suggested that after the early advancement, there will be a lull in showers. What does this mean? Will the rains discontinue now?

Bhute: The timeline of the monsoon doesn't matter. Even if the monsoon were to arrive in June, ahead of schedule or even if it had been delayed, it is not necessary that the city would receive heavy rains every single day. Rains

during monsoon are not continuous, simple or steady, as they always depend on the systems. There will always be a variation in the quantum of rain, and there may even be days when no rainfall is registered. In Mumbai, generally August is seen as the month of dry spell when there is the least rain, and July is the wettest monsoon period, while June is the month of onset. Now that the monsoons have arrived early in May, we will observe the rain patterns this month.

Q: This year, IMD has forecast above normal rains all over the country. What does this mean for Mumbai?

Bhute: In the Long Range Period forecast, IMD's chart has indicated that above-normal rainfall is very likely along the west coast, particularly around the Maharashtra region. This suggests that the percentage of possibility of excess rainfall is more even in Mumbai.

Q: Does this mean Mumbai can see more flash floods, as we observed on May 26 with the arrival of monsoon?

Bhute: The patterns of monsoon have now changed as we receive heavy rains within a short period. While we cannot say right now whether the frequency of flash floods will be higher, we can definitely expect many days where we will receive 'heavy to very heavy rain'. As per the IMD's forecast for this season, a higher frequency of rainy days is very likely, as we can expect more 'heavy to very heavy rainfall' type of days in Mumbai.

Q: IMD often draws flak for failing to issue timely forecast warnings and alerts. What makes forecasting a challenging task in a city like Mumbai?

Bhute: First of all, we are in a tropical region where the frequency of weather changes is very fast. Now, in the monsoons, we expect rains from the southwesterly winds, and that has to be supported by upper air winds. While generally we get rains because of southwesterly winds, which bring moisture, and we get the convection of the rains, the changes in wind patterns and other systems happen at the micro level. Mumbai is only a 40 to 60 km patch, which is in the Arabian Sea. Compared to the larger state of Maharashtra, it is a very small stretch. It is very difficult to forecast for such a small stretch, as sub-kilometre mesoscale models are unavailable. Besides being in the tropical zone, Mumbai's proximity to the sea also means that the weather changes very rapidly. On land, we observe fixed patterns where systems generally move in a very particular manner. But in Mumbai, we will see that some parts receive rain while the other parts may remain dry and even sunny. Furthermore, while we predict and issue forecast warnings on the basis of synoptic conditions one day in advance, changes happen very fast within half an hour or in hours. Even if we look at May 26, extremely heavy rainfall occurred only in South Mumbai, while the rest of the suburbs experienced much less rain during the daytime. Within two days, the Colaba station received more than 250 mm of rainfall while the Santacruz station recorded heavy showers on the second day. Whenever we issue orange or red alerts, we mention the likelihood of rain in isolated pockets, as it is very unlikely that the entire city would receive heavy rain.

Q: What is the system of issuing red alerts? Sometimes, red alerts are issued when the intensity of rain relaxes or the showers discontinue after a red warning is sounded. Bhute: For red warnings, we generally follow the orange alert. While we forecast heavy rainfall for an orange alert, the city may likely experience extremely heavy rainfall for only two hours, after which it may dry up. On May 26, too, we had issued forecasts with orange and then, red alerts, indicating that the city would receive heavy rain during the first half, following which the intensity would reduce. However, we issue our forecast warnings for a period of 24 hours, as immediately removing the red alert is not ideal. Even if the system relaxes and rains have reduced, we keep our warnings for a 24-hour period, as the systems can always intensify and bring heavy rain again. Often, it also happens that we issue our red alerts 24 hours or 48 hours in advance, but sometimes the systems can change very fast. Furthermore, it is not easy to withdraw a red alert immediately after it is issued. Our objective is that the administration and the public should not be in trouble or underprepared. If there is a possibility of rain, we can always overwarn rather than underwarn, as there should not arise a situation where our underwarning leads to a lack of adequate preparation or there is an adverse situation or mishap. Sometimes, even if we are expecting heavy rain, which can be categorised as orange, we do not remove our red alert, as extra precaution is always better.

Area under cotton cultivation up by 15% in Punjab, but long-term decline continues

GNS News Agency, June 3

Cotton cultivation in Punjab has registered a 15 per cent increase this year compared to 2024, offering a ray of hope for the state's struggling cotton belt. The figure is likely to improve further as the data of the area under cotton sowing is to be collected till May 31. According to official data, the cotton-growing districts of Fazilka, Bathinda, Mansa, and Muktsar have so far covered 1.13 lakh hectares out of the targeted 1.29 lakh hectares, falling short of the target by 14.6 per cent. But this marks a notable rise from the 98,490 hectares sown in 2024 — a year that saw record-low coverage of the cash crop. "The improvement is visible, though minor. Cotton sowing is almost complete, and final data will be available in early June," said Jagdish Singh, Chief Agriculture Officer, Bathinda. "Based on the sale of seeds, we are expecting a further increase in the area under cotton by the end of May." District-wise sowing data (as Fazilka: 58,169 hectares (ha) (vs 51,600 ha in 2024; target 70,000 ha) Bathinda: 16,200 ha (vs 14,500 ha in 2024; target 19,000 ha) Mansa: 27,595.8 ha (vs 22,560 ha in 2024; target 28,500 ha) Rajinder Kumar, Chief Agriculture Officer, Fazilka, attributed the partial increase to better awareness and slight recovery of farmer confidence, though a double breach in the Punjab Minor Canal affected irrigation and sowing timelines in parts of the district. The numbers dropped to 2.5–2.52 lakh ha during 2020–2021, to 2.48 lakh ha in 2022, to 1.79 lakh ha in 2023, and further to 98,490 ha in 2024. The latest target of 1.29 lakh ha represents a deliberate scaling down in response to farmer disinterest, pest threats, and market uncertainties.

Experts trace the steady decline to the Green Revolution, which encouraged paddy cultivation in areas with canal water access, leaving only the saline-water-prone Malwa belt suitable for cotton. "Cotton was once white gold, but issues like whitefly and pink bollworm attacks, spurious seeds, and low MSP procurement by the Cotton Corporation of India have disillusioned farmers," said Sukhjinder Singh Rajan, a Fazilka farmer. In 2015, a whitefly outbreak devastated 3.25 lakh hectares of cotton. A compensation of Rs 8,000 per acre was announced by the then SAD-BJP



Experts trace the steady decline--Punjab boasted 8 lakh hectares under cotton cultivation in the 1980s--to the Green Revolution, which encouraged paddy cultivation.

government.. A pink bollworm infestation in 2021 led to another round of farmer losses and a Rs 17,000 per acre relief package was announced by the then Congress government. Unlike cotton, paddy benefits from an assured minimum support price (MSP) and easy canal water access. "That's why many farmers shift to paddy. Cotton is risky with unpredictable pests and no guaranteed procurement," added Rajan. Still, some officials remain optimistic. "Mansa is very close to achieving its target of 28,500 hectares," said Harpreet Pal Kaur, Chief Agriculture Officer, Mansa. "We expect to meet it once final figures are compiled." While the marginal rebound in 2025 is encouraging, experts stress the need for quality seeds, fair pricing, pest management, and assured procurement to revive cotton cultivation meaningfully in Punjab.

Govt job aspirant found dead near under-construction building in Pune's Khed; suicide suspected

GNS News Agency, June 3

MPSC aspirant suicide, Pune Khed taluka death, competitive exam stress, student suicide Maharashtra. The man had come to visit his sister from his home in Bahirwadi, which is around 14 km away. In a suspected case of suicide, the body of a 27-year-old man who was preparing for various competitive exams including the Maharashtra Public Service Commission (MPSC) exams was found next to an under-construction building in Pune district's Khed taluka, police said.

The police said the deceased was a resident of the Bahirwadi area of the taluka. Sometime around 12 pm on Monday, the man was found lying in a pool of blood next to an under-construction building in the Rakhshewadi area, the police were informed by the locals. He was rushed to a local hospital, where he was pronounced dead. He had suffered multiple serious injuries consistent with a fall from a high-rise building, an official said. "As part of our initial probe,

we examined various leads including the footage from the security cameras in the area and in the building," said an officer from the Khed police station, adding that the investigation suggested that the man walked into the premises of the under-construction building around 11.15 am. The officer further said the man had come to visit his sister from his home in Bahirwadi, which is around 14 km away. "In the morning he told his sister that he was stepping out for a walk and then came to the building. No note has been found in our probe till now," said the officer.

When contacted, Inspector Prabhakar More, in charge of the Khed police station, said, "The initial probe points to this being a case of suicide. The deceased was preparing for various civil services exams including the MPSC and also searching for a job. His family members have said that he was under a lot of stress recently. We have launched a probe to ascertain the exact reason and sequence of events leading to his death."

Centre raises paddy MSP by Rs 69 to Rs 2,369 per quintal for 2025-26

GNS News Agency, June 3

The government on Wednesday raised the Minimum Support Price (MSP) for paddy by 3 per cent to Rs 2,369 per quintal for the 2025-26 kharif marketing season. A decision in this regard was taken by the Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA) chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi. The support price for common and A grade varieties has been increased by Rs 69 per quintal to Rs 2,369 and Rs 2,389 per quintal, respectively, for the forthcoming kharif season of 2025-26 crop year (July-June). Among pulses, support price for tur has been raised by Rs 450 to Rs 8,000 per quintal, while that of urad MSP by Rs 400 to Rs 7,800 per quintal and moong MSP by Rs 86 to Rs 8,768 per quintal for 2025-26 kharif marketing season. The government has increased the MSP of Kharif crops for 2025-26, to ensure remunerative prices to the growers for their produce. Information and Broadcasting Minister Ashwini Vaishnav told reporters. The highest absolute increase in MSP over the previous year has been recom-



mended for nigerseed, followed by Ragi, Cotton, and Sesamum. The increase in kharif crops support price for 2025-26 is in line with the Union Budget 2018-19 announcement of fixing the MSP at a level of at least 1.5 times the All-India weighted average cost of production.

After Ajit Pawar, nephew Yugendra visits Baramati, meets flood-affected citizens



GNS News Agency, June 3

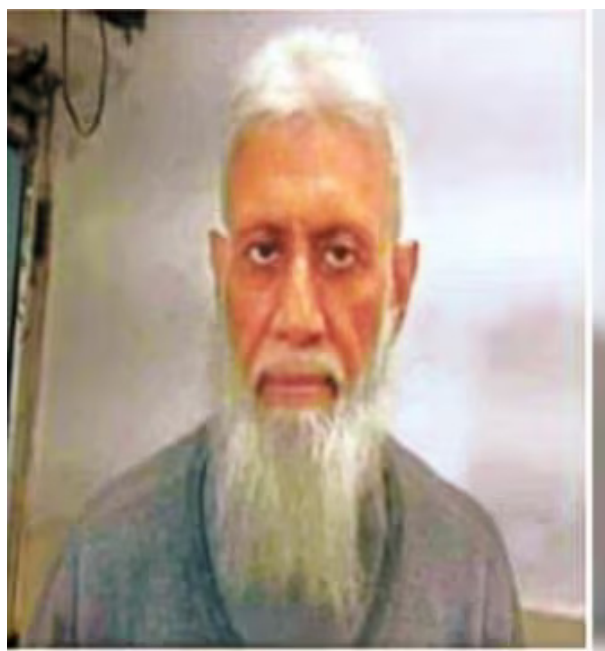
Yugendra Pawar Baramati, Baramati flood news, Ajit Pawar Baramati visit, Yugendra Pawar had unsuccessfully contested the the Assembly elections from Baramati against his uncle, Ajit Pawar, last year. After Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar paid a visit to his hometown, Baramati, which has been witnessing heavy rain in the last few days, Nationalist Congress Party (SP) leader Yugendra Pawar followed suit on Tuesday. Yugendra, who had unsuccessfully contested the Assembly elections from Baramati against his uncle, Ajit Pawar, last year, visited the affected areas and provided food packages to residents, assuring that he would raise their problems with the administration. "I have been active in Baramati... I started by visiting the flood-affected areas. I began from the urban areas," Yugendra said on Wednesday. Baramati has received a record amount of rainfall — more than 300 mm — in the last few days. The heavy rain has led to flooding of nullahs, resulting in canals getting damaged, and water gushing into houses, roads, and farms. The NCP (SP) is distributing grains and pulses to affected families who have lost all their food in the floods, Yugendra said, adding this would help them in meeting their immediate needs till their lives return to normal once the rain stops. "We will take up the problems and issues with the administration to ensure a proper solution to the issues. If the canal walls were checked regularly, it would not have been damaged," Yugendra

added. Following the heavy rains, NCP (SP) executive president and MP Supriya Sule, who is leading a delegation of MPs of various parties to convey India's position on the recent conflict with Pakistan following the Pahalgam terrorist attack, had said in a post on social media that she was in touch with the citizens of Baramati, Daund, Indapur and Bhor, areas that are a part of the Lok Sabha constituency she represents. Ajit Pawar's son Parth and his wife and Rajya Sabha MP Sunetra Pawar, who had contested against Sule in the Lok Sabha elections last year, had also visited the affected areas of Baramati.

All you need to know about paused US student visa interviews

Hyderabad: In a significant and potentially disruptive development for the global education ecosystem, the US Department of State has issued a directive halting all new student visa interview appointments at US embassies and consulates worldwide. This order, issued on May 27, 2025, aims to give the government time to implement a new set of vetting procedures, including potentially more rigorous scrutiny of applicants' digital and social media histories. Consular offices globally were directed to temporarily pause the scheduling of new student visa interviews. While already scheduled interviews will reportedly still go ahead for now, no new interviews will be added to the calendar until the new vetting mechanisms are fully established. No timeline has been officially provided regarding how long this pause will last. However, the State Department indicated that further guidance is expected "in the coming days." The stated rationale for this policy change is to tighten national security vetting processes. The administration is reportedly considering expanded digital scrutiny, including 'Social media activity',

Tihar authorities directed to respond to 26/11 mastermind Tahawwur Rana's plea to speak to family from jail



GNS News Agency, June 3

A Delhi court on Wednesday directed Tihar Jail authorities to submit a report in response to an application

moved by Tahawwur Rana, the 26/11 Mumbai terror attack conspirator, seeking permission to speak to his family members while in judicial custody. The court of Additional Sessions Judge Chander Jit had in April dismissed a similar application moved by Rana when he was in the custody of the National Investigation Agency (NIA). Rana is currently in judicial custody till June 6. The NIA had opposed his first application, stating that the investigation was at a crucial stage and that the agency didn't want any interference. There was also an apprehension, said sources, that Rana might leak sensitive information related to the case.

For now, Rana is allowed to meet his lawyers every other day in the presence of NIA officials, who will be at a hearing distance. He will be provided with a pen and paper during the meeting. The Pakistani-Canadian was arrested in Chicago in 2009, the year after the terror attacks in which 166 people were killed. He arrived in Delhi on April 10 following his extradition from the US. According to the NIA, Rana was also involved in planning future attacks in India and had met Lashkar-e-Toiba (LeT) operative Abdul Rehman in Dubai ahead of the Mumbai attacks. Rana is accused of aiding and abetting the reconnaissance carried out by LeT scout David Coleman Headley, with whom he went to school in Pakistan, for the 26/11 attacks and of participating in the conspiracy by providing crucial logistical support to the attackers. He was arrested in Chicago in 2009, months after the Mumbai terror attacks in November 2008, in which 166 people were killed.

'Like a death sentence': Agitating teachers on CM Mamata's fresh recruitment date announcement

GNS News Agency, June 3

west bengal teachersThe protest stems from the Supreme Court's April 3 verdict upholding a Calcutta High Court order that annulled 25,753 school appointments made through the West Bengal School Service Commission (WBSSC) in 2016. Following Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee's announcement from Nabanna on Tuesday that the notification for a fresh recruitment examination will be issued on May 30, teachers protesting outside Bikash Bhavan have expressed outrage, calling the move "no less than a death sentence." According to the Chief Minister's announcement, the application process for the new recruitment will begin on June 16, with the last date for submission set for July 14.

This decision has sparked anger among the agitating teachers who had secured jobs through the scrapped panel. Vrindaban Ghosh, spokesperson for the Joggo Shikshok Shikshika Adhikar Mancha, told reporters, "The government should have prioritised the review petition. But we see that the government is more keen to conduct the fresh recruitment tests. This is like a death sentence for us." The protest stems from the Supreme Court's April 3 verdict upholding a Calcutta High Court order that annulled 25,753 school appointments made through the West Bengal School Service Commission (WBSSC) in 2016. The apex court stated the entire recruitment panel had to be scrapped as authorities failed to distinguish between "tainted" and "untainted" candidates. Since then, the state government and the WBSSC have filed review petitions in the Supreme Court seeking reconsideration of the judgment, which are pending.

Chinmoy Mondol, a prominent protester, said, "She should have said that they are giving priority to the review first and then the exam, but she said the opposite. Her target should have been the legal fight, not just the review or exams. She should have mentioned the necessary steps



to ensure that the review is accepted. Exams should have been secondary. Everyone must follow the Supreme Court order, but in other cases, alternatives have always been found. In our case, it seems the main agenda was to hold exams." The protesting teachers, many of whom have worked for eight to nine years, say it is unjust to subject them again to competitive exams that they already cleared. They claim they are neither mentally nor physically prepared for such tests after years in service.

They also questioned the government's decision to announce vacancies for 44,203 posts. "The first priority should have been securing the jobs of the 25,753 who lost theirs," said one protester. "The exams should only be for those affected, not for new candidates." Bidisha Mukhopadhyay, one of the affected teachers, criticised the Chief Minister's statement: "The Chief Minister is saying that she will make space for the tainted in the education and other departments, and the untainted will have to give exams. Does this mean the tainted will get a smooth path to jobs, and we, the untainted, have to suffer? What is our fault?" According to sources, a group of the agitating teachers plans to try and meet the Prime Minister during his scheduled visit to Alipurduar in West Bengal.

Aligarh cow vigilante assault case: Meat in vehicle was not beef, forensic lab confirms



GNS News Agency, June 3

Four days after four men were allegedly assaulted by cow vigilantes in Uttar Pradesh's Aligarh on the suspicion that they were transporting beef, the police said on Wednesday that a forensic science laboratory had confirmed that it was not cow meat. The police had said earlier that the men were transporting buffalo meat. Police Inspector Dheeraj Kumar, the station house officer of Harduaganj police station, confirmed the development.

The incident took place near Alhadadpur village in Aligarh on Saturday when cow vigilantes allegedly assaulted Akil, 43, Arbaaj, 38, Akeel, 35, and Nadeem, 32, with wooden and iron rods, accusing them of transporting cow meat. The accused allegedly also set their vehicle on fire and stole their phones and money. While two FIRs were registered over the incident, four people have been arrested in the case so far. The police identified the arrested accused as Vijay Gupta, 50, Bhanu Pratap, 28, Luv Kush, 27, and Vijay Bajrang, 23.

One of the FIRs registered at Harduaganj police station on Saturday was lodged on the basis of a complaint by Salim Khan, the father of Akeel, one of the men who was assaulted. The FIR was lodged against 38 people, 13 by name and 25 unnamed. Gupta, Bajrang and Luv Kush were named in this FIR. According to Khan's complaint, the men were transporting meat purchased from a meat factory at Al-Ambar. The moment the vehicle reached Panaiti Road, several accused approached the vehicle and demanded protection money from the victims, Khan said in his complaint. He further said that they were assaulted when they refused to pay Rs 50,000. The case was filed under sections 191(2) (rioting), 191(3) (unlawful assembly), 190 (unlawful assembly to commit an offence), 109 (attempt to murder), 308 (extortion), 310(2) (robbery) and 3(5) (joint criminal liability) of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita.

Another FIR was registered under the Uttar Pradesh

Prevention of Cow Slaughter Act on the complaint of Vijay Bajrangji against unidentified people. In his complaint, Bajrangji said that he received a tip-off and followed a vehicle near Alhadadpur village. He alleged that the vehicle driver tried to run him over when he tried to stop the vehicle. In his complaint, Bajrangji said that he saw seven decapitated cows inside the vehicle and that the four men said they were smuggling cow meat by paying a bribe of Rs 3 lakh to the police. The four injured men, who are receiving treatment at the Jawaharlal Nehru Medical College Hospital, Aligarh, are out of danger now, SHO Kumar added.

Family of 4 receives critical burn injuries in early morning fire in Pune's Mohammadwadi; probe underway

GNS News Agency, June 3

Four members of a family, including two children, sustained critical burn injuries in a fire that started in their house in the Mohammadwadi area of Pune in the early hours of Wednesday. A probe has been launched into the exact cause of the accident, according to the Pune police.

The fire took place around 4.30 am in a flat on the second floor of a building in Sai Colony in Wadkar Mala area of Mohammadwadi. The injured have been identified as Tekchansingh Chauhan, 48, his wife Bebi, 42, daughter Kashish, 19, and son Nilesh, 15. All are currently being treated at Sassoon General Hospital for their serious burn injuries. Mansingh Patil, Inspector, Kalepadal Police Station, said, "The husband and wife have sustained very severe injuries, with 70 to 80 per cent burns. The two children have sustained close to 40 per cent burns. A probe has been launched into the incident."

A Pune fire brigade officer said a fire tender from the Kale Borate Nagar Fire Station was dispatched immediately after they received information of the blaze in a house on the second floor of a building in Mohammadwadi. "Upon reaching the scene, the firefighters saw that a part of a house on the second floor of a two-storey building was on fire. The fire was brought under control within a few minutes. A man, a woman, and two children from the family had suffered burns," the fire brigade officer said.

Victim knew attackers, says FIR registered after pickup van driver's murder in Karnataka's Dakshina Kannada



GNS News Agency, June 3

KarnatakaThe victim, Abdul Rahiman, 32, a resident of Kolthamajalu in Bantwal taluk, was murdered while unloading sand near a customer's house, according to the First Information Report (FIR) registered by Bantwal Rural police. A day after prohibitory orders were imposed in Karnataka's Dakshina Kannada district following the murder of a pickup van driver in what is suspected to be a communal incident, the police investigation has revealed that the killers were known to the victim. On Tuesday, Abdul Rahiman, 32, a resident of Kolthamajalu in Bantwal taluk, was murdered while unloading sand near a customer's house, according to the First Information Report (FIR) registered by Bantwal Rural police. His friend and co-worker Kalandar Shafi, 29, who was severely injured in the attack, is currently under treatment at the Intensive Care Unit (ICU) of a hospital. According to Shafi, the accused were known to them. Rahiman was the secretary of Jama Masjid in Kolthamajalu village and the accused murdered him for communal or other reasons, as per the FIR which has named Deepak, Sumith and 13 others - who are reportedly known to Rahiman and Shafi - as accused. A police officer associated with the probe said the Mangaluru City Crime Branch has been roped in to trace the accused and at least five teams have been formed for the same. Yatis N, Superintendent of Police, Dakshina Kannada, said the victims were attacked around 3 pm- 3.30 pm while they were dump-

ing sand. "We are yet to ascertain the reason behind the killing. Teams have been formed to nab the accused," he added.

The complaint filed by Mohammad Nisar, another driver, said that his friend Mustafa informed him that Rahiman and Shafi were being assaulted. "When they were unloading sand outside the residence of one Rajiv in Kuriyala village, about 15 people carrying machetes and rods attacked Rahiman as he sat in the driver's seat," Nisar stated in the complaint. He added that the attackers dragged Rahiman out of the vehicle and stabbed him multiple times. When Shafi tried to intervene, he was also attacked. The accused fled when local residents started to shout for help, the FIR added. Mohammad Azmal, a relative of Rahiman, said the government had earlier said that it would form anti-communal squads but such killings have not stopped. "Rahiman was a poor man with two kids, aged 2 and 3. These murders are happening for political reasons and I would request the government to take stern action against the accused," Azmal said. Rahiman's funeral procession on Wednesday was attended by thousands. Shutters were downed and activities halted in BC Road and nearby areas.

Following the murder, the district administration imposed prohibitory orders in Bantwal, Belthangady, Puttur, Kadaba, and Sullia taluks, under section 163 of the Bharatiya Nagrik Suraksha Sanhita, from 6 pm on May 27 (Tuesday) till 6 pm on May 30 (Friday). The case was registered under sections 103 (murder), 109 (attempt to murder), 118(1) (voluntarily causing hurt), 118 (2) (voluntarily causing grievous hurt), 190 (unlawful assembly), 191(1) (force or violence is used by an unlawful assembly), 191(2) (rioting) and 191 (3) (rioting by using deadly weapons) of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS). The incident comes nearly a month after Hindutva activist Suhas Shetty was murdered in Mangaluru on May 1. Eleven people were arrested in connection with the murder. Shetty had five cases against him - four in Mangaluru city and one in Dakshina Kannada district. He was the prime accused in the murder of Mohammed Fazil, 23, in Surathkal on July 28, 2022. Naushad alias Chotte Naushad, one of the accused in Suhas Shetty's murder, was attacked with stones in Mangaluru Central Prison on May 19. He was then transferred to Mysuru jail.

40-year-old Covid patient from UP dies in Chandigarh hospital

GNS News Agency, June 3

covid-19 bengalAt present, the authorities have not released any information on the Covid variant that affected the Firozabad resident or whether he had any comorbidities. A 40-year-old patient from Firozabad, Uttar Pradesh, who was referred to the Government Medical College and Hospital in Chandigarh's Sector 32 from Ludhiana after he tested positive for Covid-19, died early on Wednesday. This is the first reported case of Covid-19 in Chandigarh amid the latest surge of the infection, even as one case was recently reported in Mohali.

At present, the authorities have not released any information on the Covid variant that affected the Firozabad resident or whether he had any comorbidities. He was in isolation in the hospital's Covid-19 ward.

Earlier this week, Dr P V M Lakshmi, professor at the School of Public Health at the Postgraduate Institute of Medical Education and Research (PGIMER) in Chandigarh, had stated that the recent rise in infections in various states does not indicate a completely new variant, adding that mutations are a normal process. This virus is from the JN.1 lineage, as per the doctor, and it is difficult to say how severe it is at this stage. Dr Lakshmi advised that vulnerable groups like young children, the elderly, and immunocompromised individuals must be cautious. People experiencing symptoms like difficulty in breathing, persistent cough, cold with fever, or high fever lasting more than four to five days should seek immediate medical attention. Precautions can also be taken, like washing hands and wearing a mask in crowded places. The Delhi Government had recently issued an advisory stating that hospitals should



ensure preparedness in case Covid-19 cases increase. This includes checking the availability of beds, oxygen, and essential medicines. Those who test positive should isolate themselves from high-risk groups until symptoms are completely resolved. They must also monitor their health - if the fever doesn't come down or breathing becomes difficult, they should visit a hospital immediately.

Currently, mass testing for Covid-19 is not being carried out, but experts say there is no need to panic. The administration of the Government Medical College and Hospital in Chandigarh inspected isolation wards and ensured preparedness on Tuesday. The administration of the Government Multi-Specialty Hospital in Sector 16 stated that all necessary supplies are already in stock. Dr Suman Singh, director, Health Services, confirmed that all essential resources are available. "There is no need to panic. We are closely monitoring the situation and will plan further action if needed," she added.

17 years and Rs 33 lakh spent, but man still waits for shop in Rohini mall; court orders FIR against Parsvnath Developers



GNS News Agency, June 3

The court was hearing a revision petition filed by a complainant, Amrit Pal Singh Malhotra, who was represented by advocate Prateek Som, against a 2024 magistrate court order that had refused to file an FIR against the developers. The court was hearing a revision petition filed

by a complainant, Amrit Pal Singh Malhotra, who was represented by advocate Prateek Som, against a 2024 magistrate court order that had refused to file an FIR against the developers. (File) A Delhi court Saturday directed the registration of an FIR against Parsvnath Developers for a 17-year delay in the construction of a shop in a mall in Sector 10, Rohini, for which the customer had allegedly paid Rs 33.5 lakh. This is the eighth FIR to be lodged against the company and its directors for allegedly duping various people who paid for houses and commercial spaces. "In all the above-mentioned FIRs, the allegations are more or less similar against the accused persons that they received handsome amount from the investors on the pretext of providing them flat/shop etc. but they never completed their part of liability resulting in FIR against them. Therefore, it can be safely said that accused persons are adopting the same modus operandi with their investors for the purpose of inducing them to invest in their projects," said Additional Sessions Judge Dharendra Rana of Rohini Court in his order dated May 24.

IndiGo appoints Vikram Singh Mehta as new Chairman

New Delhi: IndiGo, the country's largest airline, on Wednesday announced the appointment of Vikram Singh Mehta as the new Chairman, succeeding Venkataramani Sumantran. Mehta has been a Member of the Board of InterGlobe Aviation Ltd (IndiGo) since May 2022. In a release, IndiGo said Mehta succeeds Sumantran, who stepped down from the post after the completion of his five-year term as a board member. Sumantran was appointed as the Chairman in May 2022 and, post-COVID, navigated the Board during IndiGo's strong recovery and incredible growth over the past three years, the release said. Mehta, who was an Indian Administrative Services (IAS) officer, has served as Chairman of the Shell Group of Companies in India and as

CEO of Shell Markets and Shell Chemicals, Egypt, among other roles. He has also served on the boards of various companies. A Mathematics graduate from St Stephen's College, Delhi University, Mehta also holds master's degrees in Politics and Economics from Oxford University and in Energy Economics from Tufts University. Apart from Mehta, there are six members on the company's board, including co-founder Rahul Bhatia, as per information available on the IndiGo website. Meanwhile, on Tuesday, IndiGo promoter and co-founder Rakesh Gangwal and his family trust reduced their holdings by divesting a 5.72 per cent stake in the airline for Rs 11,564 crore through open market transactions.

Israeli forces fire on crowd gathered at Gaza aid site; one killed, 48 injured



GNS News Agency, June 3

The Gaza Health Ministry said Wednesday (May 28, 2025) that one person was killed and another 48 wounded when Israeli forces opened fire on crowds overrunning a new aid distribution site in Gaza. The melee happened on Tuesday (May 27, 2025) at a new site established by an Israeli and US-backed foundation. A U.N. official had said earlier that 47 people were wounded, mostly by gunfire. Ajith Sunghay, the head of UN Human Rights Office in the Palestinian territories told reporters in Geneva: "There are about 47 people who have been injured", adding that "most of those injured are due to gunshots", and that "it was shooting from the IDF". On Tuesday (May 27, 2025), crowds of Palestinians broke through fences and an Associated Press journalist heard Israeli tank and gunfire and saw a military helicopter firing flares. The distribution hub outside Gaza's southernmost city of Rafah was opened the day before by the Gaza Humanitarian Foundation (GHF), which has been slated by Israel to take over aid operations. The U.N. and

other humanitarian organizations have rejected the new system, saying it won't be able to meet the needs of Gaza's 2.3 million people and allows Israel to use food as a weapon to control the population. They have also warned of the risk of friction between Israeli troops and people seeking supplies. Palestinians have become desperate for food after nearly three months of Israeli border closures pushed Gaza to the brink of famine. Israel says it helped establish the new aid mechanism to prevent Hamas from siphoning off supplies, but it has provided no evidence of systematic diversion and U.N. agencies say they have mechanisms in place to prevent it. GHF says it has established four hubs, two of which have begun operating. They are guarded by private security contractors and have chain-link fences channeling Palestinians into a what resemble military bases surrounded by large sand berms. GHF said its military contractors had not fired on the crowd but "fell back" before resuming operations. Israeli forces are stationed nearby in what Israel refers to as the Morag corridor, a military zone separating the southern city of Rafah — which is now mostly uninhabited — from the rest of the territory. The U.N. and other humanitarian groups have refused to participate in GHF's system, saying it violates humanitarian principles. They say it can be used by Israel to forcibly displace the population by requiring them to move near the few distribution hubs or else face starvation, a violation of international law. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said Tuesday (May 27, 2025) that "there was some loss of control momentarily" at the distribution point, adding that "happily, we brought it under control." He repeated that Israel plans to move Gaza's entire population to a "sterile zone" at the southern end of the territory while troops fight Hamas elsewhere.

Ukraine's Zelenskiy lands in Berlin for talks with Merz on ending the war

BERLIN, GNS News Agency, June 3 Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskiy landed in Berlin on Wednesday for talks with German Chancellor Friedrich Merz, his office said, part of a diplomatic drive to end the war in Ukraine, Europe's deadliest since World War Two. Merz will receive Zelenskiy with military honours at the federal chancellery at noon (1000 GMT) for a visit focused on German support for Ukraine as well as efforts to achieve a ceasefire, a government spokesperson said in a statement. The Reuters Tariff Watch newsletter is your daily guide to the latest global trade and tariff news. Sign up here. Ukrainian and Russian officials met this month for their first face-to-face negotiations since Russia's full-scale invasion of its former Soviet neighbour in 2022, under pressure from U.S. President Donald Trump to end the war.



The talks failed however to produce a ceasefire agreement and Russia unleashed three nights of massive aerial attacks on Ukraine over the weekend. Russia has gathered 50,000 troops near Ukraine's northern Sumy region, Zelenskiy told reporters. With Trump signalling wavering support for Ukraine in recent months, Germany could play an increasingly important role as Ukraine's biggest military and financial backer after the United States. Merz, a conservative who took office this month, has vowed to take more of a leadership role in ensuring support for Ukraine than his Social Democrat predecessor Olaf Scholz. He visited Ukraine with other European leaders within days of becoming chancellor and on Monday endorsed Ukraine's right to launch long-range missile strikes into Russian territory - in contrast with Scholz's cautious rhetoric on the issue.

Zelenskiy said on Tuesday he was grateful to Merz for coming to Kyiv but there were "things that we could not discuss because we did not have a long one-on-one. And we agreed that the time will come when I will come to Berlin and we will talk about it." Washington and Kyiv are waiting

for Russia's draft of a memorandum on a peace accord and Merz has dampened hopes for a quick resolution to the war. "Putin and Russia clearly have at the moment no interest in a ceasefire, or a peace deal," he said on Tuesday. "This means, as a consequence, that Ukraine must continue to defend itself — and that we must actually intensify our efforts to enable Ukraine to do so." Germany is not expected, however, to announce new weapons deliveries to Ukraine given that the new government has said it would no longer publicly detail what arms it is sending Ukraine, preferring a stance of "strategic ambiguity."

Russia has accused Ukraine significantly increasing drone and missile attacks on Russian territory over the past week using Western-supplied munitions. Additional reporting by Ludwig Burger in Berlin and Max Hunder and Anna Pruchnicka in Kyiv; Editing by Tom Hogue, Lincoln Feast and Ros Russell. Our Standards: The Thomson Reuters Trust Principles., opens new tab Chief correspondent covering political and general news in Germany with experience in Argentina and in Cuba leading Reuters' broader Caribbean coverage.

US and Russia clash in public as the Ukraine war heats up



MOSCOW/KYIV, GNS News Agency, June 3 The United States and Russia quarrelled in public on Wednesday over the intensifying Ukraine war after U.S. President Donald Trump warned that President Vladimir Putin was "playing with fire" and Moscow massed 50,000 troops near a Ukrainian region. While world leaders bicker over the prospects for peace, the deadliest conflict in Europe since World War Two is heating up fast: swarms of drones are being launched by both sides while Russia is advancing at key points along the front.

The Reuters Tariff Watch newsletter is your daily guide to the latest global trade and tariff news. Sign up here. Trump, in a post on Truth Social, said that Putin was playing with fire and cautioned that "REALLY BAD" things would have happened already to Russia if it was not for Trump himself.

"What Vladimir Putin doesn't realize is that if it weren't for me, lots of really bad things would have already happened in Russia, and I mean REALLY BAD. He's playing with fire," Trump said in a Truth Social post on Tuesday. Top Russian security official Dmitry Medvedev, a former president, dismissed Trump's criticism.

"Regarding Trump's words about Putin 'playing with fire' and 'really bad things' happening to Russia. I only know of one REALLY BAD thing — WWII. I hope Trump understands this!" Medvedev wrote in English on the social media platform X. Trump's envoy, Keith Kellogg, on Wednesday quoted Medvedev's post and said it was reckless. "Stoking fears of WW III is an unfortunate, reckless comment... and unfitting of a world power," Kellogg said on X. After speaking to Trump on May 19 for more than two hours, Putin said that he had agreed to work with Ukraine on a memorandum which would set out the contours of a

peace accord including the timing of a ceasefire. Kellogg said that Washington awaited Russia's draft of a memorandum on a peace accord. Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov said the next round of talks with Ukraine would be announced soon. Putin ordered tens of thousands of troops into Ukraine in February 2022 after eight years of fighting in eastern Ukraine between Russian-backed separatists and Ukrainian troops. Russia currently controls just under one fifth of Ukraine. Though Russian advances have accelerated over the past year, the war is costing both Russia and Ukraine dearly in terms of casualties and military spending. Russia said it had downed 296 Ukrainian drones over 13 regions overnight while Ukraine said Russia had launched 88 drones and five ballistic missiles. After Russia ejected Ukrainian forces from the western Kursk region, Moscow's forces have pushed over the border into neighbouring Sumy region of northeastern Ukraine and taken several villages there. Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskiy said that Russia has gathered 50,000 troops near the northern Sumy region, but added that Kyiv had taken steps to prevent Moscow from conducting a large-scale offensive there. Putin has repeatedly said he wants a "buffer zone" along Russia's border with Ukraine. Russian Defence Minister Andrei Belousov said that the U.S.-led NATO military alliance was using the Ukrainian crisis to build up its presence across eastern Europe and the Baltic but that Russia was advancing along the entire front in Ukraine.

Revenue inspector caught red-handed taking Rs 25,000 bribe for issuing family certificate

Hyderabad: The Anti Corruption Bureau sleuths on Wednesday caught a revenue inspector working at the Tahsildar Musheerabad mandal office when he demanded a bribe of Rs. 1 lakh and accepted Rs. 25,000. The revenue inspector, Bhoopala Mahesh, had demanded a bribe of Rs 1 lakh and later settled for Rs. 25,000 for showing official favour "for issuing family members certificate to the complainant."

JD(U) MP Sanjay Jha bonds with 'Korean Bihari' in viral cultural exchange



GNS News Agency, June 3

Seoul: In a warm and unexpected cultural exchange, Janata Dal (United) MP Sanjay Kumar Jha, who is currently leading an all-party Indian parliamentary delegation to South Korea, met with popular YouTuber Yecheon C. Lee, affectionately known as 'Korean Bihari', in Seoul. The meeting was both light-hearted and meaningful, showcasing a unique connection between Bihar and Korea. Taking to the social media platform X, Sanjay Jha wrote: "This meeting was something different and special! It was a pleasure to meet YouTuber Yecheon C. Lee aka Charlie in Seoul (South Korea), who is also known as 'Korean Bihari' for his typical Bihari style."

Charlie, who spent his early childhood in Patna, Bihar, and grew up immersed in Bihari culture, has gained Internet

fame for speaking fluent Bhojpuri and Maithili and representing Bihar's culture with authenticity and affection. In a video shared by Jha, the two are seen exchanging greetings in Maithili, a regional language of Bihar, highlighting the deep-rooted cultural ties that transcend borders. "I came to Korea for the first time, and it feels really nice," said Jha during their interaction. Charlie, visibly moved, responded, "Whatever I have achieved is because of Bihar. Despite being from Korea, the way I speak Bihari languages and represent the state is why I feel honoured to be recognised by MP Jha." Jha also took the opportunity to highlight the broader purpose of the parliamentary delegation's visit. "The aim of this multi-party delegation is to showcase India's clear stand against terrorism and expose Pakistan-backed cross-border terrorism," he explained during the conversation.

The meeting has since gone viral on Indian social media platforms, with many users praising the warm exchange as a perfect blend of cultural diplomacy and patriotism. At the end of their meeting, Jha praised Charlie's continued efforts to preserve and promote Indian culture abroad, particularly Bihar's linguistic and social traditions. An all-party parliamentary delegation from India, led by Janata Dal (United) MP Sanjay Kumar Jha, also met with Indian Ambassador to South Korea Amit Kumar earlier on Sunday to outline a Korea-specific strategy for future diplomatic engagements. The delegation emphasised India's firm stance of zero tolerance against terrorism, with particular reference to Operation Sindoor and the April 22 Pahalgam terror attack.

New satellite images show 3-metre wide crater at Pakistan's Murid air base

GNS News Agency, June 3

New Delhi: Pakistan's Murid air base suffered extensive damages, in May 10 strikes by the Indian Air Force (IAF), destroying not just its buildings and concrete structures but also damaged the underground facility at the vital air station, fresh satellite images revealed on Wednesday. The high-resolution satellite images shared by the Intel Lab on X, shows a three-metre wide crater, just 30 metres from one of the two entrances at the strategic air base. The damages to buildings and rooftops of structures at the Murid air base, a hub of Pakistani drone and missiles, have already been documented in the satellite imageries, earlier.

The fresh satellite images have been shared on X by the defense analyst Damien Symon. He has been instrumental in digging out details of destruction at Pakistan's crucial airbases — from structural to underground complex damages. "This complex is heavily protected with double fencing, has its own watchtowers and access control, thus making it a high-value target. This site might have been made to withstand any bombardment and might have served as storage for special equipments or as shelter for personnel," said Damien Symon, geo-intelligence researcher at the Intel Lab.

The Murid air base is a forward operating base of Pakistan, located just 150 kilometres from the Line of Control. It is situated in Pakistan's Chakwal, supporting the Sargodha



air base and the Nur Khan air base in Rawalpindi, both serving as forward locations for Pakistan's air force. The damages to underground complex at Murid airbase also gets ascertained from the previous and after satellite images, of May 10 military strikes. In April 16 image, satellite imagery showed undamaged building at Murid air base, however, the post-strikes image structural damages to the building. "Structural damage is evident at this facility, believed to serve as a command-and-control node near the UAV complex of the airbase. A portion of the roof has collapsed inward, and the outer walls also exhibit visible deterioration," Damien Symon said, a day ago, sharing the pictures of damages.

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

GNS News Agency, June 3

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.

Five-year forecast sees more killer heat, fires, temperature records

GNS News Agency, June 3

Get ready for several years of even more record-breaking heat that pushes Earth to the more deadly, fiery, and uncomfortable extremes, two of the world's top weather agencies forecast. There's an 80% chance the world will break another annual temperature record in the next five years, and it's even more probable that the world will again exceed the international temperature threshold set 10 years ago, according to a five-year forecast released on Wednesday (May 28, 2025) by the World Meteorological Organisation and the U.K. Meteorological Office. "Higher global mean temperatures may sound abstract, but it translates in real life to a higher chance of extreme weather: stronger hurricanes, stronger precipitation, droughts," said Cornell University climate scientist Natalie Mahowald, who wasn't part of the calculations but said they made sense. "So higher global mean temperatures translate to more lives lost". With every tenth of a degree the world warms from human-caused climate change, "we will experience higher frequency and more extreme events (particularly heat waves but also droughts, floods, fires, and human-reinforced hurricanes/typhoons)," emailed Johan Rockstrom, director of the Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research in Germany. He was not part of the research. "And for the first time there's a chance, albeit slight, that before the end of the decade, the world's annual temperature will shoot past the Paris climate accord goal of limiting warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius (2.7 degrees Fahrenheit) and hit a more alarm-

ing two degrees Celsius (3.6 degrees Fahrenheit) of heating since the mid-1800s," the two agencies said. "There's an 86% chance that one of the next five years will pass 1.5 degrees and a 70% chance that the five years as a whole will average more than that global milestone," they figured. The projections come from more than 200 forecasts using computer simulations run by 10 global centres of scientists. Ten years ago, the same teams figured there was a similar remote chance — about 1% — that one of the upcoming years would exceed that critical 1.5 degree threshold, and then it happened last year. This year, a 2-degree Celsius above pre-industrial year enters the equation in a similar manner, something U.K. Met Office longer term predictions chief Adam Scafe and science scientist Leon Hermanson called "shocking". "It's not something anyone wants to see, but that's what the science is telling us," Mr. Hermanson said. Two degrees of warming is the secondary threshold, the one considered less likely to break, set by the 2015 Paris agreement. Technically, even though 2024 was 1.5 degrees Celsius warmer than pre-industrial times, the Paris climate agreement's threshold is for a 20-year time period, so it has not been exceeded. Factoring in the past 10 years and forecasting the next 10 years, the world is now probably about 1.4 degrees Celsius (2.5 degrees Fahrenheit) hotter since the mid 1800s, World Meteorological Organisation climate services director Chris Hewitt estimated. "With the next five years forecast to be more than 1.5 degrees warmer than preindustrial levels on average.

Beyond fairness: marking International Skin Pigmentation Day with awareness and acceptance



For 32-year-old Ananya (name changed), a content strategist from Bengaluru, dark patches began appearing around her temples and neck nearly four years ago. "At first, I thought it was just tanning. But over time, the patches deepened, especially around the folds of my skin. No matter what cream I used, nothing helped—and worse, people started asking if I had a disease or wasn't taking care of myself," she says. It took years of misinformation, home remedies, and even steroid-containing creams before she finally received a diagnosis: Lichen Planus Pigmentosus (LPP)—a chronic pigmentary disorder that disproportionately affects individuals with darker skin tones. "The hardest part wasn't the condition—it was the way people looked at me. I became self-conscious, even anxious in social situations. I didn't know this was a recognised medical issue. I thought it was just me," Ananya shares.

Stories like hers underscore the urgent need for public awareness—especially around lesser-known conditions like LPP. That's why International Skin Pigmentation Day, observed globally every May 25, matters. This annual observance is not only about educating the public on pigmentation disorders such as melasma, LPP, and post-inflammatory hyperpigmentation; it also aims to challenge long-standing biases, foster inclusivity, and celebrate the diversity of skin tones worldwide.

"In Indian skin types, while melasma and post-inflammatory hyperpigmentation are common, we also see conditions like Lichen Planus Pigmentosus, pigmentary demarcation lines, lentigines, and photopigmentation," explains Rashmi Sarkar, director professor of dermatology at Lady Hardinge Medical College, founder of the Pigmentary Disorders Society India, and International director of the ILDS for South Asia, Middle East & Africa (2023–27). LPP, in particular, is a chronic condition characterised by dark, slate-gray patches that often affect the face, neck, and flexural areas. "It's often mistaken for dirt, neglect, or poor hygiene," says Dr. Sarkar. "This adds an extra layer of stigma for patients, especially women. And because LPP is persistent and slow to respond to treatment, it can be emotionally distressing."

Indian skin presents unique challenges in the context of hyperpigmentation. With naturally higher melanin levels, skin of colour is more reactive to inflammation, sun exposure, and mechanical stress. Dr. Sarkar emphasises the importance of tailored dermatological care: "What works for lighter skin may not work—or may even harm—darker skin. Treatments must start gently, focusing on sun protection, anti-inflammatory agents, and appropriate pigment inhibitors."

According to Dr. Sarkar, growing interest in skincare is a double-edged sword. "People are more proactive now, especially in urban areas," she says. "But this also means

a flood of misinformation—people blindly adopting global skincare trends that don't account for Indian skin biology." To address this, she founded the Pigmentary Disorders Society, India's first organisation focused exclusively on pigmentary diseases. "We need structured research, education, and community awareness—not just quick-fix beauty trends," she explains. In a culture where fairness has historically equated to beauty and privilege, unlearning internalised colourism remains a challenge. While media and celebrities have helped start the conversation, Dr. Sarkar believes dermatologists must be at the forefront. "For people with conditions like LPP or melasma, the worst thing they can do is use unsupervised skin-lightening agents or harsh peels. Many of these products contain banned substances like mercury or potent steroids, which can lead to long-term damage," she warns. "Hydroquinone, while effective, should only be used under strict medical supervision. DIY remedies like lemon juice or essential oils can make pigmentation worse." Instead, she advises focusing on broad-spectrum sunscreen, avoiding excessive friction or heat, and using products specifically designed for sensitive, pigmented skin. "It's about skin health, not skin tone," she reiterates. The International League of Dermatological Societies (ILDS), an umbrella organisation of dermatologic societies worldwide, plays a critical role in raising awareness and advocating for safe skin health practices. Under the leadership of its president, professor Henry W. Lim, the ILDS actively educates against unsafe skin-lightening behaviors, including the misuse of topical steroids, fairness creams, and harmful bleaching agents, as part of its broader advocacy mission. In her role with the ILDS, Dr. Sarkar addresses the global implications of skin tone bias, emphasising that across regions like South Asia, Africa, and Latin America, skin bleaching has become a public health crisis with consequences ranging from severe skin damage to kidney failure and even cancer. Dr. Sarkar has helped champion global resolutions to regulate harmful products and shift beauty narratives. "We must stop viewing dark skin as a flaw. That mindset is dangerous—and deeply unfair," she says.

To lead meaningful change in this space, Dr. Sarkar emphasises the need for a multipronged approach in India. This includes strengthening dermatological training with a focus on skin of colour, launching public health campaigns that are firmly rooted in scientific evidence, and implementing stricter regulations against harmful and misleading cosmetic products. She underscores that treatment for pigmentary disorders—whether melasma, LPP, or post-inflammatory hyperpigmentation—must be evidence-based, gradual, and guided by qualified dermatologists. Foundational care should begin with the consistent use of broad-spectrum sunscreen, complemented by anti-inflammatory agents to reduce irritation and flare-ups. Pigment-lightening ingredients such as azelaic acid, kojic acid, and tranexamic acid may be used judiciously under supervision. Above all, managing pigmentation requires patience, consistency, and a compassionate approach that prioritises skin health over cosmetic perfection. "These are chronic conditions. Improvement takes time—but it's possible," Dr. Sarkar says. "And there should never be shame in seeking help or embracing your natural skin." International Skin Pigmentation Day is not just a day for medical education—it is a cultural reckoning. In a country where skin tone still influences confidence, social value, and opportunity, this day reminds us to unlearn toxic beauty standards and replace them with science, empathy, and respect.

All you need to know about: treating addiction

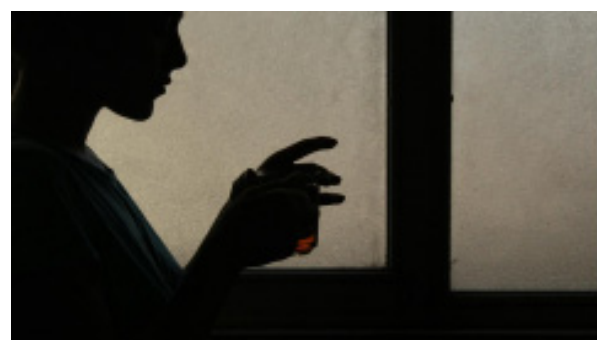
The roots of addiction medicine began in the ancient civilisations of Africa and Europe. Special methods to care for persons addicted to alcohol were developed in ancient Egypt. There are references to individuals considering chronic intoxication as a sickness that enslaved the body and soul dating back to the fifth century BC. Native American healers used botanical agents (hop tea) to suppress cravings for alcohol, and the root of the trumpet vine to induce aversion to alcohol. In 1774, Anthony Benezet published the book 'Mighty Destroyer Displayed', where he observed that intoxication had a tendency to self-accelerate: "Drops beget drams, and drams beget more drams, till they become to be without weight or measure."

We have come a long way since. Modern treatments encompass a bio-psycho-social approach that integrates neuropharmacology, psychotherapy, and social interventions. Addiction is multidimensional and disrupts many aspects of an individual's life. A similarly multimodal approach is needed to treat it. Pharmacotherapy helps the individual remain abstinent and thus functional in the family, at work, and in society. Among people who are unable to quit a drug after repeated treatment failures, the treatment goal changes to reducing the frequency of substance use and the severity of relapse. Combined treatments with pharmacotherapy and psychotherapy can lead to better treatment retention and outcomes.

Intoxication results from being under the acute influence of a drug. It typically produces pleasurable feelings, altered emotional responsiveness, altered perception, and impaired judgement. Intoxication states can range from euphoria or sedation to life-threatening emergencies when overdose occurs. The initial challenge to the clinician is diagnosis, as intoxication can mimic other psychiatric conditions. The assessment involves a thorough patient history, physical and mental state examination, and laboratory screening. The first priority is general supportive care and resuscitative action to ward potential life-threatening complications off. The assessment also involves ascertaining the severity of the substance ingestion, a patient's level of consciousness, substances involved, and co-occurring disorders.

Standardised questionnaires are available for use by the clinician and the patient. However, acute intoxication may impede an individual's ability to provide information, so that can also be obtained from the patient's family. Toxicology screens provide information regarding the types of substances used. Urine is the most widely used specimen because of the ease of obtaining a sample, the relatively high concentrations of drugs and metabolites present in urine, and the stability of the metabolites when frozen. Testing for alcohol is done via breathalyser, blood alcohol levels, and urine tests. Laboratory assays that measure increase in liver enzymes—such as gamma-glutamyl transferase, aspartate aminotransferase, alanine aminotransferase, and carbohydrate-deficient transferrin—indicate possibly heavy use. Serum-based phosphatidyl ethanol detects the presence of even a few days of heavy alcohol consumption for up to three weeks after use.

Withdrawal management is an entry-point into treatment and by itself does little to change long-term drug abuse



This comprises the attenuation of the physiological and psychological features of withdrawal syndromes. Hospitalisation becomes relevant in the context of acute intoxication, severe or complicated withdrawal, co-occurring conditions that complicate management, failure of treatment engagement, and life-threatening complications. Patients with addiction exhibit varied clinical presentations, from acute and subacute to chronic manifestations. The treatment response is contingent on the substance used, the presence or absence of a compromised cardiopulmonary system, and the underlying health status of the patient. Under the care of a psychiatrist, addicted individuals are systematically withdrawn from drugs in an inpatient or outpatient setting. Withdrawal management is intended to reduce or eliminate the medical consequences of withdrawal, the pain of withdrawal, and cravings. Many risks are associated with substance use withdrawal. For example, in persons with severe alcohol dependence, an abrupt, untreated cessation of drinking may result in marked hyper-autonomic signs, seizures, withdrawal delirium, or even death. Medications are available for tapering from alcohol, nicotine, opioids, benzodiazepines, barbiturates, and other sedatives. Withdrawal management alone does not address the associated psychological, social, and/or behavioural problems. It is conceived as early treatment engagement—preceding a full continuum of services. Neuropharmacological management

Recognising intoxication and withdrawal states is critical to appropriately manage individuals with addiction. Psychiatrists are able to recognise the unique intoxication and withdrawal states of particular substances, and treat patients who are under the influence of or are experiencing withdrawal from substances. The treatment involves an appreciation of the natural history of the disorder and a complete assessment of the patient's psychiatric status. There are two general strategies for pharmacological management: suppressing withdrawal via a cross-tolerant medication and reducing the signs and symptoms of withdrawal by altering another neuropharmacological process. A longer-acting medication is typically used to provide a milder, controlled withdrawal. Examples include the use of methadone for opioid detoxification and chlordiazepoxide for alcohol detoxification. Detoxification alone doesn't constitute the full-spectrum of management—but in most general hospital settings, patients are discharged after the detoxification process without longer-term anti-craving management.

Lights, Camera, Kathipara: Chennai's vanishing role in Tamil cinema



In Super Deluxe, Thiagarajan Kumararaja walks us through narrow lanes of a city, with dry walls guarding frames tinged with saturated hues. As it is, there's nothing flashy that indicates it's Chennai (the film was set and shot in the city), but the filmmaker held a fascinatingly hyperreal lens on Chennai, showing an urban landscape you are most familiar with, but in a world only imagined. Cities have distinct energies, a sense of controlled chaos that only cinema comes close to simulating. How Chennai has evolved on celluloid is a storied exploration with some compelling patterns.

In the 1970s, Chennai was regularly featured in anti-urban narratives that portrayed cities as pockets of debauchery, a foreign land that preys upon the ignorant newcomer. Before K Balachandran critiqued the regressive norms of rural India, he made Pattina Pravesam in 1977, in which a family from the village endured extreme hardships in Chennai, forcing them to return. Though setting a serial killer story like Sigappu Rojakkal in the city points to a similar mindset from Bharathiraja, his Nizhalgal spoke about youths moving to Chennai to fulfil their lofty dreams. Kamal Haasan's Mahanadhi (1994) also hinted that perhaps the family wouldn't have faced such unspeakable miseries had they stayed back in their village. Even comedian Vivek, who has sung praises of the city, showed this perspective in 2002's Run, where his character gets creatively swindled of all his belongings upon landing in Chennai.

The early 2000s were an interesting period in how films continued balancing these perceptions with fresher takes. Where Alaipayuthy, Enakku 20 Unaku 18, Priyamaana Thozhi, Minnale, and 7G Rainbow Colony embraced the modern urban life, Chennai became the capital of crime in films like Thirupaachi and Dhool. Similar was the case with Saran's Amarkalam and Gemini, set in North Madras, but we will come to that in a bit. The 2000s were also when more non-native residents of Chennai started to reap the benefits of the IT boom, and films began reflecting this. Autograph wasn't set in Chennai, but it spoke of a man who found prosperity in the city, looking back at his roots. Ram's Kattradhu Thamizh is arguably the loudest critique of gentrification, Western lifestyle, and the anglicisation from Silicon Valley.

Kattradhu Thamizh is also a rare exception at this point, as one could notice that while Chennai factors in the backdrop of the above films, it seldom becomes a character by itself. In Ram's film, Chennai turned the protagonist into a sociopath. The city was intrinsic in how Venkat Prabhu captured the frenzy of street cricket, the carefree lives of youngsters, and how they dealt with new-age problems in Chennai 600028. That film, along with 7G Rainbow Colony—and later, Madras, Idharkuthane Aasapattal Balakumara, Kodyil Oruvan and Maaveeran—were also films that depicted lives within housing boards and colonies. Going back to the 2000s, films weren't just painting Chennai as a city of hope; in Angadi Theru, Vasanthabalan, a staunch critic of urban life, made a persuasive case by showing the heart-wrenching ordeals that happen behind the curtains of an activity most Chennaites must relate to—shopping in T Nagar.

Angadi Theru also pointed towards the rise of an almost neo-realistic, hyperlocal approach to filmmaking in the 2010s—ushered by the likes of Thiagarajan Kumararaja, Vetri Maaran and Pa Ranjith—where the city isn't just a concrete shelter for the protagonists, but a thriving socio-political organism that houses millions. You cannot take Chennai out of Aaranya Kaandam, Madras, Metro, Vada Chennai, or Maanagaram. Most of these films, especially those of Vetri Maaran, indeed fell in line with themes that stereotyped North Madras as a land of crime—a stigma many residents know to have real-life effects. But a silver lining did emerge. These stories weren't interested in single-mindedly exposing the darkness of the underworld; they had characters, black, grey, and white, somehow interacting with the crime lords and local politicians due to circumstances or socio-economic factors. This is why you wouldn't mind climbing a water tank with Anbu from Vada Chennai rather than hanging out with Kokki Kumar in Pudhupetta. Further, the likes of Oram Po, Kaakka Muttai, Sarpatta Parambarai, and Iruddhi Sutru managed to break the stereotype surrounding Chennai north of the Cooum—an ever-fascinating region rich in history, culture and art. But before we get to the current state of affairs, there's another angle to look at Chennai's representation in films—in how the city was best shown in songs rather than scenes.

The Marina breeze not only carries the scent of fish fries, filter coffee, Cooum, sambar vadai and the sound of an autorickshaw kick-starting. Chennai is a never-ending open concert enlivened by the likes of TM Soundarajan, MS Viswanathan, Ilaiyaraaja, AR Rahman, Yuwan Shankar Raja, Anirudh Ravichander and Sean Roldan, who rule the radios of bustling tea shops and the quiet concerts that happen within earphones in the metro train. So it's only befitting that we find the most memorable depiction of the city in the visuals of songs. Somehow, 'Madrasai Suthi Paaka Poren' from 1994's May Madham comes to mind instantly, but it's quite something to revisit the old Madras in older songs. It seems song sequences were a great opportunity for the characters and the audiences to get some air and respite from the studio sets, and what better place to do that than Marina Beach? It feels surreal to watch 'Nenjirukku Engalukku' from Nenjirukku Varai, in which Sivaji Ganesan, R Muthuraman and V Gopalakrishnan walk and dance on a Kamarajar Promenade we can no longer recognise. If you thought hitting the beach to shake away the blues is a modern trend, watch Gemini Ganesan walk and sing 'Manidhan Enbavan Mirugamagalam' in Sumaithangi. Or when he takes his squad to the beach in a car in 'Naalai Naam' from Punnaagi. Songs like 'Enna



Paarvai' from Kadhalikka Neramillai and 'Nee Ketala Naan Maatenendru' from Ilamai Onjal Aadukirathu turned the gardens of Marina into Eden. When it comes to showing other parts of Chennai, 'Madras Nalla Madras' from Anubavi Raja Anubavi is often cited as an example. But listen to the lyrics and you will realise it is anything but a tribute. Interestingly, the song that features the maximum number of heritage sites, as pointed out by heritage activist Sriram V, is 'Azhagiya Mithilai Nagariniley' from the movie Anna. Over the years, however, fewer and fewer songs were shot in live locations in Chennai. Managing the crowd of eager on-lookers rendered shooting films featuring popular stars in real locations impossible, which is why you might find many songs, like 'Nenjam Undu Nermai Undu' and 'En Kanmani En Kadhal', have the actors perform in front of a screen. If not for this, you had to take Mr. MGR to some other desolate beach for a hassle-free experience, like in 'Kadal Oram Vangiya Kaatru' from Rickshawkaaran. The '90s and early 2000s too had films like Kadhal Kottai and Kadhal Desam that were shot in popular locations in Chennai, but in the mid-2000s, the Tamil Nadu government's restrictions in shooting films in public locations prompted filmmakers to shoot in studios or outside Chennai or move to suburban locations where getting permissions was easier. Still, even then, there were great exceptions to this, like 'O Ringa Ringa' from 7 Aum Arivu, a 2011 Suriya-starrer that was somehow even shot in the congested Ranganathan Street, T Nagar. Fascinatingly, despite these restrictions, the 2010s saw many small and mid-budget films—such as Onaayum Aattukkuttiyum, Chennaiyil Oru Naal, Goli Soda, Vadacurry, Vathikuchi, Meyaadha Maan, 8 Thottakkal, Irumbu Thirai, Silu Karuppatti, Maanagaram and others—that were shot in real locations and had intriguing takes on the city, perhaps as a result of a certain drive towards realism among the younger crop of filmmakers who made their way to the fore from making short films or small features that couldn't afford a studio.

Chennai has featured in more than a dozen Tamil films since 2023, but never as a character by itself. Films still establish the city with a shot of the Kathipara flyover or the Central station, but the city never becomes central to storytelling. Prashanth, Shaam, Attakathi Dinesh and Shakthi Vasudevan no longer climb onto MTC buses; only in Blue Star, a film set in Arakkonam, not Chennai, romance blooms in a local train. The autorickshaw drivers and passengers are now involved in discussions too different from what Rajinikanth sang about in 1995. The Central railway station we see in films no longer lets a woman find her mystery lover wearing a rose-knit sweater. Interestingly, only Bharathiraja appears as an exception here, as he tells the story of a married man falling in love with a woman he meets on the Metro train in Modern Love: Chennai.

The current crop of Tamil filmmakers has largely refrained from romanticising Chennai, but even sobering explorations of a lifestyle, community, or neighbourhoods are few and far between. Except for films like Ram's Taramani or Chennai 600028 (must one add Demonte Colony?), even films that carry a specific neighbourhood as the title—Kodambakkam, Nungambakkam, Kizhaku Kadarkarai Salai, and so on—do not tell a memorable story rooted in their milieu.

And yet, you would still find youngsters romanticising the city on social media, and aspiring filmmakers in their short films. Even when listening to Ilaiyaraaja from an MTC bus hurtling through rainwater is considered 'overrated,' we do it, for there is no common grammar to romanticising such momentary joys. So while this may not be the season for Chennai, on screen and in IPL, this city was never known for invincibility. This is, after all, the kingdom of Rajinikanth, an actor who became a superstar by turning the rising-from-the-ashes arc into his signature style in commercial cinema.

Google launches Flow: A groundbreaking AI filmmaking tool powered by Veo, Imagen, and Gemini

Hyderabad: Google has officially launched Flow, an AI filmmaking engine that gives storytellers access to Google's most powerful models, Veo, Imagen, and Gemini. Flow is for creatives, as it's the easiest way to create cinematic scenes and clips, allowing filmmakers to explore and iterate on their ideas more freely and deeply.

The future of Flow is beyond the experimental VideoFX by Google and is now available to subscribers in the United States under the Google AI Pro and Google AI Ultra plans. Users gain access to next-generation video generation technology that creates gorgeous visuals that stay extremely faithful to the prompts while keeping a hold of realism and physics.

Using Flow, users will be able to design custom characters and visual ingredients using Imagen text-to-image capabilities. These ingredients can then be applied to many different scenes to ensure consistency in visual style and smooth transitions across clips. The intuitive prompting system, powered by Gemini, allows one to describe quite involved creative scenarios in plain language to the benefit of a woman.

Revival on the cards for Indian economy



Even as India's economy continues to grow at a healthy pace — an above 7 per cent score is on the cards — of late, there has been some debate on the underlying momentum. This is on account of the report cards of some companies in the consumer goods space. Their performance is being said to reflect "urban stress". Even if that is taken into account, several economic indicators appear positive. The GDP data will be released later this week. The purchasing managers index for both services and manufacturing has been in the region of 57-60 for the last three months. Any number above 50 is positive, and the average so far this year is above 60 for the composite index — the highest in the last five years. Alongside, GST collections in the first seven months of the year have topped at Rs 12.74 lakh crore. This is higher than last year's tally of Rs 11.64 lakh crore. Two-wheeler sales have risen by 16 per cent for the first seven months of the year. Passenger car sales had slowed down in September over August but rose by 9 per cent in October when the festival season began. The lament of some companies on subdued consumption could be attributed to the "shradh" period when believers desist from buying consumer goods as part of their practice of abstention. This manifested in low sales of automobiles in particular leading to a build-up of inventories. This, however, changed in October with this segment showing an upward movement.

So while second-quarter growth would be less than 7 per cent at around 6.8-6.9 per cent, there is likely to be a substantial pick up in the second half of the year. A critical factor is the rural economy. Rural demand has been muted in the last couple of years due to a combination of lower farm output and higher inflation. A good kharif crop could address the first part of the problem. The area under cultivation this year is much higher compared to last year, pointing to good harvests for cereals, pulses and oilseeds. The res-

ervoir levels are at around 87 per cent, auguring well for both the rabi crop as well as allied activities. Therefore, farm output growth this year should be at a robust 3.5-4 per cent, and this could support demand. Inflation, however, remains a worrying proposition. At 6.2 per cent, it is being driven by food prices. The positive sign here is that the next crop of onions and tomatoes should be arriving by December. The kharif harvest should lead to an improvement in supplies of pulses, a major pain point in the past. Therefore, food inflation should moderate by the end of this calendar year with the base effect also kicking in December. While one has to be mindful of the course of inflation, given the October surprise, a moderation should help revive demand. This year, the investment momentum has been healthy even though the start was slow. The general election caused a slowdown in the central government's capex. States too were affected. While private investment tends to align with government capex, sources of funding, namely, bank credit, debt issuances as well as ECBs, point to a "K" shaped pattern in investment activity. The demand for funds has come from sectors related to infrastructure activity, including metals, cement, machinery, chemicals and power. The housing sector has been doing well at the premium and middle levels and the momentum has spread to tier-2 and tier-3 cities. Power sector investment is revolving around renewables, which have seen large capacity increases. A backward link has been witnessed between government capex on roads and railways as well as urban development and industries such as steel, cement and machinery which have gone in for fresh investment. However, when it comes to consumer goods industries, it does appear that the existing capacity is not being used, which has come in the way of new investments.

With the two main engines of consumption and investment looking positive, there is reason to believe that overall growth will remain above 7 per cent this year — the Bank of Baroda's forecast is 7.3-7.4 per cent. This, however, should not lead to complacency given that growth last year was 8.2 per cent. Most read So far, the RBI has maintained its growth forecast at 7.2 per cent. This has given it comfort for continuing with its anti-inflation policy stance. The inflation rate virtually rules out any rate cut in the December policy. While a decision on the rate cut could come in February, depending on how the inflation number turns, global factors cannot be ignored. The victory of Donald Trump does suggest some action on immigration, import tariffs and corporate taxes, all of which can be inflationary.

What is the controversy around the Sambhal mosque?

A petition was filed by Hari Shanker Jain and others in the court of the civil judge of the district and sessions court, Sambhal on November 19. The petitioners alleged that the 16th Century Jama Masjid in Sambhal was built at the site of an ancient Hari Har Mandir. The claim was similar to those made in the case of Gyanvapi mosque in Varanasi and Eidgah Masjid Mathura in Uttar Pradesh and Kamal-Maula Masjid in Dhar in Madhya Pradesh. Mr. Jain is the petitioner in the Varanasi, Mathura and Dhar cases too. The Sambhal mosque is a protected national monument.

How were the surveys carried out?

After a hearing on the same day, the civil judge ordered a photographic and videographic survey of the mosque and asked for its report to be presented before it on November 29. The mosque's intezamia committee was not consulted by the court. Following the order, a survey team including the court-appointed advocate commissioner, Ramesh Raghav, arrived at the mosque post-Maghrib or sunset prayers. The survey was carried out peacefully in the presence of the Superintendent of Police, members of the mosque committee and Sambhal's district magistrate. However, a second survey carried out on November 24 led to large scale violence. Conducted in the morning, the survey team was preceded by a local mahant (priest), one of the petitioners, and followed by some members chanting Jai Shri Ram slogans. A police party accompanied the surveyors. A large number of protestors gathered near the mosque. It soon resulted in stone pelting from the crowd. The police allegedly resorted to opening fire in which five men, including two teenagers, died. The police denied the allegation, arguing it used lathi-charge and tear-gas to control the crowd. The local MLA, Ziaur Rehman Barq in turn rubbished the police claims, arguing the dead included unarmed persons who had gone out for their daily chores. The residents also alleged the police had ransacked their homes.

What is the mosque's history?

Unlike Ayodhya or Varanasi, the Sambhal dispute cropped up only this year. For centuries, people of different communities have lived peacefully here. The Jama Masjid in Sambhal is one of the three mosques built by Mughal Emperor Babur during his reign between 1526 and 1530; the other two being the mosque in Panipat and the Babri Masjid in Ayodhya which was demolished in 1992. The Sambhal mosque was built by Babur's general Mir Hindu Beg around 1528. The mosque, as noted historian Howard Crane wrote in an essay titled, 'The Patronage of Babur and the Origins of Mughal Architecture' is "located on a hill at the center of Sambhal. It consists of a sanctuary formed of a large, square mihrab hall with battered walls, covered by a dome on squinches, and flanked by arches on north and south." The mosque is built with stone masonry covered with plaster. Its façade is similar to the mosque in Budaun and quite removed from the latter Mughal monu-



ments which were built largely of red sandstone. The mosque was repaired twice during the reigns of Jahangir and Shah Jahan in the 17th Century. While most historians attribute this mosque to Babur's general Hindu Beg, some believe the mosque is actually a Tughlaq-era monument and the Mughal founder merely added certain features to its architecture. The Hindu tradition, however, holds that the mosque incorporates parts of an ancient Vishnu temple. They believe the tenth avatar of Vishnu, Kalki, will descend here in Sambhal.

What is the Places of Worship Act?

The Sambhal dispute has once again cast fresh spotlight on the Places of Worship Act 1991 under which the religious character of all places of worship as it existed on August 15, 1947, has to be maintained. The only exception was the then ongoing dispute around the Babri Masjid-Ramjanambhoomi. The Act was aimed at shutting out the possibilities of any further contestations around places of worship. It states, "An Act to prohibit conversion of any place of worship and to provide maintenance of the religious character of any place of worship as it existed on the 15th day of August, 1947, and for matters connected therewith or incidental thereto." The Act's Section 3 leaves no room for debate by clearly barring the conversion in full or part of a place of any religious denomination into a place of worship of a different religious denomination.

What are the challenges to the Act?

The petition filed in Sambhal seeks to change the basic character of the place of worship, in contravention of the 1991 Act. The petitioners quote the oral observation of Justice D.Y. Chandrachud who is reported to have said in 2022 that the "ascertainment of a religious character of a place, as a procedural instrument, may not necessarily fall foul of the provisions" of the Act. Incidentally, four petitions have challenged the Places of Worship Act in the Supreme Court. The courts have admitted petitions seeking to alter the religious character of the places of worship in Varanasi, Mathura, Dhar, and now Sambhal even as the Supreme Court is yet to decide on the challenges to the Places of Worship Act itself.

Scientists uncover game-changing link between obesity and type 2 diabetes

New Delhi: The US scientists have decoded why obesity increases the risk of type 2 diabetes by targeting the fat cells. The study, published in Cell Reports, may advance new treatments for type 2 diabetes and other chronic diseases that work by helping fat stem cells differentiate and make new, smaller fat cells. In a first, the team from the University of California-Los Angeles (UCLA) showed that obesity can make it difficult for the body to produce key cellular building blocks called ribosomal factors.

Without sufficient ribosomal factors, fat stem cells cannot produce functioning fat cells. Their energy gets trapped and they become enlarged and play a crucial role in diabetes development. While fat tissue has been blamed for long, it's "actually essential for maintaining normal glucose metabolism," said Dr. Claudio Villanueva, Associate Professor

of integrative biology and physiology at the University of California-Los Angeles. Villanueva explained that people with obesity carry "too much fat tissue which is also not functioning optimally". Fat tissue stores energy from food. However, when not functioning properly, the excess energy gets rerouted to be stored elsewhere in the body like in the liver — leading to fatty liver disease; or in the heart — leading to atherosclerosis or stroke. The study included obese and diabetic mice. The fat cells of these mice were four to five times larger than those found in lean mice. The team administered them with rosiglitazone. The results showed that their ribosomal factors increased to normal levels, which triggered their fat stem cells to differentiate to produce new, smaller fat cells. Further, this enabled the mice's fat tissue to function properly in storing energy. These also generate key hormones that regulate metabolism.

Cocktail scene in India is getting bolder (think ingredients like Maggi masala, wasabi)



MSG, sweetened fish sauce, ramen soup, wasabi, and kimchi - mixologists in India are shaking up the cocktail scene with these unconventional ingredients. But what's behind this rising trend of experimental cocktails? cocktail

Chyawanprash - the Ayurvedic herbal jam your mom used to force-feed you every winter - isn't something you'd expect to see in a cocktail on a Saturday night outing. Yet, some of the trendiest spots in the country are incorporating it into their drink menus. Take, for instance, PCO in Delhi's Vasant Kunj and Ekaa in Mumbai, where chyawanprash features as an intriguing ingredient in creative cocktails. While the former serves Ignorance Is Bliss—a cocktail made using bourbon, sweet vermouth, coffee, aromatic bitters, and, of course, chyawanprash—the latter offers an elaborate special menu featuring cocktails crafted with Ayurveda-inspired ingredients. Apart from chyawanprash, head mixologist Jishnu uses unexpected elements like camphor, brahmi, and triphala to create a unique drinking experience.

Wasabi, Maggi masala, kimchi, ghee, walnuts, ramen soup—would you ever imagine these ingredients making their way into your cocktail glasses?

Fat Fashioned - A whisky-based cocktail prepared with besan laddoo butter served at Khi Khi. India's cocktail culture is undergoing a dazzling transformation, with mixologists and bartenders embracing bold flavours, unconventional ingredients, and cutting-edge techniques to elevate the drinking experience. "Cocktail culture is evolving along with food culture in India. People want to try something bold as they are now aware of classic cocktails and want something new for their palate," Abhishek Rana, Head of Bar at Dos, Delhi, tells India Today. Mixologists and bar owners agree with this shift in consumer preference. A rising number of cocktail bars and an increased focus on having an innovative cocktail menu suggest this shift too. The good old Bloody Mary, Cosmopolitan, Negroni, Picante, Martini, and Margarita are no longer enough. The result? Professionals are shaking things up—quite literally—by heavily experimenting with cocktail ingredients. Though not an entirely new concept, industry insiders note that the trend of innovative cocktails has gained momentum and huge popularity in the last 4-5 years in the country.

PCO's cocktail 'Ignorance Is Bliss' contains chyawanprash as the key ingredient. (Photo: Instagram/Passcodeonly)

Mixologists are now drawing inspiration from global trends while incorporating local and indigenous ingredients that are mostly unimagined pairings with alcoholic spirits. For instance, Rana's bar serves Dos Me Up Spicy, a cocktail that incorporates wasabi, and Whispering Caffeine, a blend of house-made walnut rosemary syrup with coffee. At The Brook in Gurugram (run by the owners of artisanal cocktail bar Sidecar), tequila, Himalayan honey, fresh tomatoes, pea water, and Maggi masala come together to create a unique cocktail called Maggi Point.

At Khi Khi, a chic bar co-founded by Navdeep Sethi, bold creations—like the Whisky Soda, featuring homemade pineapple ice cream soda and pineapple foam—reimagine classic combinations. Adding a nostalgic twist, some bars are infusing drinks with flavours reminiscent of childhood treats. Vikas Srivastava, VP of operations at TreeHouse Hotels, which also runs the 24x7 eatery and bar Poe&Co in Goa, reveals jello shots with vodka and alcohol-infused chuskis flavoured with kokum or aam ras as their standout creations. Srivastava recalls having chaat martini—a vodka-based cocktail infused with tangy tamarind, spices, and a rim coated with crushed papdi and sev. Although Delhi-NCR is often credited as the epicenter of this trend, experimental

cocktails are now making waves in cities like Mumbai, Bengaluru, Hyderabad, and Goa. "It's a nationwide trend. All over India, bars are changing their setups, creating experimental cocktail menus, and using new techniques and ingredients," says Rana.

What's bringing the change? A confluence of factors is behind the rise of experimental cocktails in India. Post Covid, the surge in international travel and subsequent exposure to global trends is certainly a key influence. Atul Tiwari, EAM - Food and Beverages at The Leela Palace, New Delhi, highlights a burgeoning craft bar culture and the growing influence of younger demographics as key factors driving the experimental cocktail revolution in India. "Millennials and Gen Z, in particular, are seeking unique and experiential beverages that go beyond the traditional. Social media has played a significant role in amplifying these trends, with stunning cocktail presentations and innovative recipes captivating audiences," Tiwari tells India Today. Some bars are infusing drinks with flavours reminiscent of childhood treats like jamun popsicles. "People are no longer willing to limit themselves to enjoying a traditional drink, especially the younger generation, which has just started on alcohol and has taken a fancy to cocktails. This has further fuelled passion for creating newer and edgier cocktails," adds Srivastava. Sandeep Arora, whisky connoisseur and director of Spiritual Luxury Living, also highlights the role of the young generation of bartenders and mixologists in redefining the craft of cocktails by creating concoctions with home-grown mixtures and ingredients. "Driven by the desire to stand out, they are pushing the boundaries of India's cocktail culture," says Arora. The growing popularity of Indian-made spirits, particularly craft gins, has further fuelled this trend. Goa, now hailed as India's gin capital, has inspired a wave of local innovations too.

Artists...err...mixologists Today, bartenders are celebrated as crafts, with their creations reflecting a delicate balance of craftsmanship and creativity. "Bartenders are much like chefs in the kitchen. Just as chefs start with a basic sauce and layer in flavours to craft exciting dishes, bartenders begin with classic cocktails as their canvas, experimenting with new combinations and flavour profiles to create something extraordinary," says Sethi. "Indian bartenders are using a lot of science in their cocktails, and this chemistry is surely going to lead to an even bigger bar culture in the future," adds Rana. Apart from incorporating intriguing ingredients, professionals are employing innovative techniques such as fat-washing, molecular mixology, and crafting house-made syrups to elevate their cocktails. The rising trend of bar takeovers with international mixologists is also proving to be invaluable learning experiences for Indian bartenders as well as consumers. Cream - A mastiha-based drink with white chocolate in it - presented by Greek mixologists at The Leela Palace, Delhi. For example, The Leela Palace in New Delhi hosted Alexandros Tselepis and Konstantinos Theodorakopoulos, the founders of The Bar In Front Of The Bar in Athens, for a weekend bar takeover of The Library. The duo stirred a storm with their inventive cocktails, featuring Greek Mastiha as the base and unique flavors like white chocolate and kimchi that added an intriguing twist to the various cocktails. "Such bar takeovers help a lot of Indian bartenders understand what's going on around the world," says Jishnu. India's future is bright, as many programs are being run in India now, creating a new and interesting platform for bartenders to learn from. There are many bar takeovers happening, and bartenders from abroad are coming here to share their knowledge and experience. Many Indian bartenders and mixologists are also traveling all over the world, learning, and incorporating new techniques on their return to India. India has lots of ingredients, and people are experimenting with these unique ingredients all over the country. The farm-to-bar concept is also developing.

The cocktail scene is set to get bolder in the coming years—that's what industry insiders predict. According to Sethi of Khi Khi, food-inspired cocktails are going to be the next raging trend. Farm-to-bar is also predicted to gain popularity. Bars are also embracing local produce and sustainable practices, crafting zero-waste cocktails and using house-made mixers. "India has great potential to be the cocktail hub globally with so many great bars and bartenders. But we just don't give them enough attention," Jishnu believes. "The rise of molecular mixology, sustainable practices, and immersive drinking experiences will further elevate the scene. As smaller cities join the trend and the industry invests in skilled mixologists, India is well on its way to becoming a global cocktail destination," says Tiwari.

Silicone patches for acne and anti-ageing are viral. But do they work?

Silicone patches work by locking in moisture retention which can help address various skincare concerns. Photo: Generative AI by Neha Gupta/India Today Who doesn't want clear and glowing skin? In fact, the entire 374-billion-dollar makeup and skincare industry often centres its marketing efforts around one primary goal: helping consumers achieve clear skin. However, this goal is often obstructed by hurdles like acne, pores and wrinkles. To tackle these issues, social media is brimming with tips, tricks, hacks and products promising to help you achieve your skincare goals (though keeping track of them all is no easy feat). The latest trend making waves on social media is silicone patches - an old dermatologist-recommended product now being hailed for its 'potential benefits'. Silicone patches: the viral product According to social media, the benefits of silicone patches include: Reducing the appearance of scars Hydrating the skin Minimising wrinkles Improving skin texture Promoting collagen production These benefits have made silicone patches or tapes a viral sensation and the 'IT product' due to their ease of availability, affordability and, of course, their one-product-fixes-all approach to skincare woes. Moreover, as the trend grows, it's not just skinfluencers endorsing the product - dermatologists online are also lending their approval. Today, thanks to this trend, silicone patches have reached India as well, with many people trying these age-old tapes to resolve their skin issues. You can find them on any e-commerce website, like Amazon, Nykaa etc. Silicone patches help in collagen production, which helps in achieving a glowing skin. Now, if you're thinking of adding to your nighttime skincare routine, hold up. We spoke to various experts and scrolled down to read what we found. What exactly are these patches?

Initially developed for healing surgical scars and wounds, Dr Shristi, an aesthetic physician and founder of Aviv Aesthetics, Delhi, tells India Today that silicone tapes act as occlusive dressings on the skin. These tapes work by locking in moisture retention that, in turn, promotes collagen production, which can help address various skincare concerns. Dr Aparna Santhanam, a dermatologist from



Mumbai, agrees and adds that these tapes are medical-grade adhesive strips made primarily of silicone. "These are thin, flexible and designed to be applied directly to the skin. Originally developed for scar management in post-surgical and trauma cases, they improve the appearance of scars by hydrating the area, protecting it from environmental factors and supporting collagen remodelling," she explains. Experts also agree that nowadays, these patches are trending as a treatment for acne scars, hyperpigmentation and even wrinkles, thanks to social media platforms like TikTok and Instagram. Can it actually help? Experts say these tapes can potentially help you achieve that clear skin if used correctly. If not, they can cause side effects. Potential benefits For acne Silicone tapes can help reduce the appearance of acne scars by providing hydration and improving collagen production in the skin. Dr Sonali Kohli, a consultant dermatologist at Sir HN Reliance Foundation Hospital, Mumbai, says that silicone patches are very similar to pimple patches. She advises that both should only be used for specific indications and under a dermatologist's guidance, as improper use of active acne can worsen the condition. For anti-ageing Dr Rinky Kapoor, a consultant dermatologist, cosmetic dermatologist, and dermatologist, at the Esthetic Clinics, Mumbai, explains that silicone tapes can work by improving the texture and smoothness of your skin while reducing fine lines and wrinkles.

Fragmentation muddies the poll picture in north-west Maharashtra



All three major leaders of the ruling Mahayuti coalition — the Bharatiya Janata Party's Devendra Fadnis, the Shiv Sena's Eknath Shinde and the Nationalist Congress Party's Ajit Pawar — have prestige, fortune and power at stake in the upcoming Assembly election in Maharashtra. Yet, from the looks of the contest on the ground, this election seems a make-or-break situation for Mr. Pawar more than his colleagues in the coalition. Dindori is a Scheduled Tribes reserved seat in Nashik district. The sitting MLA, Narhari Zirwal, belongs to the NCP and also serves as the Deputy Speaker in the current Assembly. A seasoned tribal politician, his fealty to Mr. Ajit Pawar precedes the split within the party — he was one of the NCP MLAs who accompanied Mr. Ajit Pawar to the Raj Bhavan when Mr. Fadnis was sworn in as the Chief Minister in an early morning ceremony in November 2019. He now has the unenviable task of retaining an Assembly seat in a constituency where the NCP (Sharad Pawar) led by a large margin — more than 82,000 votes and by nearly 34 percentage points — in the Lok Sabha election.

Mr. Zirwal's co-existence within the Mahayuti has not been comfortable recently — he was among a few tribal legislators who jumped from the Mantralaya building from the third floor onto safety nets, to protest against the government's inaction in hiring tribal students for State-level jobs. But he is among a few NCP veterans who are banking on Mr. Ajit Pawar's appeal as an administrator and the idea that joining the Mahayuti has helped their constituents in terms of welfare. Mr. Ajit Pawar, who is one of the two Deputy Chief Ministers of Maharashtra, held a rally in Dindori on Thursday. There seems to be a stark contrast between the NCP and the NCP(SP) rallies in western Maharashtra. The latter, especially the one on Wednesday in Manchar in Ambegaon, was like a political festival attended by farmers, farm-workers, supporters and a lot of onlookers perched from buildings or other vantage points. Mr. Ajit Pawar's rallies on the other hand, seem like a professionally managed event with supporters brought in on buses and turning out decked in party colours and insignia, and arrangements made for food and water. The younger Pawar's Mahayuti public meeting featured speeches by leaders who placed emphasis more on the schemes launched by the government with the crowd presenting a largely staid response, unlike the atmosphere in the Manchar rally. Does this reflect the mood of the electorate? Mr. Zirwal may argue otherwise pointing to a substantial accrual of support following schemes such as the Ladki Bahin Yojana. Indeed, local reporters said many women did receive five instalments of cash transfers from the scheme but Sunita Charoskar — the wife of former MLA Ramdas Charoskar — fielded by the NCP(SP) will be banking on Sharad Pawar's strong appeal in the constituency.

As one travels northward from Dindori to Kalwan, another reserved tribal seat, the terrain shifts from a mofussil milieu to a more rural one. The lands seem more verdant with a preponderance of cash crops being grown on fertile black soil, such as flowers, corn among others. We see

more of the Western Ghats as we go further in this region which is also host to a large tribal population, many of whom are also engaged in agriculture. Kalwan is also witnessing a direct contest between the two grand coalitions with the Mahayuti fielding the NCP's sitting MLA Nitin Pawar against the MVA's Jiva Pandu Gavit of the Communist Party of India (Marxist). Mr. Nitin Pawar's sister-in-law Bharati Pawar lost the Lok Sabha election on the BJP ticket in Dindori but was a prominent tribal face in the Narendra Modi Cabinet between 2019 and 2024. Mr. Nitin Pawar's father Arjun Pawar held the constituency from 1990 to 2014 before losing to Mr. Gavit. Mr. Nitin Pawar is banking on his family's appeal in the seat which has been built over many tenures.

Mr. Gavit was a prominent face of the farmers' historic 'Long March' from Dindori to Mumbai that took place in March 2018. Thousands of farmers, including tribal ones, had marched, many barefoot, to protest against the government's failure to address their demands and this ended only when the government made assurances. Mr. Gavit's activist supporters say that some demands were fulfilled, but the assurances were still not implemented and this resulted in farmer anger against the Mahayuti government, witnessed in the defeat of the NDA in Dindori and Kalwan in the Lok Sabha election. They frame Mr. Gavit as being a 'peoples' man', forever taking on authorities to address grievances of the farmers and tribals in the region.

An elderly Muslim, who goes by the appellation "Maamu", provides a series of anecdotes of how Mr. Gavit led struggles. Tribals who were part of the Long March aver that they continue to swear by Mr. Gavit and suggest that the welfare schemes launched by the Mahayuti government came too late in the day. Shantaram Baghul, a tribal farmer with substantial land holdings and a relative of Mr. Nitin Pawar, argues otherwise. He says that Mr. Nitin Pawar's family and their legacy of bringing in developmental work to Kalwan will outweigh any concerns. He turns derisive when asked about Mr. Gavit, calling him an agitator and someone who supports tribals who "occupy" forest land for agriculture. Mr. Nitin Pawar also enjoys support from small establishment owners but his task seems cut out as he managed only a narrow win (by 6,600 votes and 2.4 percentage points) in 2019 and any accrual of support from the erstwhile united NCP to Mr. Gavit — who has a strong support base — could help the latter sail through. Nashik contest Unlike Dindori and Kalwan, the urban seats in Nashik feature the contest between various strands of political Hinduism — the Hindutva of the BJP and its closest ideological ally, the Shiv Sena (led by Mr. Shinde), the moderate Shiv Sena (UBT) that swears by an "inclusive" definition of Hindutva, and the nativist-Hindutva espousing Maharashtra Navnirman Sena (MNS). Once a bastion of the MNS in the late 2000s and early 2010s, Nashik is no longer so for the party.

Yet, in the pitched electoral battle between the two major coalitions, the MNS candidates in the fray in Nashik East and West could act as spoilers. Prasad Sanap is barely into his thirties and is a relatively new entrant to the MNS after a long stint in the BJP's Yuva Morcha. He seems confident about his prospects in Nashik East despite a recent setback. He faces an extortion case filed by his own partyman and district secretary Yogesh Patil for allegedly snatching cash from the latter's residence; Mr. Sanap alleges that Mr. Patil had not submitted election expenditure accounts to the Election Commission and that he had gone to demand election expenses. He shrugs at the allegations and says that he will secure a mandate for his civic agenda. The NCP(SP) has fielded BJP dissident Ganesh Gite as a candidate against the BJP's sitting MLA Rahul Dhikle. Mr. Sanap argues that the electorate will vote in favour of his qualifications, youth and agenda but the task seems formidable for a party in decline.

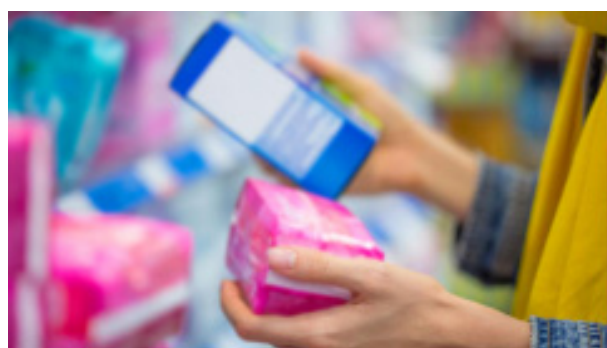
Menstrual equity is key to gender equality

Since 2014, May 28 has been observed globally as Menstrual Hygiene Day, drawing attention to the importance of menstrual health and hygiene. The occasion is marked by awareness campaigns and pad distribution drives. But for millions of menstruating people across India, this day passes like any other — shrouded in silence, discomfort, and exclusion. While public conversations on menstruation have increased, they are only one piece of a much larger puzzle. India has around 355 million menstruating women and girls. According to the fifth round of the National Family Health Survey (NFHS-5), nearly 77% of young women aged 15 to 24 use hygienic methods such as sanitary napkins or menstrual cups. However, this figure drops to 64% in rural areas and remains significantly lower among the Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, and poorest households. These numbers mask a deeper crisis of access, dignity, and education. Period poverty is not just about lack of products — it reflects the social structures that determine who gets to negotiate menstruation safely and who does not.

In 2018, only 18% of schools in India had basic sanitation facilities that included covered bins and functional incinerators for menstrual waste. The numbers were better in girls-only secondary schools, but most co-educational and primary schools lacked these essential services. As a result, many girls miss school during their periods, and some drop out entirely. This is not a private inconvenience — it is a public failure that affects education, health, and future opportunities for economic participation, perpetuating gender inequality.

Stigma, injustice Cultural stigma only deepens the injustice. Many girls are never told about menstruation before their first period, often making it a traumatic experience. They are taught to keep quiet, to stay out of kitchens and temples, and to feel ashamed of their bodies. The idea that menstruation is impure echoes the caste-based notion of pollution. In both, the body is seen as contaminating and is controlled through exclusion. Dalit women have long been treated as impure; menstruating girls are similarly isolated. This link between purity and exclusion is not coincidental — it is a powerful tool of oppression.

There is also a striking hypocrisy in how we view menstruation and reproduction. We revere motherhood, yet we shame menstruation — the very process that makes motherhood possible. Girls are expected to feel pride in becoming women, but also to hide the signs of that transition. We speak of "nari shakti" while creating conditions causing young women to miss school for something as biological as a period. This contradiction speaks to a deeper discomfort with female autonomy and the cycles of their bodies. Despite increasing attention, most policy responses remain limited to product distribution. Free pads handed out by NGOs or government schemes are valuable, but they risk framing menstruating girls and women as passive recipients of charity rather than rights-holding citizens. These



are temporary fixes, not systemic solutions. In districts such as Nawada and Darbhanga in Bihar, adolescent-led groups of girls called "Kishori Samoo", supported by the Population Foundation of India, have created over 50 sanitary pad banks, ensuring girls never have to miss school or suffer indignity because they cannot afford menstrual products. We must move from relief to responsibility — from one-time drives to sustained investment in menstrual health infrastructure and education.

Layers of exclusion Menstrual justice demands that we centre the needs of the most marginalised. Dalit, Adivasi, and Muslim girls, those with disabilities, and those living in urban slums or rural hamlets often face multiple layers of exclusion. In these communities, menstruation becomes a source of crisis and shame. Schools lack separate toilets, homes lack privacy, and health workers are rarely trained to provide support. If we fail to address these realities, we deepen inequality.

Menstrual health must be integrated into national education, health, and gender equality programmes. This means ensuring functional toilets, access to water, disposal systems, and menstrual education in every school and public institution. It also means recognising that not all menstruating people are women. Trans and non-binary individuals are routinely left out of this conversation and face even greater stigma and exclusion. We must also confront how market forces have shaped this landscape. Menstruation has been commodified — pads are advertised with euphemisms and shame, and sold at prices many cannot afford. The private sector must be regulated to ensure affordability, quality, and dignity, rather than treating menstruation only as a profit-making opportunity. It's time to act.

To normalise menstruation by 2030, as this year's Menstrual Hygiene Day theme urges, we need to do more than talk — we must act. Conversations about menstruation should start at home and in classrooms, with mothers, teachers, and boys included. Frontline health workers and community leaders must be trained not just to distribute pads, but to break stigma. And data must guide action — using tools such as the NFHS and school sanitation audits to measure progress and hold systems accountable.

Universities are different from religious institutions



The M.A.O. College, established by Sir Syed in 1877, as also its outgrowth, the Aligarh Muslim University has been the finest constructive manifestation of Muslim educational and cultural activity after 1857. The Supreme Court of India in S. Azeez Basha (1967), without even giving the university an opportunity of being heard, had declared it to be an institution that was neither established nor administered by Muslims. The seven-judge Bench judgment in the Aligarh Muslim University (AMU) case (2024) is in tune with the series of liberal and progressive decisions on minority rights by the top court in the last 75 years with the only aberration being Azeez Basha (1967), now comprehensively overruled. But to say that the judgment is a 4:3 one may not be correct as on certain points one finds unanimity on the Bench. Even though dissenting judges such as in the 1967 judgment attached much importance to the statutory provisions of the Aligarh Muslim University Act, they were of the view that merely looking at the incorporating statute is not the appropriate test to determine the minority character of a university.

Dissent was not really dissent The AMU judgment 2024 is unique where dissents were not really dissents in the broad interpretation of Article 30 of the Constitution — in terms of it extending protection to universities, pre-constitutional-era institutions, and non-waiver of fundamental rights. Interestingly, Justice Dipankar Datta himself admitted that he was in a minority within minority as despite his substantial agreement with 'thoughts and conclusions' with the two dissenting judges, his views too differed with theirs. Accordingly, on the issue of the validity of the 1981 reference to seven judges, the judgment is 4:3. But on the validity of the 2019 reference, the judgment is 6:1. Therefore, the former Chief Justice of India (CJI) D.Y. Chandrachud-led bench had a valid reference to answer. One may not have any quarrel with Justice Datta's appreciation of pre-independence-era judges including CJI K.N. Wanchoo, who was an ICS officer, but the Constitution cannot remain a living and transformative document if earlier judgments of a positivist era are not overruled. The Supreme Court is not bound by its earlier judgments. Its jurisprudence improved when it overruled formalist interpretations of 'procedure established by law' of A.K. Gopalan (1950) in Maneka Gandhi (1978). Similarly, K.S. Puttaswamy (2017) saw the eight-judge Bench judgment in M.P. Sharma (1954) being overruled to declare the right to privacy as a fundamental right. There is a long list of such overruled decisions. Even on the indicia to determine minority character, there was broad agreement among the seven judges, including Justice Datta, that broader criterion is to be preferred with a flexible framework and a holistic approach. There is unanimity in the judgments that minorities must prove 'intent to administer'. Justice D.Y. Chandrachud observed that the 'right to administer is the consequence of establishment. To do otherwise, would amount to converting a consequence to a pre-condition'. He was simply following the ratio of Basha (1967); that if a minority has established an institution, it would get the consequential right to administer. Judicial discipline has been rightly given prominence by the dissenting judges. But then, in deciding the contours of administration, how can they go beyond the 11-judge Bench judgment in T.M.A. Pai Foundation (2002) that limited it to selection of students, fixation of fee, choosing of governing bodies and right to discipline employees? The nine-judge Bench in Xaviers (1974) explicitly observed that 'under the guise of exclusive right of management, minorities cannot decline to follow the general pattern. In Kerala Education Bill (1958), the Court had held that the dominant

word in Article 30 is 'choice'. Xaviers (1974) reiterated this choice, both in establishment as well as administration.

Focus on the incorporating Act Dissenting judges attached much importance to the incorporating Act. But then, Justice M.H. Beg in Xaviers (1974) was categorical that "If the object of an enactment is to compel a minority Institution, even indirectly, to give up the exercise of its fundamental rights, the provisions which have this effect will be void or inoperative against the minority Institution". Similarly, the CJI was right that mere acknowledgment of the founder's name in itself in the statute cannot be the determining factor. In fact, if the 'overriding governmental control' test of dissenting judges is applied on their own examples of institutions, it would become clear that in comparison to AMU, they have much tighter governmental control, including the power to dissolve such minority universities. India's courts have been permitting governmental regulations to maintain efficiency and standards and not as a yardstick to determine minority character. Greater governmental control is basically allowed in the interests of non-minorities who receive education in such minority institutions and those who are affected by the administrative decisions of minority management. Surprisingly, Justice Datta, who alone held both the references as non est or invalid, in an unprecedented manner, not only answered the reference but also decided the matter himself by applying the indicia given by the majority as well as minority judges leaving nothing for the three judges' Bench. This was also after observing in paragraph 13 that "it is foregone conclusion that history would be rewritten and declaration of Aligarh Muslim University by this court as a minority educational institution is only a matter of time". If he himself was correct in applying the indicia and reached a definite conclusion, why was he so sure that a three-judge Bench would reach a different finding? A reference Bench generally avoids pre-judging the outcome of a matter by the regular Bench. The dissenting judges also emphasised the test of minority dominance to such an extent that a minority university cannot get minority character just because being a university, it accepted its governance structure being similar to that of other universities. The test that the claim of minority character must rest on exclusive or near exclusive communal character of the institution is not a good sign. Universities are different from religious institutions and the expectation of liberal institutions of secular education to indulge in ghettoisation is contrary to the vision of Article 30. Where there was erring Justice Datta's view that ₹30 lakh was not raised for establishing the AMU is factually incorrect. There is a letter dated August 9, 1912 from Harcourt Butler, Member of the Governor-General in the Council, making this a condition precedent for the incorporation of the university. Justice Datta has overlooked some crucial clauses of the dissolution provision which retained the continuity with the M.A.O. College. The AMU inherited all debts, liabilities, privileges and rights of M.A.O. College. Since Justice Datta himself has accepted M.A.O. College as a minority institution, in terms of Section 4, the AMU automatically inherited its character. Where the majority went wrong was on the question of the minority surrendering its right to administer because the apex court in Bashesar Nath (1959) had held that a waiver of fundamental rights is constitutionally impermissible. Dissenting judge Justice S.C. Sharma himself ruled out the possibility of such surrender. In the context of Article 30, Justices Y.V. Chandrachud and K.K. Mathew were of the opinion, in Xaviers (1974), that these rights cannot either be 'bartered or surrendered'. In no other case on Article 30 has the Supreme Court done this kind of minute scrutiny as in the AMU cases — in 1968 and 2024. The former CJI has rightly held that a minority institution too can be an 'institution of national importance' because minorities are an integral part of the nation and may establish great institutions. Sir Anthony Patrick MacDonnell, Lt. Governor of the North West Province and Oudh in 1896, rightly predicted the future character of M.A.O. College when he said, "It is not too much to hope that this College will grow into the Mahomedan University of the future; that this place will become the Cardova of the East, and that in these clusters Mahomedan genius will discover, and under the protection of the British Crown, work out that social, religious and political regeneration, of which neither Stamboul, nor Mecca, afford a prospect." The AMU has lived up to this expectation.

India needs a globally recognised public policy school

Why is it that the world's largest democracy has yet to produce a world-class public policy institution? The United States and Europe boast of institutions such as the John F. Kennedy School of Government (Harvard Kennedy School) and the London School of Economics which train leaders who shape not only national but global governance. Yet, India, with its complex democratic structure and urgent developmental challenges, sends its finest to be trained abroad. This is not for lack of policy schools — India has many — but it has to do with the structure of India's political and institutional landscape. The executive has the reins

Public policy institutions thrive only when they influence power and decision-making. However, in India, there are limited access points for public policy commentators, academics, and civil society groups to influence policy. This is because much of the decision-making power is vested in the executive and operationalised primarily through the political elite, government officials and bureaucrats rather than through a deliberative legislative process. The oversight role of the legislature over the executive too is limited, leading to a fundamentally different policy ecosystem than in other major democracies. In the U.S., Congress' power to craft legislation independently of the executive creates space for a thriving policy ecosystem based on analysis, debate, and expertise, with each public representative providing a possible entry point into the deliberative process. This decentralised process sustains a vibrant ecosystem of policy schools, think tanks, and advocacy groups, that can secure funding and find paying clients because their analysis and expertise can meaningfully influence lawmaking. But in India, the centralisation of power within the executive — and of party leadership within political parties — diminishes the influence of these groups unless they have access to top leadership and are aligned with their political priorities. The weak formalisation of the Indian state further creates a disconnect between politics and policy, relegating policy discourse to a downstream role rather than making it constituent of the larger political platform. Consequently policy professionals lack the top-tier influence of other countries. The power factor and where the wind blows Further, influence on decision-making is closely tied to who is in power. The executive's ability to realign the public sphere when power changes hands is more extreme in India than in more institutionalised democracies. This



creates fragility in public life, where those central to decision-making can find themselves sidelined when regimes change. In more institutionalised democracies, think tanks, media and civil society groups can maintain relative influence regardless of who is in power, which helps stabilise the policy ecosystem. These factors are unique to India among other large democracies and demand a different approach to policy education. To create a top-tier public policy school in India, we must design an institution suited to our political reality — where power is informal, personalised, and heavily dependent on executive control. Such an institution must serve dual purposes: first, equipping students with both traditional policy expertise and an understanding of India's unique power dynamics; and second, facilitating a more stable policy ecosystem. Unlike western policy schools that focus on formal institutions and assume straightforward paths to influence, an Indian institution must teach students to navigate a complex web of informal networks, regional power structures, and social dynamics. The curriculum must go beyond traditional policy education to map how power actually works — through relationships, caste hierarchies, regional elites, and grassroots movements. Students need to learn not just policy theory but also how to be effective in a system where power is opaque and unevenly distributed, where idealism must meet pragmatism and the ability to adapt to local conditions to create real change. Most importantly, to truly train development leaders who want to do good for their country, the school must select for, and cultivate, empathy for the people of our country. Too often, empathy for the lived reality of people's lives is overlooked and leads to top-down diktats that can wreak havoc in people's lives.

Defending tariffs in US court, Trump administration says legal setback would put India–Pakistan ceasefire at risk



to several sectors that traditionally enjoy high protection, such as agriculture, automobiles, and alcoholic beverages. "The success of the Nation, in these endeavours and into the future, is built off the dispatch and unitary nature of the executive, girded by necessary tools.

The International Emergency Economic Powers Act (IEEPA), and President Trump's tariff actions under that Act, is one of those critical tools. The consequences of judicial intervention would be cascading and devastating, as declarations from four Cabinet Secretaries explain, "filings in the US Court of International Trade quoting the Trump administration stated. The Trump administration told the court that through tariffs, the President has also "imposed leverage on foreign trading partners", so that these countries will address the "tariff and non-tariff barriers" that have created an untenable US goods trade deficit and have "hollowed out the United States' manufacturing and defence-industrial base". "In the President's judgment, the tariffs themselves will also reduce the United States' trade deficit, increase US manufacturing infrastructure, and strengthen America's defence-industrial base. And any attempt by the judiciary to second-guess the President on these national-security matters would be unprecedented, unravel the progress the President has achieved, and have far-reaching consequences to the United States' foreign, economic, and national-security posture," a Trump official told the court.

Rubio also warned the court that if it were to stop the President from imposing tariffs, "US trade partners would likely believe that the President lacks power under IEEPA to promptly respond to their actions during the ongoing negotiations". "They may also perceive such a ruling as a vulnerability and encourage them to retaliate against the United States for attempting to impose tariffs and negotiate agreements to protect our national security. Notably, other countries declined to retaliate against the United States after the President made clear he would exercise his authority under IEEPA to impose additional tariffs, as he did with China," Rubio said. Trump's tariff tantrum on India and the US had decided to conclude the first phase of the proposed bilateral trade agreement by the autumn (September–October) of this year. However, both sides have now agreed on an interim trade deal before the first tranche, to be finalised by 9 July. Nonetheless, Trump has continued his tariff rhetoric targeting India. After Apple announced that a majority of iPhones to be sold in the US would be produced in India, Trump said that Apple would have to pay a 25 per cent tariff if it sold iPhones in the US that are built in India or elsewhere.

Trump also stated that he had told Apple CEO Tim Cook he does not want the company to expand its manufacturing operations in India unless it is to serve the Indian domestic market. Moreover, an April report by the Office of the United States Trade Representative (USTR) criticised various Indian trade barriers, including "localised internet shutdowns that disrupt commercial operations" and regulations requiring that "dairy products intended for food must be derived from animals that have not consumed feed containing blood meal". "India requires that dairy products intended for food be derived from animals that have not consumed feed containing internal organs, blood meal, or tissues of ruminant or porcine origin, and that exporting countries certify to these conditions, which lack a discernible animal health or human health justification," the report said.

Defending the use of emergency powers to impose sweeping tariffs, senior officials in President Donald Trump's administration have told the US Court of International Trade last week that a legal setback limiting Trump's emergency tariff powers would disrupt trade deals the US is pursuing and jeopardise the ceasefire between India and Pakistan, court filings showed. The lawsuit — which could have a wide-spread impact on global trade — was filed by small business owners in the US against the Trump administration. They argued in court that Trump's use of the International Emergency Economic Powers Act (IEEPA) is unlawful because US federal law does not authorise presidents to impose tariffs, court documents showed.

"A ruling that narrows IEEPA would have ripple effects across every domain in which economic instruments are used for strategic effect. For example, India and Pakistan—two nuclear powers engaged in combat operations just 13 days ago—reached a tenuous ceasefire on May 10, 2025. This ceasefire was only achieved after President Trump interceded and offered both nations trading access with the United States to avert a full-scale war. An adverse ruling that constrains presidential power in this case could lead India and Pakistan to question the validity of President Trump's offer, threatening the security of an entire region and the lives of millions," US Secretary of Commerce, Howard Lutnick said in his submission to the court on May 23.

According to the court filings dated May 24, the Trump administration said: "...the United States tactfully brokered a ceasefire in an escalating confrontation between two nuclear powers, India and Pakistan. The United States is also navigating and addressing a range of extremely consequential threats, from strategic acquisitions to naval drills to the export of deadly substances." United States Secretary of State Marco Rubio told the court that trade negotiations are currently in a delicate state, with discussions ongoing and final deals yet to be reached, adding that these negotiations are "premised on the ability of the President to impose tariffs under IEEPA. On Trump's claim on trade, India's Ministry of External Affairs' official spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal had said on May 13: "From the time Op Sindoer commenced on 07 May till the understanding on cessation of firing and military action on 10 May, there were conversations between Indian and US leaders on the evolving military situation. The issue of trade did not come up in any of these discussions." This assumes significance as India is negotiating a trade deal and is expected to sign an interim agreement within the 90-day reciprocal tariff pause window. Under the agreement, the US has sought access

IndiGo to be first carrier to operate from Navi Mumbai airport, starting with 18 daily flights



International Airport Limited (a subsidiary of AAHL) holding 74 per cent and City and Industrial Development Corporation (CIDCO) Of Maharashtra holding 26 per cent. Although the airport has not officially announced an inauguration date, Gautam Adani, chairman of Adani Group, stated during his visit in March 2025 that the airport is expected to be inaugurated by June 2025. Pieter Elbers, chief executive officer, IndiGo said, "IndiGo will be the inaugural airline to operate from NMIA and we couldn't be more pleased to announce this. Our alliance signals towards achievement of complete operational readiness on both sides to take next steps. This expansion underscores our dedication to catering to the evolving needs of our aspirational travellers and further contributing to the growth of India's booming aviation sector. The new flights from the brand-new NMIA will elevate the travel experience of our customers while enjoying affordable, on-time hassle-free services on our unparalleled network." Arun Bansal, CEO, AAHL, said, "We are delighted to announce IndiGo as the first airline partner to commence operations from NMIA. This partnership marks a major step towards confirming NMIA's position as a transfer hub for domestic and international travellers." The airport will initially cater to 2 crore passengers a year and 8 lakh metric tonnes of cargo. At full capacity, it will be able to cater to 9 crore passengers and handle 32 lakh metric tonnes of cargo annually. Spanning over 2,866 acres, NMIA is being constructed with a futuristic theme drawing inspiration from the lotus flower, which is India's national flower, and will have eco-friendly features like green energy and green construction.

IndiGo is scheduled to be the first carrier to launch commercial flights from the Navi Mumbai International Airport (NMIA). In collaboration with Adani Airport Holdings Limited (AAHL), IndiGo has planned 18 daily flights to more than 15 cities, starting from day one of NMIA operations, with expansion plans in the works. IndiGo plans to expand operations to 79 daily flights, including 14 international flights, by the end of November 2025. This number is projected to grow to more than 100 daily flights by March 2026 and to 140 daily flights by the end of November 2026, with 30 of those international.

NMIA is a greenfield airport project under development through a public-private partnership. A special purpose vehicle, Navi Mumbai International Airport Private Limited (NMIAL), was created for its development with Mumbai In-

Centre announces MSP hike for 14 Kharif crops; highest for ragi, 3% increase for paddy

The Centre Wednesday announced minimum support prices (MSP) for 14 crops for the 2025-26 Kharif Marketing Season (KMS), with moong seeing the lowest and ragi the highest increase. A decision to this effect was taken by the Cabinet Committee of Economic Affairs, which met under the chairmanship of Prime Minister Narendra Modi. In percentage terms, ragi recorded a maximum hike of 13.89 per cent to Rs 4,886 per quintal in KMS 2025-26 as against Rs 4,290 per quintal in the last season. Like ragi, another millet crop, jowar also saw almost a double-digit hike in percentage terms in its MSP. The MSP of jowar (hybrid) and jowar (Maldandi) has been fixed at Rs 3,699 and Rs 3,749 per quintal, respectively, which is almost 10 per cent higher as compared to the last Kharif season. The MSP of bajra has been fixed at Rs 2,775 per quintal, which is 5.71 per cent higher compared to the last season's Rs 2,625 per quintal. In recent years, the government has been promoting millet crops, including ragi and jowar, and has declared them as Shree Anna. Ragi accounts for just 0.51 per cent of the gross cropped area of the country and is mainly grown in Karnataka, Tamil Nadu and Maharashtra. Major jowar producing states are Maharashtra, Karnataka, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu and Uttar Pradesh. Moong, a pulse crop, saw the lowest hike of just 0.99 per cent—to Rs 8,768 per quintal in

KMS 2025-26 from Rs 8,682 per quintal during the last season. Moong is grown in Rajasthan, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh and Karnataka. Like moong, paddy has also seen a low hike in MSP. The MSP for paddy (common) and paddy (Grade A) has been fixed at Rs 2,369 and 2,389 per quintal, respectively, which is just 3 per cent higher compared to the last season. The reason for the low hike in MSP for paddy is that the government has record stock of rice in the Central Pool. As per the Food Corporation of India (FCI), 381.47 lakh metric tonnes (LMT) of rice and 318.73 LMT of unmilled paddy were available in the Central Pool as on May 1, 2025. Taken together (rice and unmilled paddy), the total rice stock would be 595 LMT. Among oilseeds, the MSP of niger seed has been fixed at Rs 9,537 per quintal—9.41 per cent higher than the last season; and soyabean (yellow) at Rs 5,328 per quintal—8.91 per cent higher compared to the last season. The MSP of groundnut and sunflower seed has been increased by 7 per cent and 6 per cent, respectively. The MSP of cotton (medium staple) and cotton (long staple) has been increased by 8.27 per cent and 7.83 per cent, respectively. In absolute terms, the highest increase in MSP over the previous year has been for niger seed (Rs 820 per quintal) followed by ragi (Rs 596 per quintal).

Beyond the whispers: Why menstruation needs to be everyone's business



"When we were young, our mother would buy sanitary pads for us; sometimes our father would also buy them for us. Now we buy pads for ourselves; sometimes our husbands get them for us. We don't have any problem in asking our husbands to buy pads for us. We don't buy pads ourselves because we feel shy to ask the shopkeeper. There are mostly men at the shops—that is the reason we feel shy to ask them." - Woman in Telangana, participant in the PENMen-pilot study. The PENMen-pilot study was conducted by The George Institute for Global Health, India to understand perceptions and practices related to menstrual hygiene and the environment around it. This quote echoes a sentiment that is familiar across many parts of India: While men—be they fathers, husbands, brothers, or even sons—are often the ones buying menstrual products, why is the topic of menstruation still wrapped in silence? Girls and women often feel too shy to buy sanitary pads themselves, especially when male shopkeepers are involved. Many of the stores selling menstrual hygiene products are owned and operated by men. Yet, menstruation is a subject largely confined to women and young girls, spoken about in whispers or euphemisms, and rarely acknowledged in public spaces or family conversations.

This contradiction points to a deeper cultural issue. At individual, family, as well as community levels, the awareness and understanding of menstruation—particularly among men and boys—remain limited, thus restricting the spaces for women to openly share their experiences, concerns and specific needs during menstruation, and denying men the opportunity to contribute to the health and well-being of their female associates. Owing to this, the physical discomfort, emotional toll, and practical challenges women face during menstruation are often ignored or minimised. Painful periods, hormonal changes, lack of privacy, and inadequate water and sanitation facilities are real struggles that rarely find space in mainstream conversations.

India has made significant progress in menstrual health and hygiene management over the last decade. Awareness campaigns, product innovations, and government initiatives have led to increased access and visibility. Many civil society organisations and social enterprises in India are now playing a vital role in promoting menstrual health by challenging stigma, improving access to products, and raising awareness. Goonj reframes menstruation as a dignity issue, distributing reusable pads through its 'Not Just a Piece of Cloth' initiative. Boondh promotes sustainable products like menstrual cups with education programs, while Good Universe runs awareness workshops engaging both women and men. Others like Menstrupedia, Eco Femme, Aakar Innovations, and Sachhi Saheli use innovative tools—from comics to eco-friendly pads and school campaigns—to normalise conversations and ensure access. Together, they are helping build more informed, inclusive, and empowered communities around menstrual health.

Government agencies and international partners have launched several initiatives to promote menstrual health and hygiene in India. UNESCO India's #SpotlightRed campaign developed age-appropriate teaching and learning modules on menstrual hygiene management for adolescents, aiming to break taboos through education. The #KeepGirlsInSchool campaign, focused on improving access to menstrual products and creating supportive school environments to reduce dropout rates among adolescent girls. Similarly, the Youngistaan Foundation, in partnership with UNICEF India, has led community outreach programmes engaging youth and promoting awareness through on-ground and digital platforms.

Efforts at the policy level with the Operational Guidelines for promoting menstrual hygiene among adolescents

Why are 'sugar boards' necessary in schools? | Explained

The story so far: In order to check the sugar intake of school-going children, the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) has instructed over 24,000 affiliated schools across India to establish 'sugar boards', where information is displayed for educating students about the risks of excessive sugar intake.

What are 'sugar boards'?

Two years ago, food influencer Revant Himatsingka appealed to schools through a video to start a 'sugar board' campaign, which involves a visual representation of the quantity of sugar contained in a bottle of aerated drink or packaged fruit juice. "Children need to learn in fun and interesting ways the perils of consuming excess sugar. So, in Do It Yourself (DIY) workshops with school children, we ask the students to stick, say for instance bottles of aerated drinks, or packaged juices, [on a paper/white board] and adjacent to that stick the quantity of sugar in a packet and number of teaspoons of sugar that go into the product," Mr. Himatsingka told The Hindu. For example, a 300 ml bottle of a popular aerated drink contains eight teaspoons of sugar, with one teaspoon of sugar being nearly four grams. Similarly, a popular brand of a 125 ml packaged mango drink contains five teaspoons of sugar. 'Sugar boards' provide essential information, including recommended sugar intake, the sugar content in commonly consumed foods (such as junk food and cold drinks), health risks associated with high sugar consumption and healthier dietary alternatives. The CBSE has stated that schools may submit a brief report and photos of the activity on 'sugar boards' till July 15. Mr. Himatsingka said that while many schools have already included 'sugar boards' in their activities, CBSE's directive will create awareness in nearly two crore students and their families.

Why are 'sugar boards' necessary?

The National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPDR) has pushed for the introduction of a 'sugar board' in all schools, not only in those which are CBSE affiliated, but also in schools which are affiliated to various State boards. In a letter written to CBSE by NCPDR in March earlier this year, the child rights body emphasised, "Over the past decade, there has been a significant increase in Type 2 Diabetes among children, a condition primarily seen

by the National Health Mission, and the National Menstrual Hygiene Policy opened for public comments in November 2023, also point towards a positive shift in this direction. This progress however, remains uneven. While these campaigns, initiatives, and efforts have increased visibility and initiated important conversations, their reach remains uneven, particularly in rural and marginalised communities. The National Family Health Survey-5 (NFHS-5) in 2019-21 showed ~20 per cent increase in the use of hygienic menstrual products from 58 per cent in NFHS-4. However, period poverty is still found to be significant amongst girls and women from low socioeconomic status contexts. Many still face barriers in accessing safe, affordable, and sustainable menstrual products, especially in rural and low-income urban areas. Stigma, cultural taboos, and misinformation continue to affect how menstruation is perceived and experienced. These perceptions can lead to exclusion from daily activities, limit school attendance, and reduce confidence and self-esteem among those who menstruate. Families may impose restrictions, and communities often lack the infrastructure or education to support healthy menstrual practices. Further, increased awareness amongst adolescent girls and women does not directly translate into agency to make informed decisions about hygienic menstrual products and practices, in the absence of supportive families and communities.

Schools "teach" it, but don't talk about it

Even in educational settings, where menstruation is part of the curriculum, open conversations around menstruation are not promoted amongst boys and girls. The presence of a chapter on the female reproductive system and menstruation within textbooks does not guarantee classroom discussion of menstruation. And even if there are class sessions on menstruation, they may not translate into real, respectful conversations in classrooms or school campuses. Teachers and other school officials consider it a girls' issue and often try to avoid discussing these details in an open forum. Prior studies from India also suggest the importance of addressing gender- and context-specific communication experiences among adolescents in India's patriarchal society. Limited information, with existing communication gaps, result in inequities in adolescents' menstrual health, and consequently, long-term disparities in their reproductive health outcomes later in life. Knowledge alone is not enough if the culture continues to suppress dialogue.

A crucial yet often overlooked aspect of menstrual health is the role of men not only as decision-makers and sponsors of purchases in families, but also as supportive family and community members. In many households, male family members are the ones purchasing pads and also allocating the budget for such products, along with investments in water and sanitation facilities. This positions them as key decision-making stakeholders within the household, shaping the attitudes and culture at home, yet they are often uninformed about the products they're buying—the toxic materials being used in manufacturing the sanitary pads, challenges related to disposal, the basic hygiene facilities needed for adopting safe menstrual practices, and their implications on the health of women as well as the environment. It is equally important for men to understand these nuances, not just to support better purchasing decisions, but also to uphold women's autonomy to choose the most comfortable and safe menstrual products for their bodies, which are also environment-friendly. Studies have shown that engaging with boys from early ages, in sensitising them and breaking the myths around menstruation has a positive shift in their knowledge, attitudes, and perceptions towards puberty and menstruation.

To truly advance menstrual health and hygiene in India, we must normalise conversations across genders and generations. Menstruation is not just a "women's issue"—it is a public health matter, a social justice concern, and a human rights issue. Menstrual health education must extend beyond schools. Educating boys and men; sensitising families and communities; empowering girls to speak up and exercise their agency; and creating inclusive spaces for discussion are all essential and need to be done together. Breaking the silence starts at home! It is in everyday conversations, at schools, in markets, in policymaking spaces, and in community meetings. When men and women can talk freely and respectfully about menstruation, we move one step closer to a society that upholds dignity, equality, and well-being for all.

in adults. This alarming trend is attributable to high sugar intake... easy availability of sugary snacks, beverages and processed foods within school environments," the letter states. While population-based data on Type-2 diabetes among children and adolescents are unavailable from India, it is estimated that the incidence of Type 2 Diabetes in the group is 397 per lakh population, next only to China which has 734 estimated cases per lakh. Speaking with The Hindu, Dr. Divya Gupta, gynaecologist and a member of NCPDR, said, "Studies indicate that sugar constitutes 13% of daily calorie intake for children aged 4 to 10 years and 15% of those aged 11 to 18 years—substantially exceeding the recommended limit of 5%."

What is India's regulatory stand?

Official sources said that the Food Standards and Safety Authority of India (FSSAI) had convened a scientific panel of experts in April and May earlier this year, to decide on a High Fat, Salt and Sugar (HFSS) definition pertaining only to school meals. However, the FSSAI has still not set HFSS standards or finalised the 'health-star rating system', for front-of-pack labelling regulations. "In the meeting, we could not arrive at definition for HFSS for what comprises a school meal. Discussions are underway and it was decided that the HFSS definition for what comprises school meals cannot be different from that of packaged food. So a holistic HFSS definition should be formulated," an official said. Currently, FSSAI has regulation for brands making food claims. For instance, a low sugar claim can only be made if a product contains not more than five gm sugar per 100 gm. "While there are regulations in place for making claims on packaged food, FSSAI has not fixed cut-offs for High Fat, Salt, Sugar consumption for the Indian population," the official said. India currently relies on World Health Organization (WHO) cut-offs for ideal HFSS intake. For instance, WHO guidelines restrict daily sugar intake in adults and children to 25 grams (six teaspoons). However, experts argue that the Indian cut-off should be lower, and should be derived from indigenous data, as the genetic make-up of Indians make them more prone to heart attacks. "We need epidemiological data, through a country wide study which monitors dietary intake, along with variables like data on Body Mass Index, insulin resistance, lipid profile, biochemical parameters and so on,"

He seems to be a bit disinterested; the motivation, the fire in the belly, has satiated: Former Indian cricketer Atul Wassan on Rohit Sharma



GNS News Agency, June 3

There was a brief spell during the ongoing Indian Premier League 2025 season for Mumbai Indians opener Rohit Sharma in the games against Chennai Super Kings and Sunrisers Hyderabad when he played a couple of blitzkrieg innings and helped Mumbai get over the line quite comfortably. At that point in the season, the tide promised to turn for Rohit, who had a quiet start to the IPL; however, after a bit, his form regressed again. In 13 games, he scored 329 runs at an average of 27.42 and a strike rate of 147.53 so far in the season.

Former Indian cricketer Atul Wassan opined that Rohit is looking disinterested. "He seems to be a bit disinterested; the motivation, the fire in the belly, has satiated. He has won almost everything, from winning the T20 World Cup and Champions Trophy to retiring from Test cricket. Hence, to motivate yourself to play at this level of cricket every day is a very tough task," Wassan said on Bails and Banter on the OTTplay app.

Rohit's performances in the IPL for Mumbai have been on a downward curve for quite a few seasons. 2016 was the last time he managed to have a season where he averaged over 40s (44.45). "He's not the Rohit Sharma of, say, three to four years ago. He's at a stage in his career where he has to push himself every morning — train hard and be at his best — because things are slipping away from him. He's still relying on his natural talent and instincts," Sanjay Manjrekar observed during one of the shows on JioStar. After winning the 2024 T20 World Cup, Rohit has announced his retirement from the shortest version of the game. Additionally, earlier during the IPL season, Rohit has called it a day in the red-ball format; however, he will continue to be part of the ODI setup. As a captain, Rohit has won five trophies for Mumbai Indians, A T20 World Cup and the Champions Trophy for the Indian national side.

Abhishek Sharma hails Shubman Gill as 'one of best players India has produced in all three formats'

GNS News Agency, June 3

Former junior cricket and Punjab teammate Abhishek Sharma was all praise for his 'friend' Shubman Gill, who has recently been handed India captaincy in red-ball cricket after the retirements of Rohit Sharma and Virat Kohli. Gill was named India's 37th Test captain while Rishabh Pant was assigned as his deputy, as the Indian team is set to tour England for a tough five-match Test series. Abhishek said he feels "very proud" of Gill and called him "one of the best players India has produced in all formats." "I think if I see his career you know if I remember the old days when we were just started playing for the U-14 and U-16 Punjab team. As youngsters, we all started with the red ball, from that time to now, it is a big achievement to become India's Test captain and I feel very proud of him," said Abhishek in a video released by Star Sports.



for Punjab in junior cricket before representing India in the U-19 World Cup, where the India Colts beat Australia in the final to win the title in 2020 under Rahul Dravid. Gill was India's highest run-getter in that tournament, where he averaged more than 100. In his 32-Test career, Gill has scored 1893 runs at an average of 35.05 with five hundreds and seven half-centuries. Out of the 32 Tests, the Punjab youngster has played 13 Tests overseas, accumulating 649 runs with an average of 29.50, with his only overseas hundred coming against Bangladesh.

Rafael Nadal might play an exhibition soon with Roger Federer, says uncle Toni

GNS News Agency, June 3

Toni Nadal said the 14-time Roland Garros champion would soon play exhibitions with Roger Federer and, perhaps Novak Djokovic too. (AP Photo) Toni Nadal said the 14-time Roland Garros champion would soon play exhibitions with Roger Federer and, perhaps Novak Djokovic too. Rafael Nadal's former coach and uncle Toni has hinted at the Spaniard GOAT playing exhibition matches with Roger Federer, after the French Open gave him a warm sendoff, reminding him of how much the world loved him. Talking to claytenis.com, Toni Nadal said the 14-time Roland Garros champion would soon play exhibitions with Roger Federer and, perhaps Novak Djokovic too. "I imagine he'd like to do some exhibitions with Federer soon, to give back a little of everything tennis has given him and what tennis has meant to him," Toni Nadal told CLAY and RG Media.



form of exhibitions? Toni told CLAY, "After these months away from the courts, I think at some point he'll want to get back to training and feel like he's playing the ball well. I'm convinced that soon, quite soon, he'll be back playing."

2026 was a more realistic target given Rafa was expecting the birth of his second child this year, according to Claytenis.com. Riffing off Paris, and its elegant ceremony, the Italian Tennis Federation (ITF) too were keen on one such telling CLAY that the Italian Open wants to organize a grand tribute to Nadal, a ten-time champion of the tournament. Rome is considered the most important clay-court tournament after Roland Garros. "In 2024, Nadal knew there was a tribute planned, but he didn't want to do it. In 2026, it would be logical for us to pay tribute to him, and it's clear that Paris has raised the bar significantly. The most important thing will be to do something he likes," Claytenis.com quoted a source as saying. There's a huge clamour with Madrid Masters 1000 too hinting that they would be happy to welcome him back as an exhibition player. "And not just once, but ten times if you want!" Gerard Tsobanian, president and CEO of the Spanish tournament, told CLAY in Paris. "If Rafa can play in a way that doesn't cause him physical pain and can put on a show, like he has all these years, why not?" Tsobanian was quoted as saying by Claytenis.com.

'It's a dream... I can't wait': Zinedine Zidane on taking over French national team's coaching role

GNS News Agency, June 3

Footballing great and French veteran Zinedine Zidane said it would be a "dream" job taking over the coaching duties of the France national team. The 52-year-old is reportedly set to succeed as the coach of France after the 2026 FIFA World Cup. This development came after the Les Bleus' long-time coach Didier Deschamps announced his departure post the 2026 World Cup set to be played in the USA, Canada and Mexico. Deschamps has been in charge of the French side since 2012 and has led the French national team to the World Cup title in 2018 and the final in 2022. "I feel qualified for the French team, where I played and spent practically 12, 13, 14 years as a player. Of course it's a dream. I can't wait," said Zidane as the French media reported. "I feel 100 per cent ready to coach. Of course, it's a desire. But there's a coach, there's a team, and we have to respect everything, and that's what we do. But when the time comes, it will be a great pleasure if the opportunity presents itself," he added, as was quoted by Marca. Zidane also praised the 17-year-old Spanish and Barcelona sensation Lamine Yamal. "When you see him play, for example, the semi-final against Inter Milan. I've never seen anything like that in my life. Just watch someone who has such a



command of his craft on the pitch. It's fabulous to see him like that. We all had fun with him, and that's why, for all these young players, Lamine is the one to watch," said the former captain of France, Zidane, who led his country to the World Cup title in 1998. Yamal, at such a young age, has astonishing talent. He has already won the Euro Cup with the Spanish national team in 2024, where they beat England 2-1 in the final. Yamal was the young player of the tournament.

Race walker Servin Sebastian's inspiring story: From nearly quitting four months back to winning bronze at Asian Athletics Championship



GNS News Agency, June 3

In January, Servin Sebastian was on the verge of quitting race walking. A family matter had affected his mental peace. He didn't have the mindspace to train. Servin had decided to head back home to his village, Edayathumangalam in Tiruchirappalli in Tamil Nadu to be with his family, his army coach Ganapathi Krishnan, said. However, Ganapathi, a 2016 Olympian, didn't want Servin to drop out. He counselled Servin, the gist of his message was about not wasting an opportunity to win a 'big medal' and bring joy to his family. Servin won his first international medal, a bronze at the Asian Athletics Championships in Gumi, South Korea. The top seven finishers bettered the meet record, Servin posted a personal best of 1 hour, 21 minutes and 14 seconds. China's Asian Games silver medallist Zhaozhao Wang (1:20:37) won gold and Japan's Kento Yoshikawa (1:20:46) took the silver. For Ganapathi, the Asian Championships silver is a proof of Servin's potential. He's also glad that the athlete who almost dropped out four months ago finished on the podium in Gumi. "Servin was very stressed at the start of the year because of a family issue. It was understandable. But I told him he would be making a mistake if he gave up race-walking because he had potential. I told him to go home for 10 days and return. We used to talk everyday and I tried my best to keep him motivated but at the same time lend him an ear. If he trusts a coach then he will give his 100 per cent," Ganapathi said.

The first person Servin spoke to after winning the silver medal was his mother Gracy. "She was crying because of joy," Servin told The Indian Express from Gumi, South Korea. His father Sebastian, a farmhand who earns Rs 250 a day, came on the line next. "When I started off my father borrowed money to buy me shoes. Today I am happy I could give something to them in return. Winning a first inter-

national medal is a special moment. In 2023, I won silver medals at national competitions, then last year I won gold medals. Winning a bronze at the Asian Championships is the next step. I hope to qualify for the World Championships later this year," Servin said.

Servin is also elated about registering a personal best. Last year at the Indian Race Walking Championships in Chandigarh, Servin had qualified for the Paris Olympics by clocking 1:20.03, however, the results didn't stand because of faulty timing systems. "What happened last year was not in my control. But I had to accept my fate. It was not the fault of athletes. I am someone who does not think about the past. Today, I am happy that I could also clock a personal best that will remain in the record books," Servin, an Indian army havildar, said. He started off as an 800 metre runner but a hamstring injury when he was 16, forced him to change course. A trainee at the Sports Development Authority of Tamil Nadu's Krishnagiri hostel, Servin's career as a 800 metre athlete had hit a roadblock. However, his coach Indira asked him not to despair. "Indira ma'am asked me to try race walking. It took me a while to get the hang of it, but because of the hamstring injury it was the best option for me," Servin said.

Coach Indira cajoled him to take the next important step in his career — appear for selection trials of the Indian army. Servin was inducted in 2018 and initially trained in Hyderabad, before moving to the Army Sports Institute (ASI) in Pune four years later. Since then Ganapathi has been his coach.

Ganapathi recalls that Servin needed a few technical tweaks if he was to progress. Indian walkers have been disqualified overseas because of technical faults — three at the 2018 Asian Games. Ganapathi too has seen red paddles when he was an active athlete. "What generally happens in India is that coaches and athletes try to get as fast as possible without focussing on the technical aspects. That is because they want quick results. What happens in international competition is that till about 10 kilometres Indian walkers are doing well but once the speed picks up they are not able to keep pace without committing a foul. This also happens because they get tired. Indian walkers have great potential if they correct technical flaws early," Ganapathi said. In Servin's case what needed correction was what is called the 'bounce' or both feet in the air. "In race-walking at least one foot needs to be in contact with the ground at all times. So, in the off-season I helped him iron out technical issues by giving him longer training sessions but at a slower pace so there is no 'bounce'. He will only get better from here on," Ganapathi said.

'No doubt about Pant's ability and calibre': LSG mentor Zaheer Khan backs Rishabh Pant after a poor season with bat

GNS News Agency, June 3

Lucknow Super Giants skipper Rishabh Pant ended his Indian Premier League 2025 campaign as a batter on a high after slamming a century on Tuesday against Royal Challengers Bengaluru in the last league game at the Ekana Cricket Stadium in Lucknow. This came at the back of a terrible IPL 2025 season for Pant, who managed just 151 in 12 innings ahead of the RCB match.

Throughout IPL 2025, Pant crossed the 25-run mark just twice while averaging a paltry 24.45. This also meant that LSG finished sixth in the standings with just six wins in 14 matches. Pant's 61-ball 118 also went in vain after RCB, riding on their stand-in skipper Jitesh Sharma's blinder, beat LSG by six wickets to book their seat in the Qualifier 1. However, mentor Zaheer Khan believes there is no question about skipper Pant's calibre, and his ability was never in doubt despite his underwhelming performances for most of the IPL. "He's been good as a leader. That was a positive for us throughout the season. The form with the bat was definitely a learning experience for him, having this kind of season. But the ability and calibre — no one had any doubt about it," Zaheer said after their last league match. Pant was bought in for a huge sum of Rs 27 crore at the mega auc-



tion. The former India pacer said it was good to see the swashbuckling keeper-batter end the season on a high.

"We're happy he finished on a really strong note — that's the calibre he has, and the impact he can have on the game," said Zaheer. "When you start off the IPL season, your first goal is to think of the playoffs, how you are going to get there... We obviously made the conscious effort of (trying to handle) the challenges which we are facing in the beginning of the season, which is losing a few of our main bowlers to injuries," he added.

Lakshya troubled by back issues, Satwik-Chirag return with solid win & Aakarshi, Unnati nick one set off Chinese top names

GNS News Agency, June 3

India's men's doubles pair Satwik-Chirag went past Malaysian Choong Hon Jian and Haikal Muhammad in straight games. (BWF/Badminton Photo) India's men's doubles pair Satwik-Chirag went past Malaysian Choong Hon Jian and Haikal Muhammad in straight games. A persistent lower back issue is making Lakshya Sen's outings at the top level of competition a stop-start affair. On Wednesday at the Singapore Open Super 750, India's top men's singles shuttler was again forced to end his stay after the troublesome back flared up. Playing the turbo-charged Taiwanese Lin Chun-Yi, Sen did well to take the opener 21-15 and even caught up at 17-17 from 12-15 down in the second. But he needed repeated medical treatment requests and simply couldn't continue leading to yet another Round 1 exit, this time from mid-match retirement. He trailed 21-15, 17-21, 13-5 with severely restricted movement. "Lakshya had to retire from his Singapore Open match due to lower back pain and spasm," father DK Sen told The Indian Express adding it was a recurring problem. "He had similar issues during practice last Saturday. Despite trying his best, he wasn't fully fit. We'll focus on his recovery now," he added. Meanwhile it was a solid and steady return from back issues for Chirag Shetty — who had wisely taken time off to tend to his problems, not risking aggravation till he felt upto it. Shetty and Satwiksairaj Rankireddy, easily India's most consistent performers over last few years won 21-16, 21-13 against Malaysian Choong Hon Jian and Haikal Muhammad. The Indian pair will need to battle Indonesian World No 8 pair Sabar Gutama and Moh Reza Isfahani (29/26), in what can be a tricky second round. Having dropped to World No 27, the Indians have a lot of catching up to do but are under no pressure and will prioritise staying fit and healthy first. The Indonesians operating at a bruising pace, were barely in Top 30 same time last year, but have gone as high as No 7 this month. They are second amongst 3 Indonesian pairs in Top 10. They created a stir at the All



England getting rid of Chinese Liang-Wang and drubbing another Chinese pair of Hyang-Liu next round. They were a handful against Chinese He-Ren at the World Tour Finals last year, and topped Aaron-Soh in the flat game too. It was also a good result for Ruthvika Gadde and Rohan Kapoor who won 21-16, 21-19 against Australians Chen Zhi Yi and Francesca Corbett. Indian mixed doubles pair of Ruthvika Gadde and Rohan Kapoor in action. (BWF/Badminton Photo) Indian mixed doubles pair of Ruthvika Gadde and Rohan Kapoor in action. (BWF/Badminton Photo) The tiny takeaways in singles from a pair of losses were when 17-year-old teen Unnati Hooda nicked a set off Malaysia Masters champ and China's heir apparent Wang Zhi Yi, 25, who is ranked World No 2. Wang strangely flattened after leading 13-8, and Unnati made the most of the helpful side of the drift arena to race to take the opener 21-13. Wang, the All England finalist, saw to it that her game remained unbreachable thereafter, winning 13-21, 21-9, 21-15 in 56 minutes. The defiance against Chinese began actually with journeywoman Aakarshi Kashyap staying pugnacious in the opener against third seed and World No 4 Han Yue, matching her in rallies to take the opener 21-17. Though written off routinely, Aakarshi is only 23 and remains determined to make a mark despite her short stature and limited game.

Moushumi Chatterjee says she 'pities' Amitabh Bachchan, calls him a victim of his image: 'He is always performing as that's all he knows'



She said, "Amitabh Bachchan is a very intelligent man. He always uses politically right words. I sometimes pity him because I think most of the time he is only performing because that is all that he knows. I might be wrong but that's how I feel about him. It is because of his image. He has a huge image, which nobody else has managed to achieve." Sharing how Amitabh Bachchan is different from Rajesh Khanna, Moushumi said, "Amitabh has managed to stay grounded despite immense success. Something that Rajesh Khanna failed at. He was blown up with his success. As the saying goes: 'Ek anpadh gunda aur ek padhe likhe gunde mein bahaut farq hota hai' (There is always a difference between a literate and illiterate goon). I have never seen Amitabh Bachchan with sycophants. However, Rajesh Khanna was always surrounded by these people. He needed that attention and pampering." Moushumi expressed grief while she spoke about Rajesh Khanna's fall. She said, "It is sad how it all got into his head and he saw a massive fall. It happened very drastically for him. There was a point when he was on top, nobody has seen that high."

Previously talking about the superstar, Moushumi recalled how Rajesh once made a distasteful remark about her daughter asking who was her father Jayanta Mukherjee or Vinod Mehra. Talking to Nayandeep Rakshith, the actress said, "A lot of people who pass nasty remarks don't realise that they are actually showing who they are. You come from that surrounding. Nobody thought I can give it back. I was always like that. I never cared if you are a superhero or super heroine or anything like that. I think as a human being. If you are super, even while working as a spot boy, salute from me."

Whenever there is a discussion on stardom and star power, there is always a mention of actor Rajesh Khanna. There are several iconic stories revealing the kind of things his fans did for him. Some wrote letters to him in blood, others would get married to his photo. People even fought for the dust under his car wheels. Women put it on their heads, claiming they are now married to the star. It was a high that no Indian actor had ever experienced. But as crazy as his fandom was, his fall was equally disturbing. And this sudden rise and fall took a toll on the actor. However, one star who managed to keep his heads low despite all the success is actor Amitabh Bachchan.

In a recent interview with Filmfare, actress Moushumi Chatterjee shared how Amitabh Bachchan was always mindful of his words and mostly behaved in a specific manner the whole time to manage his image of a bigger star.

Mohanlal, Prabhas did Kannappa for free, shares Vishnu Manchu: 'They yelled at me, threatened to kill me when I offered...'

Telugu actor Vishnu Manchu's film Kannappa has created a lot of buzz mainly because of its huge star cast. While the film mainly revolves around the titular character played by Vishnu, the association of actors Prabhas, Mohanlal, and Akshay Kumar has added more value and eyeballs to it. And that was the primary goal of Vishnu Manchu. In an exclusive interview with SCREEN, Vishnu, who is over 20 films old, admitted that his market is not as big as these megastars and to make a film of this stature, it required big names to justify the project's budget and increase anticipation around it. However, despite the reports of the film being made on a budget of over Rs 200 crore, Vishnu never paid a single penny to actors Mohanlal and Prabhas whose fee is in crores.

As Vishnu passionately spoke about his project, a script of which he had written about a decade ago, he said he could make his dream come true only because of his father Mohan Babu's trust, who backed it financially and his two dear friends, Prabhas and Mohanlal. He told SCREEN, "Two people helped me greatly to make the film what it is today: Mohanlal and Prabhas. Mohanlal is such great superstar, he didn't really have to do a small role in my film, but due to his love and respect for my father, he agreed to do the role in less than a minute." He added, "Secondly, Prabhas. He is a great friend of mine. He is not just one of the biggest stars in India but Asia. He too didn't have to do this role. But after I confessed to him that I would need his presence for a greater reach of my film, he agreed immediately. He didn't even care to listen to his role in the film."

While he spoke highly of these two stars, he recalled how they yelled at him for offering them a fee for their work. "Both Prabhas and Mohanlal didn't take a single penny to do the role. Every time I ask them to quote their fees, they would yell at me. They will say: 'Itne bade aadmi hogaye ho ki humein paise doge?' Mohanlal said you grew up around me and today you dare to pay me for my work? Prabhas threatened to kill me." While Mohanlal and Prabhas didn't charge any fees, Akshay Kumar charged far less than his standard fees. "He didn't have to waive off his fees as he is not really my friend and didn't know me before coming on board." According to Vishnu, Mohanlal didn't just agree to do the role without a remuneration, but was also ready to pay for his own tickets to fly to New Zealand where the film was shot extensively. "Mohanlal sir called me and was like, 'Vishnu, when do I have to come to New Zealand? I will



book my own tickets. You just arrange an accommodation for me and my staff.' That is how humble they are."

In the same conversation, Vishnu also opened up about the reason behind trimming the roles of Prabhas and Mohanlal in the highly-anticipated film. Vishnu said it was a "sacrifice" that he had to make. "We shot Prabhas for 34 minutes, it increased the length of the film. To bring down the length of the film, we trimmed six minutes from his sequence. We have a fight sequence together, that was trimmed a bit. We even had to trim about 7 minutes from Mohanlal's sequence. He now has only 15 minutes scene in the film. This is all sacrifice that we did, only to lessen the length of the film. We didn't have an option." While Vishnu admitted that he reached these superstars as well as Akshay Kumar to increase the reach of his film to a pan-India level, he didn't take them for granted.

He confessed, "Because of my father's legacy I was able to cast most of the actors that I have today because they were all just a phone call away. But, the reality is none of these actors need to do a cameo at this point in their career. They carry a legacy of their own. So when I cast these actors, I made sure all of their roles and characters have depth and meaning." For Prabhas especially, this role is going to be a milestone in his career as an actor. He has acted very well. I am glad he is there in the film because even though he is a good friend, I have to respect his stature as a superstar today. I don't want people to come out and say 'Why did Prabhas do this role', I made sure his role has a value to it."

Alia Bhatt drops BTS moments from Cannes Film Festival debut, teases return next year.

After slaying with her different looks at the Cannes Film Festival last week, Alia Bhatt has now taken to Instagram to share some behind-the-scenes moments from her much-talked-about debut at the prestigious French film festival. In a series of photographs and videos, the Jigra actor gave fans a glimpse into the preparation and work that went behind her show-stopping outfits.

The first photo shows Alia's team getting her ready for her much-anticipated debut at the festival. The actor wore a Schiaparelli ensemble for the red carpet. The following videos show her getting ready in a powder yellow Gucci skirt and bralette attire for one of her appearances. In the clip, her makeup artist is seen perfecting her red lipstick, crucial for the look. One of the photos also shows her flaunting her curves in Gucci's interpretation of a

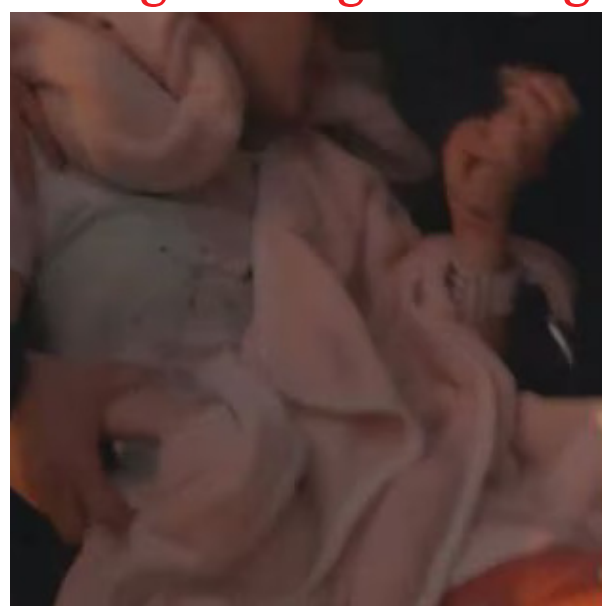


saree, which became a talking point among fashion enthusiasts. She is also seen enjoying live music at an event and posing in a stunning Armani ensemble. She wrapped up the post with a group photo featuring her team,

including her stylist Rhea Kapoor, who is also seen posing with the actor. She captioned the post, "cannes-dids ? okay bye, see you next year ????" Alia attended the festival as one of L'Oréal's ambassadors. She had also praised Aishwarya Rai, the brand's

ambassador for nearly two decades. She said, "I, for one, have actually grown up watching Aishwarya Rai Bachchan walk the carpet in all her glory and really representing India on this global stage. It was always such a huge inspiration. So it really feels very nice."

Popular K-pop idol collapses mid-performance, suffers seizure in 'heartbreaking video'; fans slam gruelling training culture



A clip from the popular Japanese girl group, based in South Korea, XG, is making rounds on the internet. Published on the group's official YouTube channel, it shows member Chisa in really poor shape after she collapsed backstage post-performance. The seven-member girl group are currently on their first world tour, 'The first HOWL,' that began in May 2023, and since then, the girl group has toured over 30-plus venues around the world. As part of documenting their journey, the agency released a video from their documentary-style content called Xtra Xtra, where at one point Chisa's health raised alarm among fans, triggering harsh criticism of the intense, gruelling training conditions, while some even called out the management for posting the video without the artist's consent.

The 40-second clip going viral on social media shows Chisa being escorted out by managers and staff from the venue backstage in an unconscious state in a wheelchair. In the full episode, Chisa was not looking well from the very start and was seen resting most of the time before the show, with the manager even exploring possibilities to see if she could get more time to rest or back out. She was being fed, kept hydrated, taken care of with fever cooling patches and more. Later, the idol was seen insisting on performing. However, mid-performance, as the group made their way back to the backstage, Chisa's health declined and she collapsed, eyes welled up, burning with fever. The clip was so alarming that it triggered mass reactions from fans, genuinely concerned about how intense and damaging idol life can be.

We've seen clips of what happened to her that day, and everytime, my heart breaks. seeing her cry in these clips just hurts. I know what it feels like to push yourself doing something you love even if you're not feeling well. I have nothing but love and respect for Chisa. pic.twitter.com/2vzjJAlxba Later, Chisa herself responded on social media. She posted a message to fans apologising for worrying them. "Sorry if watching Xtra Xtra made you worry again," she wrote, admitting she blacked out during that time and doesn't remember much of it herself. "So when



I saw the footage, even I was surprised, I'm sure ALPHAZ (XG's fans) must've been even more shocked. I haven't seen the full thing yet, but I was totally fine yesterday, and I still am today. So please don't worry about me," the R&B artist continued. The statement continued with Chisa revealing that the world tour pushed her to the edge, and she'd never felt her body give up like that before. "But the fact that it happened on my very first world tour—I feel like it was just something the universe, or aliens, wanted me to experience!" "Can we please not normalise this harsh training culture, starving the idols and making them dance like robots 24/7? This is sick," a person commented on the video. "I just saw the recent Xtra Xtra vlog, and they shouldn't have recorded or even uploaded Chisa in that condition. That is so heartbreaking and disrespectful to her. She wasn't even aware they recorded her," another chimed in. "And for all the fans defending this, you don't need to see an idol at their worst to respect their hard work. What Chisa went through isn't proof of dedication, it's a real person pushed way past her limit, sick and collapsing, while cameras kept rolling," another said.

XG debuted on March 18, 2022, under XGALX, a sub-label of Avex. Despite being a Japanese group, they have been trained under the K-pop system and are promoted both ways. The group consists of seven members: Jurin (leader), Chisa, Cocona, Hinata, Maya, Juria, and Harvey. Earlier, during an interview with The Korea Herald, the group opened up about their intense training days. Harvey revealed how she once had a nosebleed during practice but kept going, shoving tissues in her nose and not stopping. Jurin, the leader, recalled when the group underwent four evaluation tests in a single month and was left sleep-deprived. Chisa added that Jurin once kept practising her rap verse until 5 a.m. and ended up so exhausted she was even reciting the verse in her sleep. K-pop training culture has often been criticised for its ruthless approach, with big names like BTS member RM, Red Velvet's Irene, Selugi, and more openly calling out the system in the past.

'Priyanka Chopra never seemed vulnerable even though her father was going through cancer,' co-star reveals Chopra's resilience while filming

Actor Priyanka Chopra has made a name for herself in several different avenues within the entertainment industry, from iconic roles as an actor to collaborations with mega pop stars and transcending the international boundary as a celebrity. Chopra certainly has a number of impressive notches on her belt. One of Chopra's co-stars from the 2008 movie Fashion, Arjan Bajwa, recently opened up about working with the actor while both of them were going through personal turmoil.

While talking to Siddharth Kannan on his podcast, Bajwa talked about losing his father, politician SS Bajwa, and not being able to go back to work after. Arjan's father was attacked by a horde of monkeys on the terrace of his home, and he lost balance and fell down from the top. The actor revealed that director Madhur Bhandarkar decided to lay his bets on him and cast him in Fashion, giving the actor a second chance in the industry. He said, "He gave me an opportunity when all doors were closed to me, and that's why I will always hold him in the highest regard. I tell him to this day that when I was out of everything, he said to me, 'Come on board.'"

Even though he had a great opportunity on his hands, the actor admitted that he was going through the movie "half-heartedly", and everyone on the set was aware of what he was going through. He shared that among all the people present, he found a friend in his co-star Chopra, who was going through troubles on the personal front as well. "Priyanka and I were sitting and talking while the shot was



getting ready, and her father had just been diagnosed with cancer. We were sitting together and discussing our fathers, and she was also going through something very difficult, but she is a very strong girl, and I never saw her vulnerable or breaking down on the set." He doubled down on his praise for Chopra and talked about sharing that difficult time with her. "One can say that the turmoil and talking about it laid a foundation for our friendship. We had mutual respect for each other; she is very hard-working, and she deserves everything that she has achieved in her life," added Arjan. Directed by Madhur Bhandarkar, the cast of Fashion also included Kangana Ranaut, Mudha Godse, Arbaaz Khan and Kitu Gadwani.

KJo recalls childhood memory that sparked his love for fashion

Mumbai: Karan Johar took a trip down memory lane and reminisced about a childhood memory where his mother Hiroo Johar and aunts organised a fashion exhibition in 1981 with ace designer Abu Jani. The filmmaker recalled being starstruck by veteran star Zeenat Aman at the event.

Karan took to Instagram, where he shared a monochrome picture. In the images, Hiroo and Zeenat Aman are seen. In the background, a young Karan peeks through between the two ladies, wide-eyed and observant. For the caption, he wrote: "Memories can be therapeutic... Wanted to share this one indelible memory I have... My mother and my aunts wanted to have an exhibition of clothes (not that they had any background in fashion or any business acumen at all... but Props to them on ambition...) they got a young designer to help them curate and design this collection." (the now celebrated and brilliant fashion force) the collection was called ALKAPRI (the aunts named this illustrious collection of couture after their children Alka Karan



and Priyanka) I remember the innumerable lunches and chai sessions and the laughs at my residence... Abu regaled the ladies with his incorrigible humour and I used to sit in a corner and secretly enjoy the fashion and of course the gossip..."