

Bakrid celebrated in a grand manner

Adilabad: The festival of Bakrid, also known as Eid ul Adha, was celebrated with great fervor and devotion across the erstwhile Adilabad district on Saturday. Muslims gathered in large numbers at Eidghas early in the morning to offer special prayers, marking the beginning of one of the holiest days in the Islamic calendar.

Dressed in traditional attire, worshippers embraced each other and exchanged greetings of "Eid Mubarak" after the congregational prayers. The atmosphere was filled with joy, and spiritual reflection. Police and civic authorities ensured tight security and smooth traffic management near mosques and prayer grounds in Adilabad, Nirmal, Mancherial and Kumram Bheem Asifabad districts. Several leaders and dignitaries extended their warm greetings to the Muslim communities on this auspicious occasion emphasizing the values compassion, sacrifice and brotherhood.

Election Commission of India says defaming poll panel after unfavourable verdict absurd

Election Commission of India (ECI) sources on Saturday (June 7, 2025) rejected claims of rigging in the Maharashtra Assembly polls held last year and said defaming it after receiving an unfavourable verdict from the voters is absolutely absurd. The ECI sources were responding to an article by former Congress chief and the Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha, Rahul Gandhi, alleging "match-fixing" in the Maharashtra state polls. The sources said any misinformation being spread by anyone brings disrepute to the thousands of representatives appointed by political parties during elections and demotivates lakhs of poll staff who work tirelessly for the gigantic exercise.

Telangana government signs Rs 1 lakh crore green energy deals under new policy

GNS News Agency, June 7

Hyderabad: Deputy Chief Minister Bhatti Vikramarka said that agreements worth Rs 1 lakh crore have been signed for green power generation in Telangana. He further stated that the State government has introduced the 2025 New Energy Policy, aiming to achieve 20,000 MW of green power by 2030. Speaking to media persons after visiting the Greenko Integrated Power Project in Pinnapuram village, Orvakal mandal, Kurnool, on Saturday, he highlighted Telangana's vision for renewable energy. The Telangana government is exploring various avenues to enhance power generation and move towards surplus electricity. Several countries are promoting electricity generation through diverse methods such as solar, wind, thermal, pumped stor-



age, floating solar, and hydrogen power, the Deputy Chief Minister added.

KCR extends Bakrid greetings



GNS News Agency, June 7

Hyderabad: On the occasion of Bakrid, Bharat Rashtra Samithi chief K Chandrashekhar Rao on Saturday conveyed his heartfelt greetings to the people of the State. Acknowledging the festival's deep significance, he highlighted its themes of sacrifice, generosity, and brotherhood. In his message, K Chandrashekhar Rao emphasised Bakrid's powerful message of coexistence, urging people from all communities to embrace mutual tolerance and understanding. He called for a society built on harmony and goodwill, where individuals live together with respect and compassion. Praying for the well-being of all citizens, the BRS leader sought divine blessings for happiness, health, and prosperity across the State.

Chhattisgarh: Five Naxalites gunned down in encounters in Bijapur district

GNS News Agency, June 7

Bijapur: Five Naxalites were killed in two encounters with security forces in an ongoing operation in the Indravati National Park area of Chhattisgarh's Bijapur district, police said on Saturday. With the latest casualties, seven Naxalites, including top leaders Sudhakar and Bhaskar, were neutralised in the operation in the last three days, they said. "Security forces have recovered the bodies of seven Maoists during the ongoing anti-Naxal operations in the Indravati National Park area of the district," a senior police official said. On Saturday, two bodies were recovered following a gunfight, while three were found after the exchange of fire on the intervening night of Friday and Saturday, he said.

The official said the operation involving personnel from the state police's Special Task Force (STF) and District Reserve Guard (DRG) as well as the CRPF's specialised unit CoBRA, was launched on June 4 based on input about the presence of Maoist leader Sudhakar, Telangana State Committee member Bandi Prakash, Dandakaranya Special Zonal Committee (DKSZC) member Pappa Rao, and a few other armed cadres. On Friday, security forces neutralised Bhaskar alias Mailarapu Adellu, a special zonal committee (SZC) member of the Telangana State Committee (TSC) of Maoists who carried a reward of Rs 45 lakh in Chhattisgarh and Telangana, and Maoists' central committee member Narasimha Chalam alias Sudhakar, who had a bounty of



Rs 40 lakh in Chhattisgarh, was killed on Thursday, he said. The official said the identity of five more killed Naxalites, two of them women, is yet to be ascertained. A huge cache of arms and ammunition, including two AK-47 rifles, has been seized in the operation, he said, adding that search and area domination operations were underway in the surrounding forested terrain to track remaining Maoist cadres and ensure complete sanitisation of the region. A few security personnel have suffered injuries due to snakebite, honeybee sting, dehydration and other operational injuries during the operation and were provided medication, the official said. The outlawed CPI (Maoist) general secretary Nambala Keshav Rao alias Basavaraju (70) was neutralised in the Bastar region on May 21.

KTR slams Congress-BJP nexus for undermining Kaleshwaram project, vows to expose anti-farmer agenda



GNS News Agency, June 7

Hyderabad: Launching a scathing attack on the Congress-BJP nexus in the State, Bharat Rashtra Samithi (BRS) working president KT Rama Rao on Saturday accused both the national parties of orchestrating a campaign to tarnish the reputation of the Kaleshwaram Project, a critical irrigation lifeline for Telangana's farmers. Speaking at a presentation titled "Kaleshwaram Project: Countering False Propaganda with Facts," delivered by former Minister and MLA T Harish Rao, he defended the transformative initiative spearheaded by former Chief Minister K Chandrashekhar Rao. Highlighting Chandrashekhar Rao's vision for the rebuilding of the State, he credited him with harnessing the Godavari River's waters to bolster Telangana's agriculture. "KCR, a true visionary, ended decades of farmers' struggles by ensuring water security," he said, noting that projects like Palamuru-Ranga Reddy and Sitarama neared 90 per cent completion during the BRS rule, paving the way for a prosperous, fertile State. However, for the past 18 months, the Congress-BJP alliance was waging a relentless smear campaign, distorting facts to mislead the public about the Kaleshwaram Project, he said, accusing the Congress-led government of undermining Telangana's core aspirations – water, funds, and jobs –

through misrule and corrupt practices. Congress had colluded with contractors and diverted funds to its leaders in Delhi, while leveling baseless charges against BRS, he said, also questioning the silence of Congress and BJP leaders on unauthorised projects in Andhra Pradesh, contrasting this with their aggressive scrutiny of Telangana's decade-long developmental gains under BRS. He also criticised the National Dam Safety Authority (NDSA) for its selective focus, ignoring major structural failures elsewhere, such as Gujarat's Morbi bridge collapse, which killed 140 people, recurring bridge failures in Bihar, the SLBC tunnel disaster that claimed eight lives, and flooding at the Vattem pump house.

Harish Rao defends Kaleshwaram project shift to Medigadda, nullifies Congress claims

Hyderabad: Defending the decision to shift the Kaleshwaram Lift Irrigation Project from Tummidihatti to Medigadda, BRS leader and senior MLA T Harish Rao on Saturday asserted that the move was driven by technical and hydrological necessities, not political motives. Making a powerpoint presentation on the Kaleshwaram Lift Irrigation project here, he declared his readiness to appear before the Justice Pinaki Chandra Ghose panel and present facts to counter what he described as a "Congress' misinformation campaign" on the project.

President Murmu, PM Modi and leaders extend Eid-ul-Adha greetings

GNS News Agency, June 7

President Droupadi Murmu, Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Vice President Jagdeep Dhankar and other leaders Saturday (June 7, 2025) extended greetings on the occasion of Eid-ul-Adha. On the occasion, President Murmu, urged the countrymen to take a pledge to work with a spirit of dedication for the society and the country. In a social media post on X, the President wrote, "On the auspicious occasion of Eid-uz-Zuha, I extend my heartiest greetings and best wishes to all my countrymen, especially my Muslim brothers and sisters. This festival explains the importance of sacrifice, faith and many noble ideals. On this auspicious occasion, let us all take a pledge to work with a spirit of dedication for the society and the country." Similarly, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday (June 7, 2025) greeted people on the occasion of Eid ul-Adha. Mr. Modi said on X, "Best wishes on Eid ul-Adha. May this occasion inspire harmony and strengthen the fabric of peace in our society. Wishing everyone good health and prosperity."

One of the main Islamic festivals, it commemorates the willingness of Abraham, considered a prophet by Abrahamic religions, to sacrifice his son to obey the command of God. Vice President Jagdeep Dhankar said the festival is a reminder of the power of sacrifice and the blessing of generosity.



In a post on X, Mr. Dhankar said the values of selflessness and service that the festival upholds are timeless virtues that enrich the country's democratic fabric and strengthen the bonds of its diverse society. "May this occasion inspire us to come together in a shared spirit of unity and work together to build a just, peaceful, and equitable nation," the Vice President said. Meanwhile, scores of devotees thronged the historic Jama Masjid on Saturday morning to offer prayers and celebrate Eid al-Adha. Dressed in traditional attire, worshippers came together in a spirit of devotion, unity, and celebration, marking one of the most significant festivals in the Islamic calendar.

Congress Minister Tummala also party to decision in favour of Medigadda barrage: Harish Rao

GNS News Agency, June 7

Hyderabad: Reiterating that the construction of the Medigadda barrage as part of the Kaleshwaram Lift Irrigation Scheme could not be attributed singularly to any individual or entity, BRS leader T Harish Rao on Saturday recalled that even the present Agriculture Minister Tummala Nageswar Rao was also a signatory to the decision making process in favour of it. In a compelling powerpoint presentation delivered at Telangana Bhavan, the former Irrigation Minister highlighted that Nageswar Rao was a key member of a three-member cabinet sub-committee formed during the Bharat Rashtra Samithi (BRS) government to oversee the redesign and reengineering process involving the Kaleshwaram Lift Irrigation Scheme. This sub-committee was critical in shaping the project, including the decision to shift the main barrage's location from Tummidihatti to Medigadda.

The sub-committee was headed by Harish Rao, with Nageswar Rao, then Minister for Roads and Buildings (Presently Congress Minister), and Etala Rajendar, then Finance Minister, (Presently BJP MP) as members. The cabinet subcommittee was responsible for reviewing and approving critical aspects of the project after consultations with technical and expert committees. The decision for construction of the Medigadda barrage was made after a thorough discussion with technical and expert agencies concerned, which provided reports justifying the shift based on engineering, hydrological, and interstate considerations, particularly to avoid issues with Maharashtra while addressing the



environmental concerns. The former minister detailed how the cabinet's approval rested on recommendations from WAPCOS, an organization under the Central Water Commission. WAPCOS conducted a LiDAR survey to evaluate the site's suitability for the dam, providing a scientific foundation for the decision. Rao emphasized that the process also involved inputs from retired engineers, state engineers, and extensive deliberations within the cabinet, which facilitated the re-engineering and eventual construction of the barrage. "The Medigadda barrage was a cornerstone of the Kaleshwaram project, designed to boost Telangana's irrigation and agricultural potential," Rao asserted during the presentation, which was streamed live and attended by party leaders including the BRS working president, K T Rama Rao.

Vande Bharat train between Katra, Srinagar begins today; slashes travel time to just 3 hours



GNS News Agency, June 7

New Delhi: In a major boost to connectivity in Jammu and Kashmir, regular services of the Vande Bharat Express between Srinagar and Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Katra commence on Saturday. The Northern Railway has confirmed that the semi-high-speed trains will operate six days a week, significantly reducing the travel time between Kashmir Valley and the prominent pilgrimage hub in Katra. This development marks a transformative step in the region's transport infrastructure. The new Vande Bharat service will cut the travel time between Srinagar and Katra to just three hours, less than half of the current six to seven hours required by road. Two pairs of Vande Bharat Express trains, Train Nos. 26404/26403 and 26401/26402, will run on the newly-inaugurated Srinagar-Katra-Srinagar route, with scheduled halts at Banihal.

These trains are specially designed to function in extreme winter conditions and are equipped with advanced heating systems, thermally insulated lavatories, heated windshields, and defrosting technology for driver visibility. Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday, flagged off the inaugural run of these trains, following the successful completion of the 272-kilometer Udhampur-Srinagar-Baramulla rail link project, a long-awaited engineering feat that includes the iconic Chenab Bridge, the world's highest

railway arch bridge. Until now, train services in the region were limited to Banihal-Baramulla in the Kashmir Valley and Jammu-Udhampur-Katra in the Jammu region. The extension of Vande Bharat services will not only provide a faster, more reliable mode of transportation for residents and tourists but is also expected to facilitate easier access for pilgrims visiting the revered Vaishno Devi shrine. With seamless all-weather operations and premium onboard amenities, the Vande Bharat Express promises to enhance travel experience and regional connectivity, linking North India more closely with the Valley.

Sonia Gandhi undergoes tests at IGMC, party says routine check-up

GNS News Agency, June 7

Sonia Gandhi health update, Sonia Gandhi hospital visit Shimla, Indra Gandhi Medical College Shimla, high blood pressure Sonia Gandhi, Sonia and Priyanka Gandhi are staying in Priyanka's house at Chharabra, located on the outskirts of Shimla.

Senior Congress leader Sonia Gandhi was Saturday taken to Indira Gandhi Medical College Hospital in Shimla after she complained of high blood pressure, a party functionary said.

Sonia (78), who is on a personal visit to state along with her daughter Priyanka Gandhi Vadra, underwent some tests at the hospital, where she remained for around half an hour before being discharged.

Deputy Medical Superintendent of IGMC, Dr Aman Chauhan, said, "She was brought to the hospital for a routine check-up. Her BP was found to be high. She is absolutely fine. After the examination, she was discharged".

Indian Chronicle

English Daily

Gen Chauhan's candour vs Pakistan's bluster and grandstanding

The Chief of Defence Staff, Gen. Anil Chauhan, has succinctly described how Pakistan's Operation Bunyan-um-Marsoos "folded in eight hours" on May 10. In a bid to counter India's Operation Sindoor, Pakistan launched Marsoos with the aim "to get India to its knees in 48 hours... They escalated this conflict... We actually hit only error targets." When they failed to achieve their target, they picked up the telephone and said they wanted to talk." Speaking at the Shangri-La Dialogue in Singapore on May 31, he did not shy away from admitting India's setbacks in the initial phase of the conflict. He acknowledged that India lost fighter jets on the opening day due to tactical miscalculations. He emphasised the importance of learning from them. "What is important is not the jet being down, but why they were being downed," he noted, adding that the Indian Air Force swiftly identified the errors, rectified them, and resumed high-risk, long-range operations with precision targeting deep inside Pakistani territory. This ability to adapt quickly and regain operational dominance speaks volumes about the professionalism and preparedness of the Indian military. The revised tactics yielded significant success: key terror hideouts, air defence systems, and logistical hubs in Pakistan-occupied territory were struck with accuracy, sending a clear message about India's willingness and capacity to act against state-sponsored terrorism. In stark contrast to General Chauhan's measured and honest appraisal, Pakistan's military and political establishment has taken the familiar route of denial, bluster, and grandstanding. Rather than acknowledging the losses suffered—both in terms of military assets and strategic credibility—Islamabad and Rawalpindi have declared victory.

Economic sanctions against Pakistan via trade, visas, water are the third part of Operation Sindoor: Jay Panda

GNS News Agency, June 7

BJP MP Baijyant Panda, who headed a multi party delegation that visited Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Bahrain and Algeria as part of a diplomatic outreach post Operation Sindoor said the delegation's remit was not just to put India's case on its right to retaliate against terror acts on its soil, but also to convey the "new normal" of imposing economic sanctions against Pakistan for the same. Speaking to The Hindu, Mr Panda said that his delegation that visited four countries that are also members of Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), which had issued an objectionable statement post the Pahalgam terror attack, which was condemned by India, had received a positive feedback, even on the question of these economic sanctions.

"I and everybody in my delegation, considered this visit to be extremely successful because of the support we received explicitly. We were explicitly told that they understand India's dilemma. Now, but this is a work in progress. This is it's not a thing that's going to get resolved today," he said. He said that military hostilities was the first part of Operation Sindoor, the second was the diplomatic outreach by MPs and the last part, which was conveyed via these delegations was the economic sanctions against Pakistan. "And we discussed that at length, that our economic sanctions, having to do with visas, with water, with shipping, with trade, these are all intended to nudge Pakistan in the right direction. Prime Minister Modi has made it very clear. These are put in abeyance. They are not permanently scrapped," he said.

He added that Prime Minister Narendra Modi's consistent outreach, through the last decade with these countries, many of whom, have awarded him their highest civilian honours helped, apart from their own experiences with terrorism. "The one comment that used to have tremendous response with all these countries, was how just like how America went into Pakistan and had to take out Osama bin Laden, we also have the right to defend ourselves by hitting a terrorist camps. These countries have been the victims of ISIS, and they were deeply embarrassed by Pakistan's complicity in hiding Osama bin Laden," he said. On being asked about how these countries explained the negative statement by the OIC, Mr Panda said took a longer view, stating that it emerged out decades of a "circle the wagons" approach. "The OIC has a particular stance which has



emerged from decades and decades of if you can call it, 'circle the wagons' approach. But we must keep in mind that two of these nations we visited have played a role in United Nations Security Council when it has proscribed some of these terrorist elements in Pakistan as well as participating as members of Financial Action Task Force (FATF) board to put Pakistan put under the task force's gray list," he said. He admitted that the delegation was asked questions on the treatment of minorities in India and the country's stance on the Palestine issue and relations with Israel. He said that the make up of the delegation, representing different languages, regions, political parties and five different religions was a statement in itself. On Palestine, he said, the delegation spoke of India's consistent support for the two state solution, and the fact that India's budget has provisions of tens of millions of dollars for relief for Gaza and West Bank, for the Palestinian people. "One of our delegation members was Ghulam Nabi Azad, very senior politician, who has had a particular role to play from the Non Aligned Movement (NAM) days, when he used to interface with people like late Palestinian Liberation Organisation (PLO) chief Yassar Arafat. That carries a huge credibility," he added. Mr Panda termed as "bizarre" but not surprising, the appointment of Pakistan as vice chair of the committee on counter terror, announced recently by the United Nations (UN). "I'm not terribly surprised because the UN has lost its way over the decades. In any case, the institutions that were formed in the 1940s, they represented a post World War II era when the world was a very different place. India is the world's largest democracy that has ever existed in human history and now the fourth largest economy, for that not to be a permanent member of the security council, shows you how outdated the UN is," he said.

Transformative Infrastructure Boost in Manthani Constituency: 4.12 Crores Sanctioned for New Anganwadi Centres and Gram Panchayat Buildings Across Five Mandals.



"PS Ashokan" Indian Chronicle "Manthani, June 7" "Under the visionary leadership of Hon'ble Minister for IT and Industries, Shri Duddilla Sridhar Babu Garu, a significant step has been taken towards enhancing rural infrastructure in the Manthani Assembly Constituency. A total allocation of ₹4.12 crores has been approved for the construction of 16 new Anganwadi Centres and 11 Gram Panchayat buildings across five mandals in Jayashankar Bhupalpally District — Kataram, Mahamutharam, Mahadevpur, Malharrao, and Palimela. "This major initiative, sanctioned today by the District Collector on the Minister's directive, is aimed at strengthening child welfare facilities and grassroots gover-

nance infrastructure. " Approved Gram Panchayat Buildings "Kataram Mandal" "Maddulapalli – 20 lakhs" "Dharmasagar – 20 lakhs" "Mahamutharam Mandal" "Borla Gudem – 20 lakhs" "Madaram – 20 lakhs" "Mulugupalli – 20 lakhs" "Nimmagudem – 20 lakhs" "Mahadevpur Mandal" "Rapalikota – 20 lakhs" "Kudurupalli – 20 lakhs" "Malharrao Mandal" "Koyyur – 20 lakhs" "Mallampalli – 20 lakhs" "Palimela Mandal" "Lekkala Gadda – 20 lakhs" Approved Anganwadi Centre Buildings "Each Anganwadi has been sanctioned 12 lakhs under NREGS, 15th Finance Commission, and WD&CD funds. "Kataram Mandal" "Regula Gudem – Budidipalli" "Odipilavanch" "Ibrahim Palli" "Jaduraope" "Mahamutharam Mandal" "Gandi Kamaram – Gollapalli" "Vajeenapalli – Huzurnagar" "Borla Gudem-3" "Mahadevpur Mandal" "Palugula-2" "Maddulapalli-1" "Ambatipalli-2" "Beguluru-2" "Malharrao Mandal" "Mallampalli" "Pedda Thundla – Kishan Rao Palli" "Vallenkunta-3" "Pedda Thundla-2" "Pedda Thundla – Gadampalli" This initiative reflects the government's unwavering commitment to rural development, women and child welfare, and decentralised administration. It is a testament to the proactive governance and people-centric vision of Minister Sridhar Babu Garu. "The residents, public representatives, and Congress party cadres from the beneficiary villages have extended their deepest gratitude to the Hon'ble Minister for championing development and welfare across the constituency.

From Campus to Career: AP PGCET–2025 Powered by SVU



"June 7, Indian Chronicle Rayalaseema coordinator" "Sri Venkateswara University (SVU), under the aegis of the Andhra Pradesh State Council of Higher Education (APSCHE), is fully prepared to conduct the AP Post Graduate Common Entrance Test (AP PGCET–2025). After a four-year gap, SVU has once again been entrusted with organizing this significant examination for PG admissions in the state. "Prof. P.C. Venkateswarlu, has been appointed as Convener, and Prof. Surendra Babu, as Co-Convener of AP PGCET–2025. Under the leadership of Prof. Ch. Appa Rao, Vice-Chancellor of SVU and Chairman of AP PGCET–2025, the university has completed all preparations efficiently and promptly. "A press meet was organized by the university to announce the details. Vice-Chancellor Prof. Ch. Appa Rao addressed the media, accompanied by Registrar Prof. M. Bhupathi Naidu, Convener Prof. P.C. Venkateswarlu, and Co-Convener Prof. Surendra Babu. "Prof. Appa Rao stated: "We consider it a privilege for Sri Venkateswara University to lead AP PGCET–2025. Our team has taken all necessary steps to ensure the process is fair, inclusive, and seamless for all aspirants. With bilingual question papers, special arrangements for differently-abled candidates, and efficient scheduling, we are ready to deliver a student-friendly examination experience. "Key Highlights: "1. G.O. No. 44 Compliance: AP PGCET–2025 is conducted as per G.O. No. 44. Subjects like Performing Arts, Tourism, and Life Sciences have been grouped for broader opportunities, with 31 subjects in total. "2. Bilingual Question Papers: All non-language sub-

jects will be presented in both Telugu and English. Language-specific papers will be in their respective media. "3. Applications Received: 25,688 candidates have applied. Though slightly lower than last year, participation remains significant. "4. Admission Reach: The exam will facilitate admissions into 143 PG programs across 17 state universities, offering nearly 25,000 seats. "5. Exam Centers: Examinations will be held at 30 centers across 13 districts of Andhra Pradesh and Hyderabad. "6. Exam Schedule: "Dates: June 9 to 12, 2025 "Sessions: "Morning: 9:00 AM – 10:30 AM "Afternoon: 12:30 PM – 2:00 PM "Evening: 4:00 PM – 5:30 PM "Subjects: "Day 1: 17 subjects "Day 2: 7 subjects "Day 3: 5 subjects "Day 4: 2 subjects "7. DSC Timing Adjustment: One Physical Education paper has been shifted from June 9 (morning) to June 10 (afternoon) to accommodate students appearing for DSC. No other changes to the schedule. "8. Competitive Subjects: Higher competition is noted in Chemical Sciences, Life Sciences, Computer Science, Botany, Zoology, and Mathematics. Moderate competition is seen in English, Telugu, History, Commerce, and Physical Education. "9. Support for Differently-Abled: 68 candidates with disabilities will appear for the exam. All required support and scribes are arranged. "10. Results & Admissions: Results are expected to be announced by June 25, 2025, followed by the admission process. "Candidates are reminded to strictly adhere to reporting times. Late arrivals will not be allowed to enter the exam halls. "For updates, visit: <https://cets.apsche.ap.gov.in>

India central to key supply chains; must be part of G7 discussions: Canadian PM Carney

GNS News Agency, June 7

India is the fifth largest economy in the world and it is central to a number of critical global supply chains, Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney has said, arguing that the leadership of the country must be part of discussions at the upcoming G7 summit. Mr. Carney's comments came after some of his political opponents in Canada criticised him for inviting Prime Minister Narendra Modi to the G7 summit in view of a probe into allegations of Indian links to the killing of a Khalistani separatist in 2023. Prime Minister Modi accepted Mr. Carney's invitation to attend the G7 summit during a phone conversation on Friday. Canada is hosting the G7 summit in the Alberta province from June 15 to 17 in its capacity as the current chair of the grouping. To a specific question on the case of killing of pro-Khalistan separatist Hardeep Singh Nijjar in 2023, Carney told reporters that it is not appropriate for him to comment as the legal process in the case is underway. The Canadian Prime Minister said the G7 summit will deliberate on a range of key issues including energy security, digital future, critical minerals and on partnerships in building infrastructure in the emerging and developing world. Mr. Carney suggested that he extended the invitation to Mr. Modi after talking to other G7 member countries. "There are certain countries that should be at the table for those discussions," he said when asked why PM Modi was invited when there have been allegations of Indian links to the Nijjar case. "India is the fifth largest economy in the world; effectively the most populous country in the world. [It is] central to a number of those supply chains; [it is] at the heart of a number of those supply chains, so it makes sense," he said. Without elaborating, Mr. Carney noted that India and Canada have agreed to



continue law enforcement dialogue. "Bilaterally, we have now agreed importantly to continue law enforcement dialogue. There has been some progress on that... recognises issues of accountability," he said. Canada's NDP party slammed Mr. Carney for extending the invitation to Mr. Modi. This decision is profoundly troubling," it said. The India-Canada relations hit rock bottom following then Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's allegations in 2023 of a potential Indian link to the killing of Nijjar. In October last year, India recalled its High Commissioner and five other diplomats after Ottawa attempted to link them to the Nijjar case. India also expelled an equal number of Canadian diplomats. However, Liberal Party leader Mr. Carney's victory in the parliamentary election in April triggered hopes for reset of the relationship. In the last few months, the security officials of India and Canada resumed contacts and both sides were looking at the possibility of appointing new high commissioners. India had ac-

Extreme poverty in India down to 5.3% in 2022-23: World Bank



GNS News Agency, June 7

India's extreme poverty rate declined sharply to 5.3% over a decade from 27.1% in 2011-12, even as the World Bank revised upwards its threshold poverty line to \$3 per day. Given India's inflation rate between 2017 and 2021, a revised extreme poverty line of \$3 would constitute a 15% higher threshold than \$2.15 expressed in 2021 prices and result in a 5.3% poverty rate in 2022-23, the World Bank said in a report.

In India, the report said, 54,695,832 people lived on less than \$3 per day in 2024. Thus, the poverty rate at \$3 per day (2021 PPP - percentage population) is 5.44% in 2024. The extreme poverty rate decreased from 16.2 to 2.3% between 2011-12 and 2022-23, while the poverty rate at the lower middle-income country (LMIC) line declined by 33.7 percentage points, it said. Free and subsidised food transfers supported poverty reduction, and the rural-urban poverty gap narrowed. The five most populous states account for 54% of the extremely poor, it said. With regard to economy, the report said, real GDP of India was around 5% below the pre-pandemic trend level as of FY25.

Growth should gradually converge back to potential over 2027-28 assuming the current global uncertainties are resolved in an orderly fashion, it said. "The outlook, however, is subject to significant downside risks, as policy shifts may continue to unfold globally. Elevated trade tensions would dampen demand for India's exports and further delay the recovery in investment," it said. The current account deficit is expected to average around 1.2% of GDP over FY26-28 and remain adequately financed by capital inflows, it said, adding that foreign exchange reserves are projected to remain stable around 16% of GDP.

"India has lifted 171 million people from extreme poverty in the decade between 2011-12 and 2022-23," the World Bank said. "Over the past decade, India has significantly reduced poverty. Extreme poverty (living on less than \$2.15 per day) fell from 16.2% in 2011-12 to 2.3% in 2022-23, lifting 171 million people above this line," the World Bank had said in its 'Poverty & Equity Brief' in India in April. The rural extreme poverty dropped from 18.4% to 2.8%, and urban from 10.7% to 1.1%, narrowing the rural-urban gap from 7.7 to 1.7 percentage points a 16% annual decline, it had said.

Shinde offers seat in his chartered flight to woman in urgent need of kidney transplant after she misses plane



Deputy Chief Minister Eknath Shinde on Friday offered a seat in his chartered flight to a woman in urgent need of a kidney transplant after she missed her commercial flight to Mumbai, enabling her to reach the city on time for her surgery.

GNS News Agency, June 7

Deputy Chief Minister Eknath Shinde on Friday offered a seat in his chartered flight to a woman in urgent need of a kidney transplant after she missed her commercial flight to Mumbai, enabling her to reach the city on time for her surgery. The incident occurred on Friday at Jalgaon airport, where Shinde had arrived after attending the Sant Muktabai Palkhi departure ceremony in Muktanagar. A delay in his return to Mumbai unexpectedly coincided with a medical emergency that required immediate travel.

The patient, Sheetal Borde, a resident of Jalgaon district, was on her way to Mumbai for a scheduled kidney transplant. However, by the time she reached the airport, her commercial flight had already departed, leaving her distressed about the possibility of missing her critical surgery. According to officials, at that very moment, she learned that Deputy Chief Minister Eknath Shinde's chartered plane was set to depart for Mumbai from the same airport. She shared her situation with some party workers present at the airport. They informed Minister Girish Mahajan, who then requested Deputy CM Shinde to allow the woman and her husband to travel with him to Mumbai.

The Deputy CM agreed immediately, saying, "If needed, my two officers will stay back in Jalgaon, but I will definitely take my beloved sister with me to Mumbai," Shinde reportedly told Mahajan.

Festive offer According to officials, when she learned that Deputy Chief Minister Eknath Shinde's chartered plane was set to depart for Mumbai from the same airport, she shared her situation with some party workers present. According to officials, when she learned that Deputy Chief Minister Eknath Shinde's chartered plane was set to depart for Mumbai from the same airport, she shared her situation with some party workers present. Borde and her husband were then accommodated on the chartered aircraft. During the flight, Shinde is said to have enquired about her health and treatment. On arrival in Mumbai, a special ambulance was arranged, and she was admitted to the hospital without delay. Jalgaon Guardian Minister Gulabrao Patil, who confirmed the incident, said, "Shinde saheb's actions once again reflect his commitment to helping those in need. His approach to public service is rooted in compassion."

Noble Gesture: Body Donated to Medical College for Medical Research.“



“PS Ashokan“Indian Chronicle“June 6”“In a remarkable act of altruism, the family of the late Sri Pegada Lakshmi Narayana fulfilled his noble wish of donating his body to benefit future generations of medical professionals. Inspired by his desire to contribute to society even after death, the family ensured that his body would serve as a valuable resource for medical education and research.”“According to details, Sri Lakshmi Narayana, a respected resident of Sultanabad mandal, passed away on Friday night due to health complications. Honouring his final wish, his family coordinated with the Sadasaya Foundation to donate his mortal remains to Prathima Institute of Medical Sciences, Karimnagar.”“Following a consultation with Dr. Merugu Bhishma Chari, National Secretary of Sadasaya Foundation, the body was respectfully handed over to the medical college with the active support of the institution.”“The act has been widely lauded by several dignitaries and institu-

tions. Paying rich tributes to the selfless donor, Dr. Kishan Reddy, Vice Principal and Head of Anatomy at Prathima Medical College, along with Sadasaya Foundation National President Sri Shravan Kumar, General Secretary Sri Lingamurthy, Secretary Dr. Bhishma Chari, and Honorary President Sri Sana Ramakrishna Reddy, conveyed their heartfelt appreciation.”“Special acknowledgements were extended to the family members who stood by this humanitarian cause — Sri Pegada Rajamouli, Ramesh, Ailayya, Parusha Ramulu, Chandu, Srinivas, Anjaneyulu, Kishan, and Suryam. Advisors and volunteers including Sri Nooka Ramesh, Publicity Secretary Sri Vasu, and Sri Muthyala Narasayya also commended the act.”“This noble gesture not only honours the memory of the departed but also sets a powerful example of service to humanity, inspiring others to consider body donation as a legacy of learning and compassion.

Jan Suraj Party pitches Prashant Kishor as Bihar’s ‘most popular’ CM pick - a look at its poll strategy



GNS News Agency,June 7

“Declare Nitish Kumar as the Chief Minister candidate if he is the face of the NDA,” challenged Jan Suraj Party (JSP) founder Prashant Kishor on May 30, as he toured the state in his ‘Bihar Badlav Yatra’. Mr. Kishor, a political strategist, who was instrumental in strategising several political campaigns, including those of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Nitish Kumar, is setting himself up as a third alternative in Bihar beside the Mahagathbandhan (RJD-Congress-Left) and the National Democratic Alliance (BJP-JDU-LJP). Speaking to The Hindu, on Thursday (June 5, 2025), JSP working President Mr. Manoj Bharti pitched Mr. Kishor as a potential CM candidate. “He is the most popular choice for CM in Bihar. The whole country and Bihar should forget about Nitish Kumar in the coming election. There is just no way that he can be in any position to drive anything in the next government. We are not going to form any coalition with anyone before or after polls. We will not join anyone just for the sake of forming a government,” says Mr. Bharti.

Since October 2022, Mr. Kishor has been touring Bihar on foot, highlighting key issues like unemployment, migration, and inflation in the State, spanning 5000 kilometres across 17 districts. Two years later, he launched the ‘Jan Suraj Party’ with a ‘human first’ approach, aiming to build a Bihar where ‘people from Gujarat, Maharashtra, Haryana and Punjab come in search of work.’ Within days, his new party’s popularity among the masses was tested. While JSP failed to open its accounts in the November 2024 by-polls held for four seats – Ramgarh, Belaganj, Imamganj and Tarari— Mr. Kishor expressed satisfaction with polling 10% of the total votes in these seats. Prashant Kishor has been active in strategising poll campaigns since 2012. After successfully aiding Mr. Modi in his re-election as Gujarat CM in 2012 and later in 2014 as Prime Minister, Mr. Kishor first forayed into Bihar in 2015. Bringing rivals Lalu Yadav and Nitish Kumar together as the ‘Mahagathbandhan,’ Mr. Kishor was instrumental in limiting BJP to a mere 58 seats in the 243-member Assembly. Despite Mr. Kumar’s shifting loyalties, he retained Mr. Kishor as his political advisor, even appointing him JD(U)’s vice-president and his potential ‘successor.’ However, Mr. Kishor’s stint with JDU came to an end in 2020 after he vociferously opposed the party’s support for the passing of the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA). Expelled from JDU in January that year, Mr. Kishor launched ‘Baat Bihar Ki’ — a campaign to attract people to help him find Bihar its ‘rightful place among top 10 States of India in next 10-15 years.”In the following two years, Mr. Kishor hit the ground with his ‘Baat Bihar Ki’ campaign, undertaking a padyatra across the State. Targeting Mr. Kumar for the poverty in Bihar, he claimed that the NDA’s 15-year regime had brought no development to the state. As a caste survey was done across Bihar, Mr. Kishor questioned why Mr. Kumar had not increased the reservation limit, disbursed financial aid to poor and homeless families, or handed over land rights to Dalit farmers. JSP has promised to decide on the implementation of these promises once it forms government. In October 2024, Mr. Kishor announced the launch of JSP based on five principles, including a one-year tenure for its party president and two years for its council members, and selection of poll candidates in a process similar to the primaries held by parties in the United States. JSP has promised to announce initial nominees in March and the final candidate for every seat by November. The party has promised to advocate for the ‘Right to Recall’ system for public representatives and to display both Mahatma Gandhi and Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar on their official flag.JSP’s entry was opposed by RJD, which accused Mr. Kishor of acting as a ‘B-Team of BJP.’ Seeking to frame Mr. Kishor’s entry as a ploy to pit the OBCs and the upper castes against each other, RJD MP Misa Bharti said, “Who is Prashant Kishor Pandey? Pandeys have this business of abusing Yadavs.” In response, Mr. Kishor chose Madhubani-born Manoj Bharti, a former diplomat and a Dalit, as the party’s first working president, promising to build a

developed Bihar.In November 2024, JSP faced its first electoral test as it fielded candidates for the by-elections in Tarari, Ramgarh, Belaganj and Imamganj, as their MLAs were recently elected to Lok Sabha. In Tarari, JSP fielded Kiran Singh against BJP’s Vishal Prashant — son of baahubali (strongman) Narendra Kumar Pandey — and CPI-ML’s Raju Yadav. BJP managed to wrest the seat from CPI-ML, while JSP finished a distant third with 5622 votes. In Ramgarh, JSP fielded Sushil Singh Kushwaha against BJP’s Ashok Kumar Singh and RJD’s Ajit Kumar Singh in a bid to woo the Kushwaha community and capitalise on the division of votes. However, BJP managed to wrest this seat too from RJD as JSP finished fourth with 6513 votes. In Belaganj, which has a sizable Muslim and Extremely Backward Classes (EBC) population, JSP fielded Mohd. Amjad against two heavyweights — Vishwanath Kumar Singh of RJD and Manorama Devi of JDU. Mr. Kishor’s gamble failed as JDU’s Manorama Devi, wife of baahubali Bindi Yadav, trumped Mr. Amjad by a margin of 56,049 votes. In Imamganj, JSP fielded Jitendra Paswan, a well-known pediatrician from the area, against Deepa Santhosh Manhi of NDA ally Hindustani Awam Morcha (Secular), who is the daughter-in-law of party chief Jitan Ram Manjhi. Mr. Paswan failed to dent Ms. Manjhi’s vote share as he polled 37,103 votes. In the wake of the poll drubbing, former MPs Devendra Prasad Yadav and Monazir Hassan quit the party. However, Mr. Kishor remained undeterred, making a slew of promises to be fulfilled if voted to power – lifting prohibition and spending the liquor tax revenue on education, offering low-interest loans to working class with better disbursement, and providing a monthly pension of ₹2000 for senior citizens. JSP has also promised land reforms and easy loans to women with the State government providing the required guarantee.JSP also received a boost after Nitish Kumar’s estranged aide R.C.P Singh merged his outfit Aap Sabki Awaz party with it on May 18, 2025. Mr. Singh, a former IAS officer known for his booth-level organisational skills in the JDU, fell out with Mr. Kumar and was removed from the Union Cabinet in October 2024. He has since then been a harsh critic of Mr. Kumar, calling Bihar’s bifurcation and the prohibition a mistake. “According to some estimates, almost ₹20,000 crore of tax revenue from liquor is not being utilized. Prohibition is only on paper. Liquor is not available in shops but is available for home delivery. Anyone who wants to consume it can get it at a premium price. A huge section of officers are earning ill-gotten money through corruption and in the name of stopping liquor sale, half of the police force is trying to control it and trying to have a piece of the cake,” explains Mr. Bharti. Factors affecting JSP’s strategy and its prospectsThe passage of the Waqf (Amendment) Act, 2025, during this year’s Parliamentary Budget Session gave rise to questions about the potential impact on the polls in Bihar, where Muslims make up around 18% of the population. According to a Lokniti-CSDS survey, the Mahagathbandhan has cornered the Muslim votes in the past three decades. In 2005, the Mahagathbandhan cornered 40% of the Muslim vote, while NDA polled only 4% of the community’s votes.In subsequent elections (2010, 2015 and 2020), Nitish Kumar’s shifting loyalties have swayed the Muslim vote towards either coalition. With the NDA, JDU helped the coalition by polling 21% support from Muslims, while RJD polled 32% of the Muslim votes, and Congress, which did not ally with the RJD, got 22% votes. In 2015, JDU allied with RJD and cornered the support of 69% of Muslims, while NDA got only 6% of the community’s vote share. Five years later, 76% of Muslims voted for the RJD-Congress combine while only 5% of Muslims supported the NDA. “We have a selection process which entails feedback from the ground from the village level, from the block level, from the division level before evaluating candidates. Per seat, atleast 5-10 potential candidates have been nominated of which one will be chosen,” he says. The party is following the same pattern to identify candidates as that used by political consultancy firm Indian Political Action Committee (I-PAC) — an organisation founded by Mr. Kishor.Instead of castes, JSP has divided Bihar society into five broad classes – forward, backward, extremely poor, Muslims and Dalits. “Based on their percentage in the population, as per the caste census that was done in Bihar, we will distribute tickets for all 243 seats. For example, Muslims constitute 18-19%, so they will be given 40 seats,” says Mr. Bharti. When asked if a Muslim candidate will be chosen in a Muslim-majority constituency, he says, “Yes, that will be the main criteria.” Mr. Kishor has hinted at his own poll debut from Raghapur. The seat has been held by Lalu Yadav’s chosen heir, Tejashwi Yadav, since 2015. Not ruling out a potential clash between Mr. Kishor and the RJD scion, Mr. Bharti says, “Mr. Kishor has said that he has no problem fighting from any seat the party decides, including Raghapur.

Detained in Doha: Tech Mahindra Qatar head’s parents plead for justice

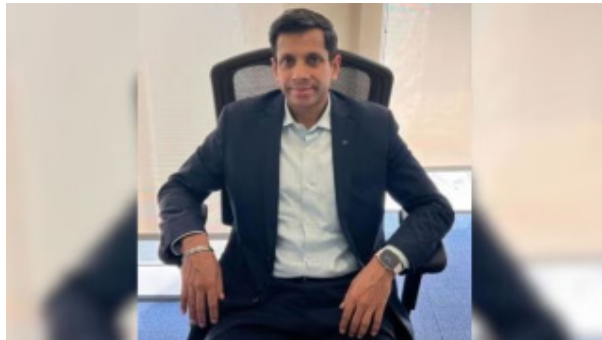
GNS News Agency,June 7

A paneer paratha made by his mother and an English version of the Bhagvad Gita handed over by his parents to “help find courage” in the darkest hour are the straws of hope that 45-year-old Amit Gupta — the Region Head of Tech Mahindra for Qatar and Kuwait — has been grasping at, over six months after he was allegedly detained by authorities in Qatar in January for “unknown reasons”.His parents have travelled from Vadodara to Doha, camping there since May this year, to provide ‘moral support’ to their son, even as the anguish continues for the family seeking justice.Retired ONGC employee JP Gupta (73) and his wife Pushpa (65) have been granted weekly half an hour in-person meetings with Amit, who remains confined in “a room without windows” at an undisclosed detention center in Doha since January. When they first met Amit on their arrival in May, the Guptas said he “cried like a child”. JP Gupta says, “Since he was taken into custody on January 1, he has not been informed till date what are the charges against him; neither is there any formal case that we are aware of. He has been locked in a room since that day, with no human interaction. When we met him, we could see that it had taken a toll on his health. He only cries for help and asks us to speak to those who can help. We have been telling him that we are trying every possible avenue but we have not found any glimmer of hope yet...”

Gupta adds that they handed over an English version of the Bhagvad Gita to Amit to “help him find courage”.

Gupta says, “The authorities allowed us to bring food for him in the last two meetings... He had asked his mother to bring paneer paratha. We were able to take one piece of paneer paratha... We gave him the English Bhagvad Gita ... we were not allowed to hand over the Hindi version. It is our hope that in these small interactions, he will hold on to his inner strength, which is fast depleting... All we have been asking for is a fair trial. If there is a crime he has committed, let the Qatari authorities prosecute him and end this uncertainty. At least tell us what is the reason that he is in such confinement...”The parents described that the meeting was facilitated with the intervention of the Embassy of India while Amit’s company, Tech Mahindra, has extended logistical support to allow the parents to travel to Doha to meet Amit.

parents of detained Amit in Doha Qatar Amit’s parents, retired ONGC employee JP Gupta and his wife Pushpa have been camping there since May this year, to provide ‘moral support’ to their son”Tech Mahindra applied for our visas and also arranged for our tickets. They had also arranged for our stay at a hotel, but we requested them to allow us to stay in Amit’s apartment here...” said his parents.”We met with the Ambassador of India to the State of Qatar and the Embassy of India has told us that it has been trying its best but the Qatari authorities have been



saying that they are preparing a report... It appears that without an intervention at the ministerial level, authorities in Doha have refused to entertain the pleas. We can only implore that our numerous letters to the Prime Minister’s Office (PMO) and Minister of External Affairs S Jaishankar’s office should be heard for the safety of our son,” his father said.”They tell us that the lawyer can only interact once the case comes to the court... We have learnt that the Qatar authorities did inform the local court that they need to extend his custody but at the end of the stipulated period, the courts granted extension without considering the pleas of Amit’s lawyers... Amit has no information about what is happening outside. We have been allowed to meet about four times — for half an hour on Sundays. At the main gate of the detention centre, our passports are taken and a vehicle is sent to the road to ferry us inside the facility... We are then frisked, and our belongings deposited. We are taken to a room and made to wait for about 15 minutes before Amit is brought out for a face to face interaction. He only keeps crying... They last interrogated him in January and thereafter, he is only in solitary confinement,” shares his father.This is the second visit of the senior-citizen couple to Doha since Amit’s detention. Although the couple has sought an extension of visa to stay back, they feel that being in Doha will not expedite the case against their son.”We are only keen on staying back to be able to meet him and give him strength. Over the phone, he expresses extreme thoughts and it leaves us worried... It is an ordeal, not just for him but for the entire family that is awaiting his release. It is our request that the Indian government must intervene to initiate the process as it may be. We are only seeking basic human rights for our son. If the Indian government does not intervene in such matters, where should common Indians go?” Gupta says.Amit moved to Doha in 2013 to work with Tech Mahindra and has been elevated to the position of Region Head of Qatar and Kuwait, reporting to his Dubai-based manager. He was detained on January 1 for an alleged probe, details of which are yet to be disclosed by the Qatari authorities.

Wanted man held after dramatic standoff as he threatens to jump off building



GNS News Agency,June 7

Wanted man held after dramatic standoff as he threatens to jump off building.Tomar was allegedly earlier involved in six police cases.A man wanted in several cases registered at different police stations across Ahmedabad was apprehended on Saturday following a dramatic stand-off — he allegedly stood on the ledge of a residential building, and threatened to jump, said police.The Detection of Crime

Branch (DCB) of the Ahmedabad City Police said the accused, identified as Abhishek alias Shooter Sanjaysinh Tomar, was absconding for some time.A tip-off was received that the accused was present at Shivam Awas in the Odhav area. Acting on this information, a team went to apprehend him.

The accused then locked the apartment door from inside and did not open it even after being instructed to do so. He climbed out onto the ledge from the balcony adjacent to the kitchen, said officials.When the team forcefully broke open the door and entered the flat, they found the accused near the kitchen area. Upon seeing the team, he moved to the edge of the ledge and started livestreaming a video on social media using his mobile phone, threatening to jump off.

The Crime Branch team immediately informed the Fire Department and the control room and took necessary action. The accused was ultimately detained using appropriate force.Tomar was allegedly earlier involved in six police cases. He was currently wanted in three different cases, said officials.

As Pune gears up for Pride March tomorrow, a transgender couple faces bureaucratic hurdles as they wait to tie the knot

GNS News Agency,June 7

Nearly two years ago, the Supreme Court, in a landmark judgment, affirmed the rights of transgender persons in heterosexual relationships to marry under existing laws. Priti, 29, a transgender from Jamshedpur who aspires to be a beautician and is waiting to tie the knot with Pune-based Trinay, 34, a transman legally recognised as male on his Aadhaar card, however faces several challenges to exercising this right.

“I have my TG Identity card and like any other woman, I want to be a wife, parent, and live with my husband. However, it has been more than one and a half years since the judgment but our transgender community still awaits this right,” Priti said. She hopes to raise this issue at the 13th Annual Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex, and Queer Pride March to be held in Pune on Sunday.Priti, who has passed Class 12 and worked in the hotel management sector, is yet to be accepted by her family. “I am a transgender person, not a sex worker. I want to become a beautician and earn my living. Mujhe jeena hai (I want to live),” Priti said. She met Trinay on an online portal, and before long, they forged a deep connection as they opened up about their personal struggles, finding strength and understanding in each other’s stories.Trinay, assigned female at birth, but who always felt like a male deep inside, had experienced several challenges due to his situation. “I wanted to pee like a boy, and wear tight T-shirts. Menstruation would give me panic attacks,” recalled Trinay, who works at a tech firm in the city. Deciding that he could not live this dual life anymore, he eventually transitioned to a male after undergoing gender affirming surgery.Speaking to The Indian Express, Trinay said, “Priti and I have been doing the rounds of the marriage registrar’s office only to return disappointed. Instead of guiding us on the online application process and other details, we were asked to obtain a court order.”The duo met Bindumadhav Khire, an LGBTQI activist and director of Bindu Queer Rights Foundation, Pune, and spoke about their difficulty in registering their marriage under the Special Marriage Act, 1954. “Both of them have the requisite IDs. The transman has a collector-issued ID with gender stated as ‘male’ and the other transgender person has a collector-issued ID with the gen-

der stated as ‘transgender’ as per provisions of the Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Act, 2019 and the corresponding Rules (2020). I too approached the Marriage Registrar, but was told that they have not received any notification with regard to the legality of registering the marriage of transgender people. So they have to obtain an order from the high court or a notification from the government in this regard,” Khire told

The activist later filed a grievance in May on the Centralized Public Grievance Redress and Monitoring System to the Ministry of Home Affairs/Legislative Matters seeking a notification by the central government, to all states and Union territories, on the legality of registering the marriage of a transgender person in a heterosexual relationship. Khire, who received a response on June 6, said that suggestions made in the grievance have been noted by the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment. “We now hope that action will be taken in this case,” Khire said.

When contacted, senior lawyer Anand Grover said that as per the top court’s ruling, there was no legal prohibition on transgender individuals from getting married.Meanwhile, at the Marriage Registrar’s office, authorities said that the process is now online and they have not received any application from transgender persons so far. While experts said it was likely that some registration offices may require guidance from higher authorities, if they have not previously handled such registrations, Khire said that it was important that LGBTQI rights granted by the Supreme Court do not remain only on paper.”This LGBTQI Pride Month, it is important that LGBTQI rights granted by the Supreme Court are implemented in letter and spirit. Transgenders who were granted legal recognition in the 2014 judgment (National Legal Services Authority v/s Union of India) still await their right to marry the person of their choice,” Khire added.As per the Supreme Court judgment dated October 17, 2023, in the case involving one Supriyo Chakraborty, the apex court stated, “.....Consequently, we agree with the conclusion...that transgender persons in heterosexual relations have the right to marry under existing laws, including in personal laws regulating marriage. The court’s affirmation of the HC judgment in Arun Kumar v Inspector General of Registration...is based upon a correct analysis.”

One of the first research-driven private university to be established in Kolkata



GNS News Agency,June 7

Kolkata’s The Chatterjee Group Centres for Research and Education in Science and Technology (TCG CREST) has been awarded ‘Deemed to be University’ status by the Ministry of Education, enabling it to establish one of the first research-driven private university in India with a unique “reverse trajectory” model. This new institution will commence Ph.D. admissions in August 2025, focusing on multidisciplinary, fundamental, and translational research across key emerging fields. “With this recognition, the Government of India has entrusted us with both a significant challenge and a profound opportunity to contribute to nation-building,” said Purnendu Chatterjee, Founding Chairman of TCG CREST. He also added that scientific and tech-

nological advancement is essential for improving the human condition worldwide and for strengthening India’s national security, driving economic growth, and alleviating poverty. TCG CREST’s model reverses traditional academic structures. They are building research centres first and then launching degree programs. They will launch post-graduate degrees soon and plans to venture into starting graduate programs in the future.

The institute will comprise five schools, including the School of Natural Sciences; School of Mathematical and Computer Science; School of Health, Environment & Sustainability Studies; School of Humanities & Social Sciences; and School of Economics. Professor Malabika Sarkar, mentor at TCG and former Vice-Chancellor of Presidency University and Ashoka University said that this initiative will make students of the new generation better equipped to address the dynamic needs of the job market in India. “There will be a very large number of P.h.D seats. It all depends on the quality of the application, there is no bar on the numbers,” Prof. Sarkar told The Hindu. She also added that masters programs will start in 2026, and will be focused programs to help students develop skills and become more employable and keep up with the changing societal standards. Established in 2020, by The Chatterjee Group, TCG CREST has quickly emerged as a key player in the global science and technology innovation landscape.

Why is the RBI changing gold loan rules? | Explained



GNS News Agency,June 7

The story so far:On April 9, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) released draft directions on loans against gold collateral with the objective to harmonise the regulatory framework across regulated entities (banks and Non-Banking Financial Companies (NBFC)) and address differences in lending practices.

What was the response to the proposals?

Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M.K. Stalin wrote to Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, seeking her intervention, pointing out that the proposal was likely to result in “serious disruptions to the rural credit delivery system in Tamil Nadu and across many parts of south India”. The Ministry of Finance clarified that it has asked the RBI to ensure that the regulations on gold loans do not adversely impact small gold loan borrowers. It also noted that the new rules would be implemented only by January 1, 2026. Mr. Stalin had said that gold-backed loans serve as a primary source of short-term agricultural credit, especially for small farmers, and those engaged in allied sectors such as dairy and poultry.

Why did the RBI want to step in?

The draft directions come in the backdrop of the RBI highlighting irregular practices amid a significant increase in the loan-against-gold jewellery portfolio of some lenders in September 2024. In the last fiscal, the combined loans against gold jewellery portfolio of banks and NBFCs was estimated to have grown by over 50%; for banks alone, the business more than doubled, growing at 104%, which set alarm bells ringing. The draft directions on loans against gold collateral aim to harmonise the regulatory framework across regulated entities and address the differences in lending practices. The directions aim at protecting the interest of borrowers; to provide clarity on certain credit and operational processes followed by lenders; and to enhance transparency and disclosure. C.V. Rajendran, Adviser, Arvog, said, “The draft circular comes at a critical juncture when rising gold prices and widening credit gaps are prompting more individuals, especially from the informal economy, to pledge household gold for short-term liquidity.”

What are the key changes?

The maximum Loan-To-Value (LTV) ratio remains capped at 75%. For consumption-based bullet loans, accrued interest must also be included in the LTV calculation, which effectively reduces the disbursed loan amount. “With LTV at disbursement likely to reduce to ensure compliance, this could impact growth in this portfolio,” said Subha Sri Narayanan, director, Crisil Ratings.The draft proposes that borrowers furnish proof of ownership for the gold that will be used as collateral. Lenders are required to implement uniform procedures for assessing the purity and weight of gold. As per the RBI draft, gold accepted as collateral shall be valued based on the price of 22 carat gold. Concurrent loans for both consumption and income-generating purposes are to be prohibited. Loan renewals or top-ups are to be permitted only if the existing facility is classified as standard and complies with the prescribed LTV ratio. Borrowers must pay the entire outstanding amount, including both principal and interest, on the loan’s maturity date to avail a fresh loan. If the lending institution delays returning the col-

lateral to the borrower beyond seven working days after loan repayment, then the lender is liable to pay the borrower a compensation of ₹5,000 per day for each additional day of delay.

How will changes impact regulated entities?

The changes are expected to reduce the flexibility of borrowers and curtail the ability of NBFCs to renew/top-up loans seamlessly. It will lead to increased compliance burden due to documentation, DSCR (debt service coverage ratio) norms, and monitoring. Smaller NBFCs that rely on re-pledging for liquidity will face funding constraints, leading to potential market consolidation. The higher operational costs could be passed on to borrowers through increased interest rates or charges. “Banks and NBFCs may need to reduce their current gold loan LTVs at disbursement to comply with these revised norms, potentially slowing down growth,” said Sankar Chakraborti, MD & CEO, Acuité Ratings & Research Limited.

Will a one-size-fits-all policy work?

Gold loans serve as a lifeline for many rural and semi-urban households, often being the only accessible source of formal credit. The RBI may consider creating differentiated regulatory norms for micro gold loans versus structured high-value gold loans.

What will be the impact on borrowers who pledge gold to avail a loan?

Gold loans, as a product, is positioned as a quick service loan with high flexibility in terms of repayment. Most borrowers mainly opt for gold loans to fund their short-term and immediate requirements. The draft directions from RBI are expected to enhance the disclosures and transparency which will help borrowers in their decision-making.Nevertheless, the draft directions (if applied in their current form) will lead to revision in LTV computation which in turn could possibly reduce the quantum of loan offered to borrowers on same quantity of gold collateral, or alternately, may require the borrower to pledge higher quantity of gold for the same loan amount, ceteris paribus.Borrowers may also need to better manage their cashflows to adhere to the requirement of repayment of the entire accrued interest for availing renewals or top-up loans.

The 75% LTV cap may limit the loan amounts disbursed, possibly impacting borrowers who need larger amounts. The elimination of re-pledging of gold would pressure borrowers to repay the entire loan at once, possibly impacting borrowers’ liquidity.Prohibition on financial gold (such as gold mutual funds and ETFs) as collateral may limit options for some borrowers.

With gold prices appreciating, how beneficial will the new norms be?

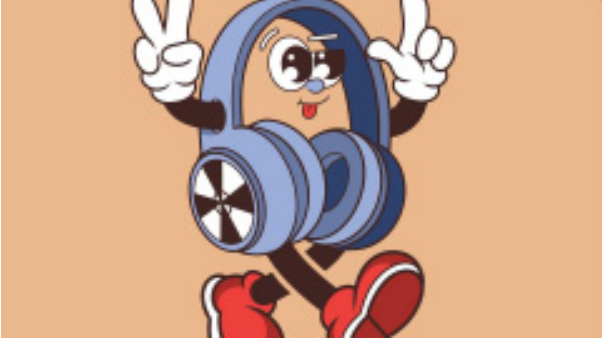
The appreciation in gold commodity prices does contribute to the growth momentum in gold loans, in general. Therefore, in the current scenario when gold prices are on the upturn, gold loans are likely to witness healthy growth.However, if the draft directions are implemented in their current form, it may lead to a slower growth pick-up for NBFCs focused on gold loans than may have otherwise been the case; this would largely stem from directions pertaining to LTV and renewal/top-up of bullet loans.Also, it is pertinent to note that as a standard practice, lenders take the previous 30-day moving average while calculating gold commodity value for any loan disbursement. Hence, any sharp appreciation or fall in commodity prices may not have an immediate impact on gold loan growth.Additionally, lenders do maintain sound risk management practices in order to counter the risk associated with the volatility in gold prices. The draft directions will also ensure a stricter and standardised practice for LTV breaches.“All in all, these draft directions will further structurally strengthen the sector to manage the gold price volatility cycles and also create a level-playing field across REs in terms of practices followed,” said Mr. Narayanan.

billion transactions during 2024-25, which represents a 41 per cent year-on-year increase. In value terms, UPI transactions rose to Rs 261 lakh crore from Rs 200 lakh crore in FY24. “The success of UPI placed India in a leadership position with a share of 48.5 per cent in global real-time payments by volume,” the RBI said.

Total digital payments in the country, including transactions through payment systems, card networks, and prepaid payment instruments (PPIs), grew 35 per cent to 221.9 billion in FY25, from 164.4 billion transactions in FY24. In value terms, total digital payments surged 17.97 per cent to Rs 2,862 lakh crore.

The RBI also said it remains committed to extending UPI to 20 countries by 2028-29. Acceptance of Indian UPI apps via QR codes has already been enabled in Bhutan, France, Mauritius, Nepal, Singapore, Sri Lanka, and the UAE, allowing Indian tourists, students, and business travellers to make merchant payments using their domestic UPI apps.

The lonely walk



The walkers’ morning routine begin only after they firmly don their headphones or earphones. As soon as the gadgets are on, a virtual bubble is formed with the song defining its boundary. As they hit the road, they are consciously restricted to the bubble, and these invisible zones around them are countless as they pass by a dozen people just like them down the road, timing their footsteps to their songs and blissfully unaware that they are not alone in their sojourn.On a typical morning walk, I myself find music to be an unobtrusive companion that pushes me to maintain my stride. The same song plays at the same time at the same place I walk through daily, and it isn’t surprising that I inevitably meet the same people. Walkers and runners like myself are nothing but strangers to each other, content in their state of unfamiliarity and living in their personal musical bubbles.The bubble often blocks out the outside world

that seeks to engage with the individual in the form of greetings from friends or acquaintances. The beats of the song firmly reinforce the personal bubble, allowing no cracks to appear in the invisible dome as one runs down the same road, oblivious to the call from a friend they just passed by. What could have been a break in a mundane morning routine continues as a ritual that seems to demand a sacrifice — a chance to interact with a tangible world distinct from the melody-induced one.

However, music is only a catalyst to the creation of a personal space, and does not isolate the walker by itself. The main tool that the personal bubble is created with is the revered earpiece, and as a friend mentioned in passing, there need not be any music playing through it. The very appearance of the device points to a need for a personal sphere, which fellow walkers know better than to violate.A personal space that transports the walker to another realm, either one of silent reflection, or one with virtual interactions with those not physically present with us on our walk, is what the earpiece creates.As I take in my surroundings on a mundane evening stroll, I realise that an elderly man’s earphones transport him to a comforting era of 1980s movie hits. A college student runs by, her headphones transmitting life lessons from the fitness influencer she idolises.A young working professional jogs along, his earpiece connecting him with his parents living on the other side of the world. While these random individuals are brought closer to the people they are unable to physically be with, they are taken away from the people who actually are with them.

‘DBSE will be phased out, no point in having two Boards’

GNS News Agency,June 7

As the Delhi government completed first 100 days, Education Minister Ashish Sood, in an interview with The Hindu, speaks about the government’s achievements in the field of education, plans to set up CM Shri Schools, introduce new subjects like Rashtraneeti and Science of Living, regulate fee hikes in private schools, and gradually phase out the Delhi Board of School Education (DBSE), which was introduced by the previous Aam Aadmi Party government

What are some of the biggest achievements in the first 100 days in the field of education?

Two major achievements stand out. First, we have initiated a 360-degree transformation of schools. CM Shri Schools, which will match private schools in infrastructure and quality, are being launched. These schools will have smart boards, AI tools to assist teachers, and language labs. All verticals of the National Education Policy (NEP) will be integrated into the curriculum.Second, we have addressed the issue of fee exploitation in private schools. A new law has been introduced to protect Delhi’s common man from being overcharged. This legislation will ensure relief from unjustified fees.

Since the new law is yet to be passed, how will fees be regulated this academic session?

We aim to implement it soon and ensure that any excess fees charged are refunded to parents. In cases like DPS Dwarka, we sent a committee led by the District Magistrate. Today, parents have received justice in court thanks to that intervention.

Will new CM Shri Schools be built, or will existing DBSE schools be repurposed?

We don’t have the time to build entirely new structures right away, so in the initial phase, we are upgrading existing buildings. Just like Pratibha Vidyalayas were converted to Dr. Bhim Rao Ambedkar Schools of Specialised Excellence (SOSEs), some CM Shri Schools will be developed similarly. Others will come up gradually as new institutions.

Will the Delhi Board of School Education (DBSE) be phased out?

Yes. We haven’t taken any new admissions under DBSE this year, and it will be phased out. There is no logic in having two Boards in one State. The previous govern-



ment created confusion. We already have the CBSE, and the DBSE is linked to the International Baccalaureate Board, which is a separate Board altogether. This dual system does not make sense.

There were issues regarding funding 12 Delhi government-funded Delhi University colleges. Has that been resolved?

We’re resolving that. On April 1, we released the grant-in-aid for the quarter, which addresses salary and infrastructure concerns. We want to avoid academic disruptions. New governing bodies will also be formed as per the law.

What will be taught under the new subjects ‘Rashtraneeti’ and ‘Science of Living’?

Science of Living will address stress and anxiety in children through yoga, meditation, and emotional wellness. Teachings from spiritual leaders like Sri Sri Ravi Shankar, Baba Ramdev, and Jaggi Maharaj will be incorporated.

Rashtraneeti will focus on civic responsibility, patriotism, environmental awareness, and values such as keeping the Yamuna clean. The curriculum is under development, and classes will begin this academic year.

What lies ahead?

Our biggest concern is that Delhi’s poor parents should not be extorted, which is why we want to ensure strict enforcement of the new law. Additionally, we plan to launch a school ranking system, like in colleges, to encourage healthy competition. Government and private schools will be ranked separately and together, so they can compete and be on par with each other.

U.N. glaciers' meet: India says Pakistan violating Indus Waters Treaty through terrorism



GNS News Agency,June 7

India has said that Pakistan should stop blaming it for the breach of the Indus Waters Treaty, as the unrelenting cross-border terrorism from its soil is interfering with the treaty’s implementation.Addressing the plenary session of the first U.N. conference on glaciers in Tajikistan’s Dushanbe on Friday, Minister of State for Environment Kirti Vardhan Singh said that Pakistan itself was violating the treaty through terrorism."We are appalled at the attempt by Pakistan to misuse the forum and to bring in unwarranted references to issues which do not fall within the purview of the forum. We strongly condemned such an attempt," he said.Mr. Singh said it is an undeniable fact that there have been fundamental changes in circumstances since the Indus Waters Treaty was signed, which requires a reassessment of the treaty’s obligations. These changes include technological advancements, demographic changes, climate change and the ongoing threat of cross-border terrorism, he said.

The Minister said that the treaty’s preamble states it was concluded in the spirit of goodwill and friendship, and that honouring the treaty in good faith is essential."However, the unrelenting cross border terrorism from Pakistan interferes with an ability to exploit the treaty as per its provisions."Pakistan, which itself is in violation of the treaty, should desist from putting the blame of the breach of the treaty on India," he said.At the International Conference on Glaciers’ Preservation, Pakistan Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Friday said his country would not allow India to cross the red line by holding the Indus Waters Treaty in abeyance and endangering millions of lives for narrow political gains."India’s unilateral and illegal decision to hold in abeyance the Indus Waters Treaty, which governs the shar-

ing of the Indus Basin’s water, is deeply regrettable," Pakistani newspaper Dawn quoted Mr. Sharif as saying.Following the April 22 terrorist attack in Pahalgam, Jammu and Kashmir, which killed 26 people, India announced the suspension of the treaty as part of several punitive measures against Pakistan.The Indus Waters Treaty, signed in 1960 between India and Pakistan with the World Bank as a signatory, governs the sharing of the Indus River system’s waters between the two countries.The three-day UN conference on glaciers, which ends on Saturday, aims to highlight the important role of glaciers in maintaining global ecological balance and addressing water-related challenges.The conference is being attended by over 2,500 delegates from 80 UN member states and 70 international organisations.

India taps to pay — Thanks to UPI

Hyderabad: Cash? Card?... And UPI said, ‘No Thanks.’ Now even the guy selling idli and vada on bikes takes digital payments!Till some time back, one would dig through wallet and pocket to even pay for a tea. Now, from the tea to vegetables to a cigarette to even gold or silver, payments are just a click away.That’s the way UPI has metamorphosed the entire gamut of transactions, making life easy for both consumer and the trader. This simple change happening millions of times daily across India is the magic of UPI.For people across a wide spectrum of society, UPI cuts out countless small headaches. Paying electricity used to mean long queues. Now, it takes seconds in your phone app. Sending money to your parents in your hometown? It arrives before you can put your phone down, safely and cheaply.For small businesses, your neighbourhood kirana store owner, the vegetable vendor, or the auto-rickshaw driver, UPI is a game-changer.UPI has quietly woven itself into the fabric of everyday India. It takes away the friction of cash, saves time and worry, and gives small businesses a powerful, affordable tool.From the busiest city market to the quietest village lane, UPI is making life flow smoother. It is not magic, it is UPI and it puts the power of easy payments right in your hands."The rapid adoption of UPI payments has changed my habits to the extent that I rarely carry cash anymore. However, this reliance on digital transactions can backfire, especially during travel when cash is unexpectedly required." — Shaheen Ahmed"UPI really had changed the way I use money. I don’t carry cash much now, and no tension even if I forget my purse at home, because my phone is enough.

Hamis seeks changes in US Gaza proposal, Witkoff calls response 'unacceptable'



CAIRO/JERUSALEM, GNS News Agency,June 7, Hamas said on Saturday it was seeking amendments to a U.S.-backed proposal for a temporary ceasefire with Israel in Gaza, but President Donald Trump's envoy rejected the group's response as "totally unacceptable."The Palestinian militant group said it was willing to release 10 living hostages and hand over the bodies of 18 dead in exchange for Palestinian prisoners in Israeli prisons. But Hamas reiterated demands for an end to the war and withdrawal of Israeli troops from Gaza, conditions Israel has rejected.

The Reuters Tariff Watch newsletter is your daily guide to the latest global trade and tariff news. Sign up here.A Hamas official described the group's response to the proposals from Trump's special Middle East envoy Steve Witkoff as "positive" but said it was seeking some amendments. The official did not elaborate on the changes being sought.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said that while his government had agreed to Witkoff's outline, Hamas was continuing its rejection of the plan. "Israel will continue its action for the return of our hostages and the defeat of Hamas," he said in a statement.Hamas said in a statement: "This response aims to achieve a permanent ceasefire, a complete withdrawal from the Gaza Strip, and to ensure the flow of humanitarian aid to our people in the Strip."The document containing Hamas' response, seen by Reuters, demands that Gaza residents be allowed unrestricted travel through the Rafah crossing and that the movement of goods be resumed.

It calls for restoring Gaza's infrastructure, including electricity, water and sanitation, and seeks permission for building materials needed to repair hospitals, health centres, schools, and bakeries across the strip.Under the Hamas plan, which the document says is guaranteed by Trump and mediators Egypt and Qatar, Israel would stop all military activity in Gaza when the ceasefire agreement goes into effect, and aid would be delivered by the United Nations, the Red Crescent and other agreed channels.

The Palestinian group said it would provide information about the number of living and deceased Israeli hostages held in Gaza in exchange for details about Palestinian prisoners detained since Hamas attacked on October 7, 2023."President Trump will personally announce the ceasefire agreement. The U.S. and President Trump are committed to ensuring serious negotiations until a final agreement is reached," the document says.The proposals envisage a 60-day truce and the exchange of 28 of the 58 hostages still held in Gaza for more than 1,200 Palestinian prisoners and detainees, along with the entry of humanitarian aid into the enclave.Senior Hamas official Basem Naim denied any rejection of Witkoff's proposal but said Israel's response was incompatible with what had been agreed. He accused the U.S. envoy of acting with "complete bias" in favour of Israel.

A Palestinian official familiar with the talks told Reuters that among the amendments Hamas is seeking is the release of the hostages in three phases over the 60-day truce and more aid distribution in different areas. Hamas also wants guarantees the deal will lead to a permanent ceasefire, the official said.Israel has previously rejected Hamas' conditions, instead demanding the complete disarmament of the group and its dismantling as a military and governing force, along with the return of all 58 remaining

Ukraine destroyed more than 40 military aircraft in drone attack deep inside Russia: official

GNS News Agency,June 7

Smoke rises above the area following what local authorities called a drone attack on a military unit in the Sredny settlement, in the course of Russia-Ukraine conflict in the Usolsky district of the Irkutsk region, Russia, in this still image from a video publishedSmoke rises above the area following what local authorities called a drone attack on a military unit in the Sredny settlement, in the course of Russia-Ukraine conflict in the Usolsky district of the Irkutsk region, Russia, in this still image from a video published Governor of Irkutsk Region Igor Kobzev via Telegram/Handout via A Ukrainian drone attack has destroyed more than 40 Russian planes deep in Russia's territory, a Ukrainian security official told The Associated Press on Sunday (June 1, 2025), while Russia pounded Ukraine with missiles and drones a day before the two sides meet for a new round of direct talks in Istanbul.

The official, who spoke on condition of anonymity to disclose operational details, said the attack took over 1 1/2-year to execute and was personally supervised by Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy.The operation saw drones transported in containers carried by trucks deep into Russian territory, he said.The drones reportedly hit 41 bombers stationed at several airfields on Sunday afternoon, including the Belaya air base in Russia's Irkutsk region, more than 4,000 kilometres (2,500 miles) from Ukraine.It is the first time that a Ukrainian drone has been seen in the region, local Gov. Igor Kobzev said. He also said in a statement that the drone had been launched from a truck.Russian officials in the Ryazan and Murmansk regions also reported drone activity on Sunday afternoon, but did not give further details.The attack came the same day as Mr. Zelenskyy said Ukraine will send a delegation to Istanbul for a new round of direct peace talks with Russia on Monday.In a statement on Telegram, Zelenskyy said that Defence Minister Rustem Umerov will lead the Ukrainian delegation. "We are doing everything to protect our independence, our state and our people," Zelenskyy said.

Ukrainian officials had previously called on the Kremlin to provide a promised memorandum setting out its position on ending the war before the meeting takes place. Moscow had said it would share its memorandum during the talks.Russian strike hits an army unit Russia on Sunday launched the biggest number of drones — 472 — on Ukraine since the full-scale invasion in February 2022, Ukraine's air force said.Russian forces also launched seven missiles alongside the barrage of drones, said Yuriy Ignat, head of communications for the air force. Earlier Sunday, Ukraine's

hostages.Trump said on Friday he believed a ceasefire agreement was close after the latest proposals, and the White House said on Thursday that Israel had agreed to the terms.Saying he had received Hamas' response, Witkoff posted on X: "It is totally unacceptable and only takes us backward. Hamas should accept the framework proposal we put forward as the basis for proximity talks, which we can begin immediately this coming week."Item 1 of 5 Palestinians walk with aid supplies which they received from the U.S.-backed Gaza Humanitarian Foundation, in the central Gaza Strip, On Saturday, the Israeli military said it had killed Mohammad Sinwar, Hamas' Gaza chief on May 13, confirming what Netanyahu said earlier this week.Sinwar, the younger brother of Yahya Sinwar, the group's deceased leader and mastermind of the October 2023 attack on Israel, was the target of an Israeli strike on a hospital in southern Gaza. Hamas has neither confirmed nor denied his death.

The Israeli military, which relaunched its air and ground campaign in March following a two-month truce, said on Saturday it was continuing to hit targets in Gaza, including sniper posts and had killed what it said was the head of a Hamas weapons manufacturing site.The campaign has cleared large areas along the boundaries of the Gaza Strip, squeezing the population of more than 2 million into an ever narrower section along the coast and around the southern city of Khan Younis.Israel imposed a blockade on all supplies entering the enclave at the beginning of March in an effort to weaken Hamas and has found itself under increasing pressure from an international community shocked by the desperate humanitarian situation the blockade has created.On Saturday, aid groups said dozens of World Food Programme trucks carrying flour to Gaza bakeries had been hijacked by armed groups and subsequently looted by people desperate for food after weeks of mounting hunger."After nearly 80 days of a total blockade, communities are starving and they are no longer willing to watch food pass them by," the WFP said in a statement.

The United Nations said on Friday the situation in Gaza is the worst since the start of the war 19 months ago, with the entire population facing the risk of famine despite a resumption of limited aid deliveries earlier this month."The aid that's being sent now makes a mockery of the mass tragedy unfolding under our watch," Philippe Lazzarini, head of the main U.N. relief organization for Palestinians, said in a message on X.Israel has been allowing a limited number of trucks from the World Food Programme and other international groups to bring flour to bakeries in Gaza but deliveries have been hampered by repeated incidents of looting.

A separate system, run by a U.S.-backed group called the Gaza Humanitarian Foundation, has been delivering meals and food packages at three designated distribution sites.However, aid groups have refused to cooperate with the GHF, which they say is not neutral, and say the amount of aid allowed in falls far short of the needs of a population at risk of famine.Israel denies operating a policy of starvation and says it is facilitating aid deliveries, pointing to its endorsement of the new GHF distribution centres and its consent for other aid trucks to enter Gaza.Instead it accuses Hamas of stealing supplies intended for civilians and using them to entrench its hold on Gaza, which it had been running since 2007. Hamas denies looting supplies and has executed a number of suspected looters.Israel began its offensive in Gaza in response to the Hamas-led attack on communities in southern Israel on October 7, 2023, which killed 1,200 people, according to Israeli tallies, and saw 251 taken as hostages into Gaza. The campaign has laid waste large areas of the Gaza Strip, killing more than 54,000 Palestinians and destroying or damaging most of its buildings, leaving most of the population in makeshift shelters.

Reporting by Nidal al-Mughhrabi and James Mackenzie; Writing by James Mackenzie and Matt Spetalnick; Additional reporting by Jaidaa Taha; Editing by Samia Nakhoul, Emelia Sithole-Matarise and Alistair BellOur Standards: The Thomson Reuters Trust Principles., opens new tabA senior correspondent with nearly 25 years' experience covering the Palestinian-Israeli conflict including several wars and the signing of the first historic peace accord between the two sides.



army said at least 12 Ukrainian service members were killed and more than 60 were injured in a Russian missile strike on an army training unit. The strike occurred at 12:50 p.m., the statement said, emphasising that no formations or mass gatherings of personnel were being held at the time.An investigative commission was created to uncover the circumstances around the attack that led to such a loss in personnel, the statement said.The training unit is located to the rear of the 1,000-kilometre active front line, where Russian reconnaissance and strike drones are able to strike.

Ukraine's forces suffer from manpower shortages and take extra precautions to avoid mass gatherings as the skies across the front line are saturated with Russian drones looking for targets."If it is established that the actions or inaction of officials led to the death or injury of servicemen, those responsible will be held strictly accountable," the Ukrainian Ground Forces' statement said.Northern pressure Russia's Ministry of Defence said on Sunday that it had taken control of the village of Oleksiivka in Ukraine's northern Sumy region. Ukrainian authorities in Sumy ordered mandatory evacuations in 11 more settlements Saturday as Russian forces make steady gains in the area.Speaking Saturday, Ukraine's top army chief, Oleksandr Syrskiy, said that Russian forces were focusing their main offensive efforts on Pokrovsk, Toretsk and Lyman in the Donetsk region, as well as the Sumy border area.

Climate activist Greta Thunberg joins aid ship sailing to Gaza aimed at breaking Israel's blockade



GNS News Agency,June 7

Climate campaigner Greta Thunberg and other 11 activists set sail on Sunday (June 1, 2025) afternoon for Gaza on a ship aimed at "breaking Israel's siege" of the devastated territory, organizers said.The sailing boat Madleen — operated by activist group Freedom Flotilla Coalition — departed from the Sicilian port of Catania, in southern Italy.

It will try to reach the shores of the Gaza Strip in an effort to bring in some aid and raise "international awareness" over the ongoing humanitarian crisis, the activists said at a press conference on Sunday, ahead of departure.A drone view shows the Gaza-bound aid ship Madleen, organized by the international NGO Freedom Flotilla Coalition, anchored off the coast of Catania, Italy, o

"We are doing this because, no matter what odds we are against, we have to keep trying," Ms. Thunberg said, bursting into tears during her speech."Because the moment we stop trying is when we lose our humanity. And no matter how dangerous this mission is, it's not even near as dangerous as the silence of the entire world in the face of the live-streamed genocide," she added.Israel, which was founded in the aftermath of the Holocaust, has adamantly rejected genocide allegations against it as an antisemitic "blood libel."In mid-May, Israel slightly eased its blockade of Gaza after nearly three months, allowing a limited amount of humanitarian aid into the territory.U.N. agencies and major aid groups say Israeli restrictions, the breakdown of law and order, and widespread looting make it extremely difficult to deliver aid to Gaza's roughly 2 million Palestinians.

Regulating India's virtual digital assets revolution

GNS News Agency,June 7

India continues to lead in grassroots crypto adoption, for the second consecutive year in the 'Geography of Crypto' report by Chainalysis (2024). A National Association of Software and Service Companies (NASSCOM) report finds that Indian retail investors poured \$6.6 billion into crypto assets and predicts the industry could create over eight lakh jobs by 2030. India also boasts one of the largest and fastest-growing web3 developer cohorts.This vibrancy may seem surprising, given the rocky journey of crypto, known as 'Virtual Digital Assets' (VDA), in India, within the domestic regulatory and policy landscape. In May 2025, the Supreme Court of India questioned the absence of comprehensive and clear crypto regulation in India, with a remark, "Banning may be shutting your eyes to ground reality". This observation highlights the dissonance between VDA reality and VDA policy which has created significant challenges for regulators and market players.

India, as a country of strict capital controls and tightly regulated payment systems, has found it difficult to reconcile these frameworks with the decentralised nature of VDAs. The Reserve Bank of India (RBI), as the domestic regulator of monetary policy, began expressing concerns about the potential threats of crypto as early as 2013, highlighting the risks associated with their lack of authorisation from any central bank or monetary authority. Despite this warning, the market saw unassailed growth in India, leading the RBI to issue a second circular in 2018, barring financial institutions from dealing with VDA-related entities. This restriction proved short-lived, with the Court overturning the circular in 2020.The government then turned to prohibitive taxation policies as a stop-gap measure while appropriate regulations were formulated. In 2022, India implemented two key tax policies for VDAs under the Income Tax Act: a 1% tax deducted at source (TDS) on VDA transactions exceeding ₹10,000 under Section 194S and a 30% capital gains tax under Section 115BBH which disallows loss offsetting. Although these measures were designed to enhance transparency and curb speculation, their effectiveness has been limited.

Estimates by various industry reports and think tanks show that between July 2022 and December 2023, Indians traded over ₹1.03 trillion worth of VDAs on non-compliant platforms, with only 9% of the estimated ₹1.12 trillion in VDAs held on domestic exchanges. Offshore trading resulted in a loss of ₹2,488 crore in uncollected VDA tax revenue for India. Between December 2023 and October 2024, Indians traded over ₹2.63 trillion on offshore platforms. The cumulative uncollected TDS from offshore exchanges since July 2022 is estimated to exceed ₹60 billion, with the nine blocked exchanges accounting for over 60% of this trading volume. Efforts to block access to non-compliant platforms, such as URL blocking, had limited success. Trade volumes on blocked exchanges rebounded after temporary declines, and web traffic to these platforms rose by 57%. Users continued to bypass restrictions using virtual private networks

GNS News Agency,June 7

Mecca: Saudi Arabia has stopped more than 269,000 people without permits for the annual Hajj pilgrimage from entering Mecca, officials said Sunday, as authorities crack down on illegal journeys into the city. The government blames overcrowding at the Hajj on unauthorised participants. It also says they made up large numbers of those who died in last year's searing summer heat.The number of expulsions highlights the scale of unauthorised pilgrimages — as well as the demand to perform the Hajj. There are currently 1.4 million Muslims in Mecca officially, with more expected to arrive in the days to come.There are fines of up to \$5,000 and other punitive measures, like deportation, for anyone performing the Hajj without a permit. The policy includes citizens and those with Saudi residency.At a press conference in Mecca, officials said they had stopped 269,678 people without permits from entering the city. According to the rules, only those with permits are allowed to perform the pilgrimage, even if they live in the city year-round.

Among those joining the crew of the Madleen are "Game of Thrones" actor Liam Cunningham and Rima Hassan, a French member of the European Parliament who is of Palestinian descent. She has been barred from entering Israel due to her active opposition to the Israeli assault on Gaza.The activists expect to take seven days to get to their destination, if they are not stopped.Thunberg, who became an internationally famous climate activist after organizing massive teen protests in her native Sweden, had been due to board a previous Freedom Flotilla ship last month.That attempt to reach Gaza by sea, in early May, failed after another of the group's vessels, the "Conscience", was attacked by two alleged drones while sailing in international waters off the coast of Malta.The group blamed Israel for the attack, which damaged the front section of the ship, in the latest confrontation over efforts to send assistance to the Palestinian territory devastated by nearly 19 months of war.

The Israeli government says the blockade is an attempt to pressure Hamas to release hostages it took during the Oct. 7, 2023, attack that triggered the conflict. Hamas-led militants assaulted southern Israel that day, killing some 1,200 people, mostly civilians, and abducting 251. Hamas is still holding 58 hostages, 23 of whom are believed to be alive.In response, Israel launched an offensive that has killed over 52,000 Palestinians, mostly women and children, according to Gaza's Health Ministry, which does not distinguish between fighters and civilians. Israel's bombardment and ground operations have destroyed vast areas of the territory and left most of its population homeless.The Flotilla group was only the latest among a growing number of critics to accuse Israel of genocidal acts in its war in Gaza. Israel vehemently denies the allegations, saying its war is directed at Hamas militants, not Gaza's civilians."We are breaking the siege of Gaza by sea, but that's part of a broader strategy of mobilizations that will also attempt to break the siege by land," said activist Thiago Avila.Avila cited the upcoming Global March to Gaza -- an international initiative also open to doctors, lawyers and media -- which is set to leave Egypt and reach the Rafah crossing in mid-June to stage a protest there, asking Israel to stop the Gaza offensive and reopen the border.



(VPN), mirror platforms or servers, and by migrating to other non-compliant exchanges.Guidelines by global standard-setting bodies, such as the International Monetary Fund, Financial Stability Board, and the Financial Action Task Force, converge in favour of comprehensive and risk-based regulation that is harmonised with international standards (a process that is underway). However, these frameworks and regulations rely on domestic, compliant intermediaries or Virtual Asset Service Providers (VASP) that act as the bridge and eyes for regulators. These intermediaries facilitate the alignment of the VDA industry with existing laws and enforcement of policies, and enhance visibility over the ecosystem, while providing crucial inputs concerning on-the-ground issues.

In contrast, India's existing policy regime, which inadvertently pushes VDA users to offshore, non-compliant platforms, erodes the country's ability to mitigate the risks presented by VDAs, as well as tax revenues that may have otherwise been collected.In comparison, Indian VASP platforms are sharpening their teeth and maturing rapidly, having shown a willingness to comply with regulations and act in good faith. For example, their collaboration with the Financial Intelligence Unit-India has been instrumental in strengthening anti-money laundering and counter-terror financing controls, earning positive feedback from the Financial Action Task Force (FATF). The aftermath of the devastating hack in 2024, which wiped out \$230 million, further showcased proactive measures by Indian exchanges. Many stepped up efforts such as enhancing cyber security measures, setting up dedicated insurance funds in case of future thefts, and uniting to develop and enforce industry-wide cybersecurity guidelines.

Need for a frameworkThese possibilities signal the critical role played by VASPs towards a safer digital asset ecosystem. Combined with their contributions to national value creation and economic growth, these platforms present a more viable and constructive channel for funds to flow through under the oversight of Indian regulators. To move beyond the current policy stasis — where tax is levied without meaningful regulation — a balanced, pragmatic and future-proof regulatory framework is necessary. India must take decisive action to create the comprehensive legislation that the crypto industry requires while mitigating associated risks.

Over 2.5 lakh Muslims without Hajj permits stopped from entering Mecca

GNS News Agency,June 7

Mecca: Saudi Arabia has stopped more than 269,000 people without permits for the annual Hajj pilgrimage from entering Mecca, officials said Sunday, as authorities crack down on illegal journeys into the city. The government blames overcrowding at the Hajj on unauthorised participants. It also says they made up large numbers of those who died in last year's searing summer heat.The number of expulsions highlights the scale of unauthorised pilgrimages — as well as the demand to perform the Hajj. There are currently 1.4 million Muslims in Mecca officially, with more expected to arrive in the days to come.There are fines of up to \$5,000 and other punitive measures, like deportation, for anyone performing the Hajj without a permit. The policy includes citizens and those with Saudi residency.At a press conference in Mecca, officials said they had stopped 269,678 people without permits from entering the city. According to the rules, only those with permits are allowed to perform the pilgrimage, even if they live in the city year-round.

Officials have also imposed penalties on more than 23,000 Saudi residents for violating Hajj regulations and revoked the licenses of 400 Hajj companies.Lieutenant General Mohammed Al-Omari told the media: "The pilgrim is in our sight, and anyone who disobeys is in our hands."The Hajj is the annual Islamic pilgrimage to Mecca and involves a series of religious rituals. It's a once-in-a-lifetime obligation for every Muslim who can afford it and is physically able to do it.

But it has been marred in recent years by concerns about extreme temperatures, with pilgrims performing their rituals outdoors in peak daylight hours.Historically, deaths are not uncommon at the Hajj, which has seen at times over 2 million people travel to Saudi Arabia for a five-day pilgrimage. It has also seen fatal stampedes and other accidents.Saudi Arabia's Civil Defence said Sunday that drones were being used for the first time at the Hajj. These can be used for surveillance and monitoring, as well as extinguishing fires.

Indian diaspora in UK lauds Op Sindoor, PM Modi's leadership against terrorism



GNS News Agency, June 7

London: Members of the Indian diaspora in the UK have lauded the Prime Minister Narendra Modi-led Union government's decisive action against cross-border terrorism through Operation Sindoor and expressed pride in India giving a befitting reply to Pakistan-sponsored terror. The sentiments were echoed during an outreach programme organised by the Indian Embassy in the UK here on Sunday (local time), where an all-party Parliamentary delegation led by Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) MP Ravi Shankar Prasad engaged with the diaspora, highlighting India's unequivocal, unified and assertive stance against terrorism. The nine-member delegation includes — Ravi Shankar Prasad (BJP), Daggubati Purandeswari (BJP), Priyanka Chaturvedi (Shiv Sena-UBT), Ghulam Ali Khatana (BJP), Amar Singh (Congress), Samik Bhattacharya (BJP), M Thambidurai (AIADMK), former Union Minister MJ Akbar and former Ambassador Pankaj Saran, arrived in the UK capital late Saturday evening (local time).

The delegation was received by the High Commissioner of India to the UK, Vivek Doraiswami. Following the delegation's interaction with the Indian community in London on Sunday afternoon (local time), the members of the diaspora praised Operation Sindoor and PM Modi-led government's leadership. An Indian community member, while praising the Indian Armed forces for successfully carrying out 'Operation Sindoor', said: "This (Operation Sindoor) is a huge success. We (India) showed Pakistan in just five days what we are capable of doing and its impact has been felt in the whole world. As you can see Pakistan's military requested India to announce ceasefire so this operation is a great success. India has given a befitting reply to Pakistan and if the latter commits any misadventure then India will again enter Pakistan and give a fitting response. In a conflict, you never know on which side a bomb will explode but I think whatever happened is a lesson for Pakistan."

Another community member said: "I hail Operation Sindoor and Sindoor is not just an ornament for a married woman but is a symbol of India's unity and for safeguarding our husband's life. I hail Prime Minister Narendra Modi's leadership and support him. Violence and terrorism should not be tolerated at any cost... India has never attacked any

country but if someone attacks us then we need to give a befitting response to them which is the right and fair thing to do." A third community attendee said: "It is great to be here at the Indian High Commission in the UK... am really excited to hear what the Indian government officials have to say on Operation Sindoor and what happened recently in Kashmir. As a woman of Indian-origin who has family in India and travelled several times to Kashmir in the past as a tourist... I feel it is really important to hear the Indian government's stand on how Indians and anyone can feel safe and protected back home."

Another diaspora member said: "All Indian diaspora members have gathered today at the Indian High Commission in the UK here and speak on India's collective position on terrorism and whatever action India took was against giving terrorism a befitting response. However, the Pakistan Army and government supported terrorists and we have nothing against the people of Pakistan. We want peace between both India and Pakistan. But Pakistan removed the 'sindoor' of our sisters. We as members of Indian diaspora want to send a message to the whole world that India has done the right thing to launch Operation Sindoor against Pakistan. Operation Sindoor has not ended but only temporarily halted. India will finally take away Pakistan Occupied Kashmir (PoK) in the coming days or months and it will become a part of India. If Pakistan commits any further terror acts, India will again enter the neighbouring country's territory and give a befitting response." The all-party delegation led by BJP Ravi Shankar Prasad visited the Ambedkar Museum in London during its visit to the UK capital as part of India's outreach effort to convey India's unequivocal commitment to defeat terrorism. The delegation visited Ambedkar Museum in London and paid tributes to BR Ambedkar. According to sources, in commemorating Babasaheb's leadership and vision, the team of MPs also recalled that one of the most outrageous examples of Pakistan-abetted and directed terror began in Mumbai on November 26, 2008, "on the anniversary of the adoption of our Constitution on that day in 1949, the drafting of which was led by Babasaheb Ambedkar". The MPs emphasised the resolve of Indian democracy to confront and defeat terrorism in all its forms.

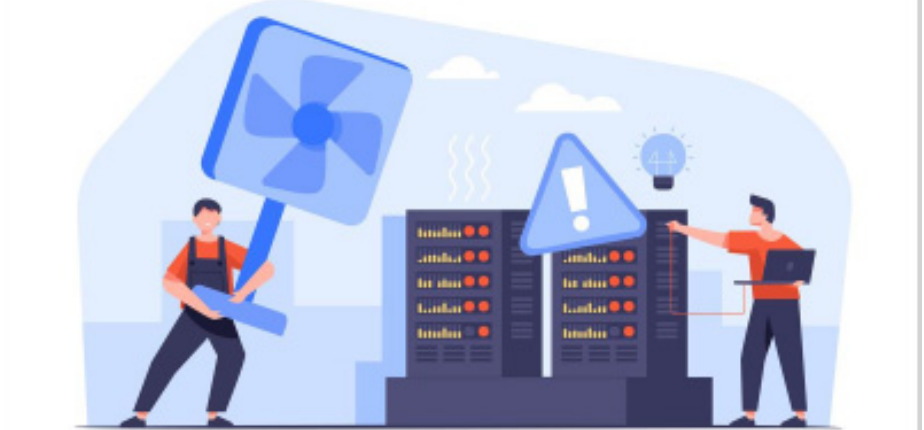
During their four-day visit to Britain, the delegation is scheduled to meet the Speaker of the House of Commons Lindsay Hoyle; Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) Minister for Indo-Pacific, MP Catherine West; members of the both Houses of the UK Parliament, and key representatives from media, think-tanks, and the Indian diaspora. The Indian Embassy in London earlier on X wrote: "An All-Party Parliamentary delegation comprising of former Ministers, members of Parliament, and a former Ambassador, led by Ravi Shankar Prasad, Member of Parliament, Lok Sabha, arrived in London late this evening. The Delegation is on a visit to the United Kingdom from May 31 to June 3, 2025, with a mission to convey India's unequivocal commitment to defeat terrorism."

How the technology industry is trying to meet its climate goals

A team of researchers from Microsoft and WSP Global has published a groundbreaking study in Nature demonstrating that advanced cooling methods like cold plates and immersion cooling can cut data centre emissions by 15-21%, energy use by 15-20%, and water consumption by 31-52% compared to traditional air cooling. The life cycle assessment, led by Husam Alissa of Microsoft, Mukunth Natarajan, and Praneet Arshi of WSP, among others, also provided actionable insights to help the Information and Communications Technology (ICT) industry meet its climate goals. "Our [life cycle assessment] has shown that reducing data centre energy use through advanced liquid-cooling technologies will lead to marked reductions in data centre environmental impacts," the authors wrote in their paper.

Electronics heat up like crowded kitchens: billions of microscopic switches (transistors) are like cooks working nonstop, bumping into each other while flipping electrical dosas (data). The tighter they are packed — that is smaller the chips are — or the more tasks they handle, the more they collide and create heat, just like a packed kitchen gets hotter, needing fans and ACs to cool down. A laptop is like a kitchen with one burner: a simple fan suffices. A data centre is like a thousand laptops working at full speed in a single room, generating heat like a massive bonfire compared to a single candle. Without cooling, the intense heat will melt the hardware in minutes. Heat slows down electrons, like runners in thick mud. If the chips get too hot, they may malfunction or altogether fail. Cooling keeps them running smoothly, ensures a longer lifespan and fast and reliable performance, and prevents heat damage. Just like an athlete needs water to stay sharp in a race, electronics need efficient heat removal.

In data centres, cooling consumes nearly as



much power as computing, like an AC fighting oven heat in a busy kitchen. To curb climate change, the ICT industry needs to cut emissions by 42% by 2030 (from its 2015 levels). Data centres need greener designs that use less energy and water, and have lower greenhouse gas emissions to help meet global climate goals and keep warming below 1.5°C. Urgent upgrades to energy, efficiency, and cooling are critical. Chips are also getting smaller, faster, and more energy-efficient, like upgrading your phone every year without draining the battery faster. As the demand for cloud services increases, so must data centre capacities and heat mitigation strategies. Two prominent cooling technologies have emerged as viable alternatives. Cold plates, also known as direct-to-chip cooling, are small heat exchange modules equipped with microchannels to enhance heat transfer. Think of a cold plate like an ice pack strapped to a feverish forehead, but for computer chips. It sits directly on hot components, with small coolant-filled channels absorbing heat into tiny channels filled with coolant.

When it becomes warmer, the coolant — such as 25% polyethylene glycol and 75% water — flows away and dumps the heat outside, while fresh coolant entering the veins keep the cycle going. This method is more efficient than fans the

same way swapping a handheld fan for an ice-cold bath is better. In a cold-plate system, the liquid-to-air heat transfer ratio ranges from 50% to 80%, sometimes more. The second technique, immersion cooling, is like dunking a hot frying pan into a pool of heat-hungry oil instead of blowing air on it. The oil, which is good at dissipating heat within itself, soaks up 100% of the pan's heat and keeps it from overheating. In the one-phase cooling method, like swirling cold water around the pan, the oil stays liquid but carries heat away. In two-phase cooling, the technique works the way water cools in a mud pot: the coolant fluid bubbles into vapour at a low temperature, rises into a cooling coil, condenses, drips back down, and repeats. "These techs cut corrosion, boost reliability, and slash carbon footprint — all while running silent without fans," the researchers wrote. Pioneers like Microsoft and Alibaba are already deploying these systems at scale.

Green or just less dirty?

To truly lower the carbon footprint of cooling technologies, scientists, policymakers, and lawmakers need to weigh its full impact. While the new solutions are innovative, they face hurdles. Coolant fluids involve different regulations, and complex designs delay deployment. Using them is like swapping plastic straws for paper: they are greener, but not without trade-offs. The world could end up trad-

ing one ecological problem for a different, even worse, one. If the electricity for an electric car comes from a coal power plant, the car's carbon footprint is still high. Similarly, cooling gains can backfire if pollution is merely shifted elsewhere. The study team's cradle-to-grave life cycle assessment evaluated air-cooled, cold-plate, and immersion cooling across emissions, energy, and water use, proving that sustainability demands systemic thinking, not isolated fixes. Twin engines of a green data centre The assessment revealed that with grid electricity, cold plates and immersion cooling cut greenhouse gas emissions by more than 15%, energy use by more than 15%, and water consumption by more than 31% — making them superior to conventional cooling technologies in use today. With 100% renewable energy, the team found the cuts could jump to 13% for emissions, 15% for energy, and 50% for water. "Switching to renewables slashes emissions by 85-90%, energy use by 6-7%, and water demand by 55-85%, regardless of cooling tech," the researchers wrote. Thus, life cycle assessments can reveal sustainability trade-offs either within the same cooling technology or when comparing different technologies. Ultimately, the calculus is clear: ICT's climate future hinges on tackling how the industry cools its data centres.

Indian summers are getting hotter, but is it the heat or is it us?



Every summer, a familiar question surfaces across India, echoing from homes to newsrooms: is it genuinely hotter, or have we simply become more sensitive? This isn't just some nostalgic lament or biological quirk. The evidence is clear and uncompromising: India's heat is intensifying, creeping in earlier, stretching longer, and striking deeper than ever before. What's happening isn't a trick of perception. It's real. Heat waves, once occasional and brief, have become persistent forces reshaping daily life and work. According to the India Meteorological Department, a heat wave is declared when the temperature reaches at least 40° C in the plains or 30° C in the hills, with a deviation of 4.5° C or more above normal for at least two consecutive days. These thresholds, once rare, are quickly becoming the standard during summer months. In states like Odisha and Rajasthan, what used to be brief seasonal heat spikes now stretch into longer, more frequent episodes, cumulatively spanning months. Between June 2010 and the summer of 2024, cumulative heat wave days soared from roughly 177 to 536 — a staggering increase of over 200%. Heat wave days count the total number of days on which heat wave conditions are recorded across all affected regions. Since heat waves strike different places at different times, these days are summed nationally, so the total may surpass the length of the summer season in any single location.

Despite the increasing severity of heat waves, official data likely underrepresents their true impact. Various government departments collect and report heat-related deaths using different methods and sources, which can lead to variations in the numbers presented. Between 2000 and 2020, India recorded 20,615 heatstroke deaths, according to government records. However, many heat-related fatalities occur outside hospitals — at homes, construction sites or village farms, for example — where medical assistance and formal death certification may not always be accessible. As a result, deaths triggered by heat are often recorded under broader causes like cardiac arrest or respiratory failure. The absence of standardised, mandatory heat-related death reporting and real-time surveillance means many such deaths remain uncounted, creating challenges for public health planning and response. Independent researchers and organisations have sought to address this gap using excess mortality analysis: comparing actual deaths during heatwave periods with long-term seasonal averages. While some critics question the accuracy of these estimates and the methods used, excess mortality analysis remains a widely accepted and robust epidemiological tool. It captures both direct and indirect deaths related to heat, including those misclassified under other causes such as cardiac arrest or kidney failure, which are often missed in official counts. For instance, the Global Burden of Disease study estimated approximately 155,937 heat-related deaths in India in 2021, encompassing fatalities from heat waves, prolonged exposure to high temperatures, and heat-aggravated conditions. Given the known underreporting in official data, such model-based estimates provide a more comprehensive and realistic picture of the true human toll of extreme heat.

The human toll of heat waves is paralleled by significant economic damage. The 2022 heatwave reduced wheat yields in key producing regions by approximately 4.5%, with some districts experiencing losses up to 15%. This disruption contributed to inflationary pressures on food commodities worldwide. Simultaneously, the heatwave triggered a power crisis as electricity demand surged to an all-time high of 207 GW, straining the grid and causing blackouts in some areas. Labour productivity in outdoor sectors such as construction and agriculture suffered dramatically, as workers faced an impossible choice between enduring hazardous heat exposure or forfeiting income. According to the McKinsey Global Institute, heat-related productivity losses could jeopardise between 2.5% and 4.5% of India's annual Gross Domestic Product by 2030, underscoring the urgent need for adaptive policies.

Ironically, India once knew how to live with heat. From the mud homes of Odisha to the sandstone courtyards of Rajasthan, generations designed spaces to cool without electricity. Rural routines followed solar rhythms: work began at sunrise, paused during peak heat, and resumed in the evening. Architecture used breathable materials like lime, thatch, and mud, keeping homes cooler than today's concrete structures. In cities, water-cooled courtyards, shaded alleys, stepwells (baoli), and perforated stone screens (jaali) created microclimates. These systems weren't folklore: they were practical responses to climatic conditions, embedded in culture and community. A vivid example of this traditional wisdom is Navtapa, meaning "nine

days of heat". Observed from May 25 to June 2, it marks the sun's entry into Rohini Nakshatra and was considered the most intense stretch of the summer. While rooted in astrology, Navtapa aligns closely with modern heat wave data. In this time, communities avoided heavy meals, rested during the midday, drank hydrating mixes like buttermilk and sattu, and provided shade and water for livestock. These practices, while culturally grounded, reflect sound physiological and environmental sense, and are today supported by modern science. Why did these traditions wane? Not because they were ineffective but because modern development models evolved differently. Post-liberalisation planning favoured speed and scale, often overlooking climate sensitivity. Glass façades and concrete homes replaced breathable structures. Labour shifted from flexible agricultural cycles to more rigid, outdoor, informal urban jobs. Planning codes like the National Building Code don't mandate passive cooling. Real-estate finance rarely supports traditional materials. Without institutional support or economic incentives, these practices couldn't be sustained or scaled.

Meanwhile, India's formal response to heat is gradually evolving. Notably, Ahmedabad's heat action plan, implemented in 2014, has been associated with a significant reduction in heat-related mortality in the city, with an estimated 1,190 deaths avoided annually in its initial years. Cities such as Bhubaneswar and Nagpur have initiated efforts to increase green cover and promote rooftop measures aimed at reducing heat absorption. However, many heat action plans remain largely advisory, often lacking binding mandates, dedicated budgets or clear accountability mechanisms. Only a few cities have appointed trained climate officers or integrated heat considerations into their urban master plans. Public cooling shelters are limited in number, and awareness campaigns frequently rely on digital platforms that may not effectively reach regional language speakers, migrants, daily wage workers, and non-literate populations. The rural landscape tells a tougher story. Despite most heat-vulnerable populations residing there, India still lacks a solid rural heat governance framework. Key programmes — including the Gram Panchayat Development Plans, the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act, and the National Health Mission — barely touch on heat issues. Unlike cities, villages have no counterpart to urban heat action plans. Panchayats often struggle with limited funding, staffing, and training, leaving them ill-equipped to set up cooling measures or modify work timings. Age-old water bodies, tree cover, and stepwells faded away, unsupported and overlooked. Many rural deaths remain invisible, depriving policymakers of crucial data.

Beyond the bricks and mortar, a deeper gap persists: a disconnect between science and how people actually experience heat. Most don't grasp the "feels like" temperature, which factors in humidity, solar radiation, and wind along with air temperature. So when the thermometer says 42° C, the body might be battling conditions closer to 50° C. That hidden burden, far beyond mere numbers, causes dehydration, heat exhaustion, and heatstroke. Public health messages rarely translate this into everyday terms, leaving too many unaware and vulnerable to the real dangers. Equally important is how heat alerts are communicated. In many parts of India, advisories are issued in Hindi or English, shared via apps and social media that assume literacy, smartphone access, and digital fluency. This approach may exclude millions, especially the rural poor, migrants, and older citizens. Heat warnings should not be confined to digital platforms. They must be delivered through oral announcements, local radio, posters, community workers, and trusted institutions in regional languages. Inclusive communication must reach every corner, every community. Otherwise, awareness remains partial and fragmented. India stands at a crossroads with a chance to harness the wisdom and experience already woven into its fabric. Immediately, districts — urban and rural alike — can start rolling out heat action plans tailored to their realities guided by the Disaster Management Act 2005. These won't be abstract policies but grounded actions: pinpointing heat hotspots, setting up shaded rest spots, ensuring water access, and sending alerts that people trust and understand.

Looking beyond the immediate, national programmes like the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana, the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act, and the National Health Mission offer a canvas to embed climate sensitivity. Think reflective rooftops, more trees, natural ventilation: elements that cool homes and livelihoods alike. With financial channels like the Fifteenth Finance Commission and District Mineral Funds, local governments gain the muscle to scale these interventions fairly and effectively. Down the line, real transformation demands more than isolated efforts. Building codes must evolve to favour passive cooling, urban and rural designs should be inclusive by default, and institutions must learn to speak the same language. Clear roles for the India Meteorological Department, National Disaster Management Authority, the State Disaster Management Authorities, municipal bodies, and village Panchayats are essential. Such coordination lets India shift from scrambling through heat emergencies to anticipating and managing them with resilience. Knowledge isn't the bottleneck. India's heritage of traditional practices alongside modern science forms a rich foundation. The challenge lies in blending these, backed by political will and cohesive policy, to ready India for its hottest years ahead.

Whose mountain is it, anyway?

On May 18, five people from the National Institute of Mountaineering and Adventure Sports (NIMAS) scaled Mt Khangchendzonga from the Nepal side, prompting expressions of concern and protest by civil society groups and Sikkim Chief Minister Prem Singh Tamang. Sikkim's native population holds the mountain sacred and the State government disallows attempts to climb it or scale its peak from the Indian side. One side of Mt Khangchendzonga faces Nepal, a country that hasn't instituted a similar ban and which the NIMAS team took advantage of.

There has been a resurgence of the assertion of spiritual beliefs over mountains of late. Mountains are important sources of water, which is increasingly becoming a strategic resource. They straddle geo-dynamic features we need to know to understand the land we live on. But in a world grappling with the effects of climate change, mountain ecosystems worldwide also rank among the most vulnerable. This renders the stewardship provided by indigenous communities important, especially in the form of indigenous knowledge that allowed people to coexist sustainably with their environs for centuries. Of course, there are other reasons to respect indigenous communities' beliefs, including building resilient societies and redressing historical injustice. In parallel, there is still a need to understand mountains from scientific and military points of view, and physical access often yields the best data. The resulting tensions have become more pronounced in the last two decades or so. As the recent incident illustrates, the key has always been stakeholder involvement and scientists and military personnel being okay with hearing the word 'no'.

This is why work on the Thirty-Meter Telescope (of which India is a government-level member) was stalled from 2014 after the Kanaka Maoli community protested its construction on their sacred Mauna Kea. Native Hawaiians have also opposed the U.S. Space Forces AMOS-STAR project on the Haleakala shield volcano on similar grounds. Atacameño communities in Chile have warned of "spiritual" loss over the construction of telescopes in Cerro Armazones and Cerro Paranal. In many instances, governments presume scientific and defence needs should override indigenous rights. Surveys to assess eco-spiritual rights are often conducted after indigenous groups have mounted large protests, and not before the project is commissioned. The India-based Neutrino Observatory (INO) faced similar opposition over locals' inability to access a temple located near the planned project site thanks to the presence of police personnel. While the INO scientists have said the police shouldn't have been present, much less denying access to the area, the incident only illustrates the sort of heavy-handedness large and expensive projects open the door to while denying indigenous communities their rights. Fortunately, however, thanks to the initiative of civil society groups led by youth, the election of indigenous individuals to government positions, technological advances, and the pressures of climate adaptation and sustainability, the legal instruments available to assert indigenous rights are becoming sharper. The UN principle of 'free prior and informed consent' of indigenous peoples is bolstered by its Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) and convention 169 of the International Labour Organisation.

Checkmate to cognitive decline: Unleashing the transformative power of chess in India



I indulged in a seven-week sabbatical in India, a deliberate pause to rejuvenate my mind and spirit. Surrounded by the warmth of my family and immersed in the familiarity of my hometown, I found the perfect sanctuary to refocus on my doctoral pursuits. The comforts of home and the absence of solo responsibilities afforded me the luxury of dedicating myself fully to my studies – a welcome reprieve from the juggling act of living independently, working full-time, and shouldering a multitude of obligations. Just as my academic momentum began to build, I craved further cognitive stimulation. My mind began to wander back to neurobics, a subject dear to many in my family. Memories of my childhood chess classes resurfaced, and I recalled how, despite my mother’s considerable investment, I had never truly applied myself. Now, an inexplicable yearning to relearn the game emerged, and I decided to start by playing with my mother and grandfather, both formidable players. Their suggestion that I resume formal training sparked a renewed passion within me. As I recommenced coaching, I felt an invigorating sense of cognitive vitality, a newfound sense of identity, and an unexpected tranquility. My cognitive output was optimised, and I was astonished by the profound impact of this simple board game on my mental well-being. The experience was nothing short of revelatory, leaving me awestruck by the game’s multifaceted benefits.

In the verdant expanse of India’s intellectual terrain, the venerable game of Chaturanga took root, germinating a profound legacy of philosophical and strategic thought that would flourish for centuries. This ancient precursor to modern chess was an apt metaphor for the classical Indian army, with its four constituent divisions – infantry, cavalry, elephants, and chariots – serving as a potent allegory for the delicate interplay of power, wisdom, and artistry. As Chaturanga traversed the Silk Road, it absorbed and assimilated diverse influences, evolving into the sophisticated game of Shatranj in Persia and eventually, the modern game of chess in Europe. Yet, despite its geographical and cultural migrations, the Indian essence of the game remained an indelible thread, weaving together the narrative of a civilisation that has consistently prized intellectual refinement and strategic brilliance. Today, India’s resurgence in chess supremacy is a testament to its enduring intellectual legacy. Luminaries like Praggnanandhaa and Vidit Gujrathi embody the very essence of strategic brilliance, foresight, and analytical acumen that once characterised the nation’s monarchs and scholars. Their mastery of the game is a powerful echo of India’s storied past, where intellectual pursuits were revered as the highest form of artistic expression.

To engage in the game of chess in India is to participate in a rich cultural dialogue that transcends time and space, invoking the ghosts of ancient strategists and philosophers who once wielded the game as a tool for intellectual refinement. Each move on the board reflects the eternal quest for equilibrium, echoing the Vedic concept of “Rita” – the cosmic order that governs the universe. In India, chess represents a sublime confluence of art, philosophy, and strategy, a synthesis that spans centuries and civilisations. The game remains an enduring testament to India’s intellectual heritage, a bridge that spans the ancient and modern, symbolising the nation’s timeless genius and its unwavering commitment to the pursuit of knowledge and wisdom. As you immerse yourself in the strategic world of chess, the game’s cognitive demands expertly hone your mental faculties. Memory plays a pivotal role, as recalling intricate patterns, strategies, and moves becomes second nature. This rigorous mental exercise yields a profound impact on both short-term and long-term memory, fortifying your ability to retain and retrieve information. The deliberate planning of each move, guided by the dual objectives

of protecting your pieces and outmaneuvering your opponent, cultivates logical thinking, analysis, and abstract problem-solving. This cerebral training enhances critical thinking, fosters creative solutions, and refines your ability to navigate complex situations.

The cognitive benefits of chess are multifaceted: it boosts intelligence quotient, stimulates innovative thinking, and provides a mental reprieve for creatives facing artistic blocks. Moreover, the sustained attention required to play chess improves focus and concentration, counteracting the detrimental effects of excessive screen time and digital distractions. By engaging in this timeless game, you sharpen your mental edge, cultivating a more agile, adaptable, and resilient mind. Emerging neuroscientific research positions chess as a potent catalyst in the battle against neurodegenerative disorders and mental health afflictions. By harnessing the game’s cognitive demands, individuals can bolster their cerebral resilience, fostering a profound impact on dementia prevention. Chess enhances cognitive reserve – the brain’s capacity to withstand pathological insults – by stimulating neuroplasticity in the prefrontal cortex and hippocampus, regions pivotal to memory and executive function. A landmark longitudinal study published in The New England Journal of Medicine (2021) revealed that elderly chess players exhibited a remarkable 40% deceleration in cognitive decline compared to their non-playing counterparts, attributable to the game’s dual requisites of working memory and strategic planning. For individuals grappling with Parkinson’s disease, chess offers a dual benefit: the deliberate movement of pieces enhances motor skills, while the game’s reward-based learning mechanism stimulates dopamine release, complementing pharmacological interventions. Beyond its individual benefits, chess fosters social connections, bridging diverse backgrounds and promoting metacognition – the capacity to reflect upon one’s own thought processes. Chess clubs and therapy groups have been shown to yield a profound impact on mental health, with studies indicating a 30% reduction in depression scores among participants. However, it is crucial to acknowledge that chess therapy must be tailored to individual needs, particularly in cases of comorbid anxiety and depression. Clinical discretion is essential in such scenarios, as the game’s competitive nature may exacerbate anxiety in certain individuals. In India, where the aging population and youth mental health crisis converge, chess presents a promising solution – a low-cost cognitive training modality with heightened therapeutic effects. Its bidirectional benefits – protecting against neurodegeneration while building emotional resilience – underscore its unique role in public health, offering a potent tool in the pursuit of mental well-being.

As we navigate the complexities of mental health and cognitive well-being in India, chess emerges as a potent catalyst for positive transformation. By harnessing the game’s profound cognitive and emotional benefits, we can galvanise a national movement that promotes mental fitness, fosters social connections, and cultivates emotional resilience. The integration of chess into national health campaigns, akin to the revered practice of yoga, holds immense policy potential. This could involve the development of chess-based programs for schools and community centers, provision of training and resources for instructors and mental health professionals, and strategic promotion of chess as a tool for cognitive development and mental well-being through targeted public awareness campaigns. Grassroots efforts are already underway, with schools, NGOs, and innovative apps working tirelessly to bring the game to vulnerable groups. By introducing chess in schools, we can enhance cognitive development, bolster academic performance, and nurture social-emotional learning. Mobile apps and online platforms are democratising access to chess, rendering it an inclusive and empowering tool for mental fitness.

As we strive to build a society that values mental well-being and cognitive health, chess stands poised to play a pivotal role. By supporting and scaling these initiatives, we can create a groundswell of interest in chess as a transformative force for individual and collective well-being. Ultimately, the game’s timeless wisdom and cognitive demands offer a profound opportunity for India to forge a new path towards mental fitness, one that is at once inclusive, empowering, and uniquely suited to the nation’s diverse needs.

Neolithic habitation found in Assam’s Dima Hasao

An archaeological site in Assam’s Dima Hasao district, uncovered but damaged during the construction of an arterial road in the 1960s, has yielded artefacts that establish it as a Neolithic habitation zone dating back to more than 2,700 years. The discovery of a furnace and iron slag, indicating metallurgical activities, has provided “substantial support” for earlier hypotheses that Daojali Hading was a major prehistoric settlement in the northeastern part of India. These artefacts were among several found by a multidisciplinary team during a recent archaeological reconnaissance survey at Daojali Hading on the ridges within the Langting-Mupa Reserve Forest off National Highway 27. The team was led by Shring Dao Langthasa and Bhubanjy Langthasa of the North Cachar Hills Autonomous Council’s (NCHAC) Department of Archaeology.

Bidisha Bordoloi, heading the District Museum in Haflong, the headquarters of Dima Hasao, about 340 km from Guwahati, collaborated in the survey, while Sukanya Sharma of the Indian Institute of Technology, Guwahati, and Marco Mitri of Shillong’s North Eastern Hill University provided expert guidance. Some of the artefacts found include Furnace and iron slag found at Daojali Hading point to early metallurgical practices. The Langting-Mupa Reserve Forest has long been recognised for its Neolithic significance. The Daojali Hading site in the vicinity was uncovered during the construction of the Lumding-Haflong Road in the 1960s, leading to systematic excavations from 1962 to 1964 by professors T.C. Sharma and M.C. Goswami of the Gauhati University’s Department of Anthropology. These investigations revealed polished double-shouldered celts, cord-marked pottery, mortars and pestles, besides jadeite stone, confirming the site’s neolithic affiliation. The unearthed artefacts linked the site with the broader Eastern and South-eastern Asian Neolithic cultural complex. The findings, however, did not stop the road construction work over the excavated area. The road damaged a large part of the site, virtually burying Dima Hasao’s neolithic past. Prof Sharma revisited the site in 1985 for further investigations. The new survey was undertaken by following his cues. The team recovered a significant assemblage of cord-marked and low-fired potsherds, grinding and polishing stones, and polished stone tools, indicative of a potential settlement. This was followed up by laying four trial trenches. “The reconnaissance survey yielded a rich assemblage of artefacts, which were reported earlier, such as polished double-shouldered celts,



cord-marked pottery, grinding stones, mortars, pestles, and double-edged celts,” Dr Shring Langthasa said. “However, iron slag and other ferruginous materials were identified for the first time. Additionally, a polished arrowhead, hafted celts, miniature adzes, broken tools, unfinished flakes, and charcoal samples were recovered,” he told The Hindu. While some trenches offered only contextual data, others produced significant finds such as limestone deposits, iron slag, and ferruginous materials, indicating early metalworking activities. The presence of both finished and unfinished lithic tools highlighted technological diversity and on-site tool production, offering valuable insights into the region’s prehistoric lithic and emerging metallurgical traditions. More research sought

Further exploration of the site led to the discovery of a furnace accompanied by iron slag — strong evidence of early metallurgical activity, the archaeologists said. These ferruginous materials are being studied at the Department of Geology of Gauhati University. The testing and analysis of artefacts, soil, and other collected samples are being conducted at the Archaeological Sciences Laboratory in IIT, Guwahati. A statement from the team said the findings indicate that Daojali Hading was more than just a lithic production site. “The range of domestic and utilitarian artefacts confirms that it was a settled neolithic habitation zone, a conclusion that aligns with earlier interpretations but lacked definitive proof until now,” it said. The team said that the site stands as a crucial marker of prehistoric community life in India’s northeast. It called for more research, including radiocarbon dating of organic remains and comparative studies with other Neolithic sites in the region.

How do military standoffs affect aviation? | Explained



The story so far: After the Pahalgam terror attack on April 22, India initiated a series of measures against Pakistan that included the suspension of the Indus Waters Treaty. In response to India’s calibrated steps, Pakistan issued a NOTAM (notice to airmen), closing its airspace to Indian aircraft from April 24 to May 23 — multiple air traffic routes were unavailable across the north and south as well as a part of the Arabian Sea. India responded with a similar NOTAM on April 30, that was effective till May 23.

What happened after the hostilities?

After India’s tri-service Operation Sindoor (May 7-10), Pakistan opened its airspace resulting in some foreign airlines resuming overflights. However, both countries have again issued fresh notices, closing their airspace to Indian (“till June 24, 4.59 a.m., Pakistan Airports Authority”) and Pakistan aircraft (June 23), respectively.

Is there a history of airspace closure?

Prof. Mohammad Owais Farooqui, Assistant Professor of Aerospace Law, Department of Public Law, College of Law, University of Sharjah, has told The Hindu that in the 1950s, India had objected to Pakistan’s declaration of a “prohibited zone” along its frontier as discriminatory as it allowed overflights by other nations. The dispute was resolved diplomatically but set a precedent that such restrictions must have bona fide security justifications. The Hindu’s archives show that airspace closure has been a major issue corresponding with the state of bilateral ties. Following the 1965 India-Pakistan war, a report, “Overflights from Feb. 10: Indo-Pak. Accord: Air Services to be Resumed From March 1” (The Hindu, February 8, 1966), highlighted “an in principle agreement to allow overflights and a resumption of normal Pakistani and Indian services from March 1”. Pakistan also wanted a direct link to Dacca (Dhaka), which was cut off in the war in September. The report said that “to reach East Pakistan from the west wing, Pakistan aircraft at present have to fly by Ceylon, a detour of more than 2,000 miles and that international flights have been forced to operate from Karachi to Bombay — across the Arabian Sea (connections to New Delhi are picked up from Bombay)”. In 1971, there was another ban following the hijacking of an Indian Airlines Fokker F-27 flight (Srinagar-Jammu) on January 30 to Pakistan. The passengers were released in Lahore and the plane was destroyed (burnt). A report, “Pak. Civil Overflights Also Banned” (February 4, 1971), detailed India’s banning of civilian overflights as well as continuing an existing ban on military aircraft until “Pakistan had satisfactorily settled the question of compensation for the Indian aircraft”. The report said that flights in both countries were affected (Pakistan “much more than India”). This incident also saw India filing a case in the World Court after Pakistan lodged a complaint with the International Civil Aviation Or-

ganization (ICAO) and the United Nations Security Council against the overflight ban. The World Court ruled (14-2 vote) that ICAO had jurisdiction over the issue. The issue was resolved in June 1976, with India and Pakistan signing a memorandum of understanding on resumption of overflights and flights. Since then, there have been other closures and normalisations, with major events being the Kargil war (1999), the Indian Parliament attack (2001) and the Balakot airstrikes (2019).

Is there an estimate of the losses?

In 2002, India’s Ministry of Civil Aviation was to seek budgetary support for Indian airlines after estimates of losses (Air India ₹40 crore a year; Indian Airlines ₹3.4 crore and the Airports Authority of India ₹5 crore from landing and parking charges and also overflights). Pakistan’s losses were estimated to be five times more, according to the Minister of Civil Aviation. In 2019, the collective losses of Indian carriers were put at ₹548.93 crore (Rajya Sabha reply). A PTI report said Pakistan had suffered a \$50 million loss. According to IATA, before the ban, at least 220 flights used Pakistan’s airspace to operate between Asia and Europe. In 2025, the consolidated loss for the Indian aviation sector (including cargo) may be around ₹7,000 crore (indicative figure), according to reports that cite industry sources. Data reports based on the 2019 closure show that Pakistan lost approximately \$2,32,000 every day in overflight charges and \$3,00,000, if landing, parking and navigation fees were added.

What were the airspace changes in 2025?

There was a temporary closure of 32 airports across northern and western India. There was also a temporary closure of 25 segments of Air Traffic Service (ATS) routes within the Delhi and Mumbai Flight Information Regions (FIRs), “unavailable from ground level to unlimited altitude” for aviation safety. Overflights were “funnelled” along certain air routes, with Mumbai, Ahmedabad, Nagpur, Kolkata and Chennai air traffic control managing the traffic. In 2019, as many as 500 flights were rerouted overnight. On May 7, during Operation Sindoor, there were close to 500 aircraft (20% were Indian aircraft) movements from Indian airspace to Pakistan, aviation sources have told The Hindu. Some of the air routes used included N571, P574, L301, L505 and L639, in turn linked to flight management with the Muscat FIR. There was also a 30% increase in aircraft movement per hour, with peak hour traffic put at 40 aircraft. In air navigation terms, India and Pakistan share close to 12 waypoints, through which the Mumbai and Delhi FIRs feed air traffic, while there are six waypoints between the Mumbai and Muscat FIRs. The sources said that the traffic load from the 12 waypoints was shifted to these six waypoints. Established air traffic management procedures were used such as minimum aircraft separation standards (vertical, crossing and lateral for east and west-bound traffic). Flightradar24’s director of communications has told The Hindu that there are few alternative routes via China due to the regimented nature of Chinese airspace and the presence of high mountains which can impact safe flight operations. Any routing that is less than optimal would add time and cost, he said.

Will international aviation law hold?

Prof. Farooqui says that while international aviation law provides mechanisms for redress, their effectiveness depends on political will and an understanding of the nuanced facts of this bilateral standoff.

A sinking feeling for ‘Brand Bengaluru’



For long-time residents of Bengaluru, it is beginning to feel like there is too much happening all at once. There are talks of extending Namma Metro to neighbouring cities. Work has started for a suburban rail network. The State government is busy pushing for a contentious network of tunnel roads to connect traffic-choked ends. And the civic body, the Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP), is being split into multiple corporations with the hope that they will manage the city better. Ironically, while these projects are being planned keeping the city’s future in mind, there is little thought being given to existing problems, which arose out of Bengaluru’s “growth”. All it takes is for the sky to open up a few times for all that lies beneath the shine of ‘Brand Bengaluru’ to be exposed. For the motorists caught on dangerously waterlogged roads, the residents of layouts that are inundated after a few spells of rain, and the families of those who lost their lives in a flooded underpass or a tree fall, the statements of ministers promising removal of encroachments only provide a sense of déjà vu.

that the pre-monsoon rains in 2025 were the highest recorded during the season and in the month of May in the last 125 years. The rainfall recorded in the pre-monsoon period (March 1 to May 31) was 286 mm against the normal 115 mm. The actual rainfall was 219 mm against the normal 74 mm for May. The India Meteorological Department, Bengaluru, said the city received a record 307.9 mm of rainfall between May 1 and May 26 (till 11.30 a.m.). Bengaluru received a staggering 105.5 mm of rainfall in the 24-hour period between 8.30 a.m. on May 18 and 8.30 a.m. on May 19 — the second highest since 2011. This caught the authorities, who were still preparing for the monsoon, off guard.

High-impact weather events have been occurring more frequently and with greater intensity globally. Many parts of Bengaluru were under water during the monsoon and post-

monsoon seasons in 2015, 2017, 2020, and 2022. In 2023, Karnataka was hit by drought, which led to a water crisis in many parts of the State in 2024. Why, then, have the civic authorities not learned any lessons? Bengaluru was once famed for its network of lakes. These served as flood management tools by harvesting rainwater and storing excess water. As the city grew, the government focused on providing piped water supply from the Cauvery river. It ignored lakes to the point where hundreds of them disappeared, making way for real estate, stadiums, and bus stands. Rivers that originate or flow through the city, such as the Vrushabhavathy, continue to be in a state of neglect. During the 2024 summer water crisis, the Bangalore Water Supply and Sewerage Board came up with a knee-jerk response. It filled up a few lakes with treated water to push up groundwater levels. This year, 63 of the 183 lakes under the BBMP have already reached full capacity before the monsoon season, raising questions about how important flood-mitigation barriers have been compromised. Citizen activists and experts have also repeatedly pointed to the reduced carrying capacity of drains due to the build-up of silt and flow of sewage. This has caused rainwater to overflow into the streets, leading to severe water-logging. The Karnataka Lokayukta, which took up a suo motu case about flooding in Bengaluru after the recent episode, said that the main reasons for flooding were negligence of officials and lack of coordination between various agencies. Justice B.S. Patil also directed officials to speed up de-silting work of drains, ensure a gradient to facilitate flow of water in them, and remove all encroachments on drains. Bengaluru is in the throes of an administrative transformation as the Greater Bengaluru Authority (GBA) will replace the BBMP, which came into being in 2007, as the city’s primary governing body. The GBA aims to bring all the major agencies working in Bengaluru under one structure, which will be headed by the Chief Minister of Karnataka.

How rage rooms are redefining anger and stress relief in India



After a grueling week at work, juggling demanding deadlines and personal challenges, Karnam Gupta, 29, a reputation manager, felt he was at his breaking point. “It was one of those times when you literally feel like breaking something,” he told indianexpress.com. On a friend’s recommendation, he booked a session at a rage room — a space designed to let people unleash frustrations by smashing objects to smithereens.As Gupta picked up a baseball bat and swung at a bottle, he felt a twinge of fear. But with each swing, the act became less about destruction and more about release, about reclaiming a sense of peace. “There was a point where I started to feel the stress lowering and my mind calming down,” he said.

What Gupta experienced is a growing trend in India in 2024. Rage rooms—also called smash rooms—are emerging as an unconventional outlet for anger and stress. The concept, already popular in countries like the United States of America, the United Kingdom, and Japan, has found its footing in India in recent years, particularly as conversations around mental health gained momentum. The idea is simple yet cathartic: don protective gear, choose from an array of breakable objects—from plates to electronic devices—and channel your anger, stress, or anxiety into smashing them, all in a controlled environment. Rage rooms stand out because they combine physical release with emotional catharsis, creating an experience that feels as much like therapy as entertainment.But can rage rooms offer a lasting solution, or are they just a fleeting urban fad? To understand more, indianexpress.com spoke to people who have used rage rooms, along with mental health experts and rage room business owners. Personal experiencesFor some, like Arjun Tyagi, rage rooms provide an immediate and active form of stress relief. “Meditation or yoga requires time and patience, but I needed something more physical and instant,” said Tyagi, an account manager.Will rage rooms become a lasting feature of India’s urban landscape, or will they fade as a fleeting fad? Will rage rooms become a lasting feature of India’s urban landscape, or will they fade as a fleeting fad? (Source: Rage Room, Maniaroom Adventures Pvt. Ltd.)“The idea of breaking things in a controlled environment sounded unique and liberating,” he said. The moment he started breaking objects, Tyagi felt a wave of release. “Smashing things allowed me to physically vent emotions I didn’t even realise I was holding onto—stress, anger, and frustration. Afterward, I felt lighter, calmer, and surprisingly more clear-headed. It was like a weight had been lifted, even if only temporarily,” he said.Content creator and food blogger Vrunda Pansuriya, 20, however, found her experience less transformative. Intrigued after seeing Mumbai-based influencers talk about rage rooms, she decided to try it out. “Mentally, I didn’t feel much relief, but it was definitely fun to do once,” she said.Do rage rooms offer mental health benefits?

Neha M Krishna, marketing head at Rage Room, Maniaroom Adventures Pvt. Ltd., told indianexpress.com, “Usually, people who come to a rage room either want to experience it once just for the thrill or because they are angry, frustrated, or stressed and want to let it out for a while. It actually helps.”Sonal Khangarot, licensed rehabilitation counselor and psychotherapist at The Answer Room, shed light on how rage rooms or anger rooms offer “immediate physical release” of pent-up emotions, “providing a safe and

controlled environment for individuals to channel their anger and stress.”“Unlike traditional therapeutic methods such as cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT), mindfulness, or emotional regulation techniques, rage rooms do not address the root cause of the emotional distress,” she said.Neha Cadabam, senior psychologist at Cadabams Mindtalk, said, “Anger and stress often result in physical tension, such as tightened muscles or increased heart rate. Engaging in physical activity, such as smashing objects, releases this built-up tension. Research in the Journal of Sports Sciences highlights how physical exertion can lower cortisol levels and trigger the release of endorphins, creating a temporary calming effect.”She also said that breaking objects can serve as a metaphor for “breaking free” from emotional burdens or frustrations. This symbolic act provides a sense of control and empowerment, which is often lacking in stressful situations. Where are the materials for rage rooms sourced from? Where are the materials for rage rooms sourced from? (Source: Cafe Bhadaas)

How rage rooms workRage rooms provide a safe space to express anger without fear of judgment or real-world consequences. This allows individuals to explore their emotions without harming themselves or others.Atul Malikram, owner of Cafe Bhadaas, Indore, brought the rage room concept to India in 2017 after discovering its popularity in Australia and Germany. Drawing from his own childhood habit of breaking things to vent anger, Malikram wanted to offer a safer, structured outlet.At his cafe, Malikram sources items like broken laptops, computers, crockery, and furniture from scrap dealers, with costs depending on the item. “Customers can smash these items in specialised rooms equipped with helmets, safety gear, and supervision to ensure a secure experience. The venue also features a soundproof, dark room inspired by Australian stress-relief practices, allowing visitors to scream and vent in private,” he said.Breakable items are sourced through regular vendors, Krishna said, and the inventory is replenished multiple times a month to maintain quality. “The safety measures are robust with strict rules and regular replacement of gear, resulting in minimal injuries,” she said. According to her, Rage Room mostly attracts Gen Z and corporate groups. She also said they have introduced breakup therapy and sessions to help de-stress after toxic workplace experiences.Despite the appeal, running a rage room comes with challenges. Malikram noted the high costs of inventory, rent, and replacing safety gear. Some also dismiss the concept as frivolous, arguing that traditional outlets like exercise or meditation are more effective.Rage rooms provide a safe space to express anger without fear of judgment or real-world consequences. (Source: Rage Room, Maniaroom Adventures Pvt. Ltd.Drawbacks of using rage rooms as an outlet for emotional release

Rage rooms offer a unique mix of fun and catharsis, but experts stressed they’re no substitute for addressing deeper emotional issues.Cadabam said, “Rage rooms address the symptom (anger) rather than its cause. Using them exclusively might lead to avoidance of deeper emotional or psychological issues that require introspection and professional help.”Khangarot pointed out how rage rooms may normalise destructive behaviour as a response to stress, which could lead to maladaptive coping mechanisms over time. “While it offers immediate release, it can inadvertently reinforce aggressive tendencies. If an individual relies solely on emotional outlets, they risk neglecting the emotional work required for healing,” she said.Tyagi’s personal experience proves this. While the rage room gave him an intense physical outlet to expel his emotions, according to him, the relief, while satisfying, “didn’t offer the long-term balance I get from mindfulness or regular exercise; it works best as a quick fix.”Cadabam also said that over-reliance on rage rooms can create a dependency, “where individuals feel unable to cope without engaging in such activities.”The futureMalikram believes the concept has immense potential but acknowledges the need to evolve. After the pandemic disrupted operations, he temporarily closed his rage room to renovate and introduce fresh ideas. He plans to relaunch in January 2025 with new activities to reignite interest.Krishna, meanwhile, said there has been significant growth in 2024, and that they expanded their offerings to include neon paint rooms and activities for younger participants under parental supervision. Looking ahead, her team plans nationwide expansion and franchise development in 2025.

Everything you should know about Telangana Formula E Race issue

GNS News Agency,June 7
Hyderabad: In the wake of corruption cases filed by the ACB and money laundering case filed by the Enforcement Directorate, BRS working president KT Rama Rao refuted allegations of corruption in the Formula E race case. He called them baseless and politically driven. In a counter filed in the High Court, he stated that all decisions were lawful and aimed at bolstering Hyderabad’s global image. He contended that he cannot be held responsible for procedural lapses, if any. He went on to charge the Congress government with partisan motives in leveling unsubstantiated claims.

What are the allegations against former Municipal Administration Minister KT Rama Rao in the Formula E-Race case?

– The Congress government has accused KT Rama Rao of corruption amounting to Rs 600 crore in organising the Formula E-Race in Hyderabad, claiming a violation of the election code of conduct and procedural lapses which caused financial burden on the State exchequer. The ACB filed a case against Rama Rao, the then Special Chief Secretary K Arvind Kumar and other officials.

How has KTR responded to these accusations?
– Rama Rao has categorically denied all allegations, calling them baseless and politically motivated. He stated that the decision to host the Formula E Race was lawful and aimed at enhancing Hyderabad’s global prestige. He emphasised that there was no conspiracy or corruption involved in the decision-making process.

What legal action has KTR taken on ACB case against him?

– Rama Rao has filed a quash petition in the High Court rejecting the government’s claims. He questioned the basis of the allegations, particularly why no case was filed against the Formula E-Race organization if corruption had occurred.

What does KTR say about the Rs 54 crore expenditure?

– Rama Rao explained that the Rs 54 crore payment was made transparently through Indian Overseas Bank, adhering to HMMDA’s guidelines. He clarified that the Rs 8



crore mentioned by the government was tax-related and HMMDA can reclaim as the event was not held.

What evidence supports KTR’s claims?
– Rama Rao cited a Nielsen report stating that the Formula E-Race generated ₹700 crores in economic benefits for the state. He also pointed out that no notice was issued by the Election Commission, undermining claims of a code violation.

How does KTR view the accusations?
– Rama Rao dismissed the allegations as partisan attempts to malign his reputation, asserting that the actual loss to the event stemmed from poor decisions by Revanth Reddy’s government.

On charges of violation of the Model Code of Conduct (MCC)?

– The State government has no role in deciding any violation of the MCC. If there are any, the Election Commission of India (ECI) would have already issued notices. Why is the government keen to involve itself in the matter which out of its jurisdiction, unless there is a political motive? Since the Model code of conduct came in to the force on October 9, 2023, the petitioner become functus officio. The petitioner is no way concerned with the alleged irregularities if any

As per the fresh agreement, there is a financial commitment of about Rs 600 crore for next three years. No prior permissions from the Finance department were obtained before entering into the new agreement.

Punjab’s good samaritans who left a lasting impact on countless lives in 2024



“Ek Bihari sab pe Bhaari” is a favourite saying of Lt Col Sadhu Singh Sohi (Retd), a proud former officer of the Bihar Regiment. This pride also reflects in the letterhead of his NGO, the Ex-Servicemen Grievances Cell, which provides crucial support to veterans, widows, and their families for pension and disability benefits.Every Friday, Sohi and his dedicated team set up a makeshift office on roadside benches opposite the Mohali CSD Canteen. Regardless of the weather, they listen to the grievances of veterans struggling with military and pension authorities.Punjab At 80, Sohi continues his relentless efforts, liaising with service headquarters and the Directorate of Veteran Affairs to amend policies and ensure support for those in need.With over 2,300 members and a core team of 20 volunteers, the NGO works pro bono. In the past 23 years, they’ve secured pensions for over 400 veterans, widows, and dependents, disability pensions for 75 veterans, family pensions for 45 widows, and financial support for six dependent daughters. During the COVID-19 pandemic, they facilitated hospital admissions for 9,734 patients across India.At 80, Sohi continues his relentless efforts, liaising with service headquarters and the Directorate of Veteran Affairs to amend policies and ensure support for those in need.For the farmers of Punjab and Haryana, Devinder Sharma is a “most trusted ally.” Whenever complex policies or laws arise, farmer bodies turn to Sharma, confident he can represent their perspective effectively.A distinguished food and trade policy analyst, Sharma holds a Master’s degree in plant breeding and genetics. “I am here to give a voice to the farming community,” he often says. Backed by well-researched arguments and examples from across India and the world, Sharma counters criticism directed at farmers.punjab Sharma was appointed as one of its members, reinforcing his role as a trusted voice for farmers.Be it the issues of stubble burning or farm debt, Sharma consistently highlights the challenges farmers face and advocates for solutions. He insists that agriculture, the largest sector of livelihood in India, deserves at least 50% of the central government’s annual budget. Sharma also champions a legal framework for Minimum Support Price (MSP), ensuring no private player can buy crops below the mandated rate. In September, the Supreme Court formed a “neutral high-powered committee,” chaired by retired Punjab and Haryana High Court judge Justice Nawab Singh, to address the challenges faced by the farming community in the region. Sharma was appointed as one of its members, reinforcing his role as a trusted voice for farmers.Coaching after retirementEven ten years after retiring as the national badminton coach, 70-year-old Surinder Mahajan continues to dedicate himself to training young players at Chandigarh’s Sector-38 Sports Complex. Every day, he arrives at 4 pm—sometimes even at 5:45 am—to oversee rigorous training sessions on the ten badminton courts.

chandigarh punjab Undeterred, Mahajan began training players voluntarily, and his dedication paid off as many went on to win medals at national and international levels. “Coaching is my life, and badminton is my passion,” Mahajan says. Despite retiring from the Sports Authority of India (SAI) in 2014, he couldn’t stop coaching. He later joined the Chandigarh Sports Department but had to leave at 65 due to policy limitations. Undeterred, Mahajan began training players voluntarily, and his dedication paid off as many went on to win medals at national and international levels. Recognising his contributions, the Badminton Association of India entrusted him with training grassroots-level coaches nationwide through annual crash courses. Mahajan also serves as the general secretary of the Chandigarh Badminton Association.On a mission against the dumpDayal Krishan was a child when his father, Pishauri Lal, a fireman with the UT fire department, settled in Daddumajra. In those days, it was a scenic village with a lovely pond where filmmakers would come to shoot. Dayal still remembers spending hours watching the shooting of Ishq Nibhana, a Punjabi film that starred Satish Kaul. It was also one of those places that attracted people from all walks of life. As a result, there was a row of temples. “There was a Hanuman temple, one dedicated to Ravi Das ji, another to Kabir ji. Then there was a Buddhist temple, a mosque, and a gurdwara.”One day, all these were turned to rubble as the UT authorities descended on the site, and the City Beautiful began to dump its waste here. Dayal Krishan has witnessed Daddumajra’s descent into hellish living conditions up close. He recalls his father, Pishauri Lal, first raising an alarm when fires began smouldering across the lake in a crater where some people had started dumping waste. “It was at a distance from our house, but my father used to fret about it. He would say that methane gas was being emitted there. I remember seeing a man actually cooking after digging a small pit.” His father would go around educating people about the hazards of poor air quality. “Both my parents were very proactive. I remember once they built a log bridge during the monsoon when the shortcut that people used got flooded.” In those days, Dayal found their activism very irritating. However, the bad air took a toll on the family. His mother died of asthma, and his father of tuberculosis.Dayal Krishan, who worked as a video editor for almost a decade, found himself highlighting the perils of the dumping ground. “I left my job at City Cable because people would mock me for my focus on this issue.” Dayal, who has recently set up a photo studio, hasn’t stopped working on it. His mission is simple: “I want to make Daddumajra livable again. Is that too much to ask for?”The peon who starts before dawnMost people assume the Punjab and Haryana High Court begins its day at 10 am, but for Dhanesh Kumar, a 40-year-old peon in Courtroom 69, the day starts much earlier. Kumar, who has been working at the court since 2012, arrives at 6 am to prepare the courtroom for proceedings.Residing in Chandigarh’s Sector 33, Kumar cleans the courtroom, arranges files, and ensures water is available for the judge, who begins his day at 7 am. His duties continue until the

court adjourns for the day.

“Waking up early has significantly improved my health,” Kumar shares. Since starting his early morning routine three years ago, he has noticed improvements in his fitness and management of diabetes and other health issues. “I feel more energised and better prepared to tackle the day.”The sister who demands dignity and safetyIn the wake of the horrific rape and murder of a young doctor at Kolkata’s RG Kar Institute, which ignited nationwide protests, PGI has submitted a detailed report to the Government of India recommending urgent measures to safeguard healthcare professionals.At the forefront of this call for change is Manjanik Kaur, President of the PGI Nursing Union, who has voiced the long-ignored concerns of nurses. “A woman was raped and murdered at her workplace—this is both shameful and terrifying. Women aren’t even safe at work,” she said, demanding fundamental facilities like proper changing rooms, washrooms, and night-time security for nursing staff.Kaur highlighted alarming gaps in infrastructure, such as poorly lit areas, inadequate staff lifts, and the absence of security in private wards. She also urged a zero-tolerance policy for discriminatory behaviour and women support staff for night shifts in sensitive departments.Her message is clear: dignity and safety for healthcare workers can no longer be compromised.Serving scienceProfessor Jitendra Kumar Sahu, a pediatric neurologist at PGI, Chandigarh, has been awarded the prestigious Rashtriya Vigyan Puraskar: Vigyan Yuva-Shanti Swarup Bhatnagar for 2024 in Medicine. This national honour, conferred by the Government of India, recognises exceptional research contributions by scientists under 45.Serving as PGI faculty since 2011, Prof Sahu specialises in childhood epilepsy, particularly infantile spasms.He and his team have extensively studied the genetic landscape of infantile epilepsy and have developed an in-house genetic testing.Prof Sahu also debunks common myths such as that seizures are caused by the DPT vaccination.Bridging the gapsEstablished in 1952 for a population of around five lakh, GMSH-16 has grown into a vital district hospital, now catering to referrals from across the region with an OPD footfall of about 3,000 daily.Under the leadership of Dr Suman Singh, Director, Health Services, Chandigarh, the focus has been on enhancing patient care services, infrastructure, and amenities to bridge the gap between government and private hospitals. This year saw upgrades in various areas, including the Emergency department, gynaecology private rooms, and wards. Dr Singh prioritised patient comfort with simple yet impactful measures like oxygen supply to every bed, pull-in curtains for privacy, separate entry and exit points, modern toilets, and tech-enabled queue management.Punjab A budget of six crore rupees has also been proposed to recruit doctors and staff to restart evening OPDs, benefiting the city’s working class.“We operate as a district hospital but function like a medical college. My dream is to introduce super-specialty services here, starting with cardiology, nephrology, and neurology. A proposal for a super-specialty block has been sent,” said Dr Singh.

A budget of six crore rupees has also been proposed to recruit doctors and staff to restart evening OPDs, benefiting the city’s working class. The hospital’s Emergency unit is equipped to handle increasing cases around the clock.To reduce waiting times for diagnostic tests like CT scans, ultrasounds, and MRIs, Dr Singh is actively exploring the Public-Private Partnership (PPP) mode. The success of the MRI scan centre, introduced under PPP last year, has encouraged similar initiatives. The facility, available 24x7, charges half the cost of private centres.The hospital has floated a tender for a Cath Lab under the PPP mode to offer specialised services and reduce patient burden on other hospitals. “We are among the few facilities in the city where X-rays are available even on Sundays. The goal is to ensure quality care with regular upgrades,” said Dr Singh.“For the New Year, the dream is to get approval for a new 2000-bed, state-of-the-art hospital for Chandigarh,” she shared. Shine on, we say, Gareebon Ka DonHe likes to be called ‘Gareebon Ka Don’. Pascal Daniel, born in Bengaluru and living in Chandigarh for the past 53 years, loves teaching maths while helping the underprivileged. Pascal says his journey in charity began in 2019 when he and some others set up an NGO called Mohali Helpers. The pandemic tested their resolve, but they persevered thanks to the generosity of their students. Pascal, who has been teaching at St Stephen’s School for 34 years, says his former students need just a little prod to open their purse strings. “I post the details of the kind of help needed on Facebook, and the response is almost instantaneous.”Punjab One of Pascal’s most memorable cases was the surgery of a four-year-old child with a hole in the heart.Over time, his reputation as a helping hand has grown, leading to a steady stream of people seeking his assistance. The requests range from providing ration to families in distress to funding medical procedures. One of Pascal’s most memorable cases was the surgery of a four-year-old child with a hole in the heart. The operation was complicated and required urgent attention. Pascal appealed to his students, who responded generously, enabling the child to undergo surgery at a leading private hospital in Mohali. As Pascal says, “Where there is need, there are funds.”Saviour of clothesHis name is Dhamam Dev Prajapati, but his customers know him as Montu. The slightly built young man, who works in Sector 27, is a saviour for scores of students and others who flock to his tiny boutique—a space that barely accommodates his sewing machine in a corridor. A native of a village in Lakhimpur Kheri, Montu learned tailoring after dropping out of school in Class V. His father, a chowkidar, sent him to Chandigarh in 2012, and ever since, the city has been his home. Montu pays Rs 6,000 a month to rent the spot where he works, but his modest charges surprise his customers, who ensure he makes a decent living. “Ninety percent of customers are good; .

Mumbai: Bollywood actor and philanthropist Sonu Sood, who has been feted with the Miss World Humanitarian Award, dedicated it to countless unsung heroes – mothers praying for their children, students striving for education despite hardship who couldn't afford to study, and resilient migrants who walked for miles. Sonu took to Instagram where he shared a string of pictures of himself getting honoured by actor Rana Daggubati and posing with the award. For the caption, he wrote: This award belongs to every mother who prayed for a bus to take her child home, to every student who couldn't afford education but never gave up dreaming, and to every migrant who walked miles yet never lost faith. Grateful and humbled to receive the Miss World Humanitarian Award. This is for every heart that cares. 'Sonu is known for his humanitarian work, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic. In July 2016, he established the production house Shakti Sagar Productions, which is named after his father, Shakti Sagar Sood. In September 2020, Sood was chosen for the 'SDG Special Humanitarian Action Award' by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) for his humanitarian work. In June 2022, he launched his social media app called Explurgr. The actor, through his Sood Charity Foundation, launched the Sonu Sood Scholarship to help the economically backwards section of society. As per reports, under this scheme, financial assistance will be provided to the economically backwards students of India to continue higher education without worrying about any financial hurdles. On the work front, the actor was recently seen in Fateh, an action thriller film written and directed by him. It also stars Naseeruddin Shah, Jacqueline Fernandez, Vijay Raaz and Dibyendu Bhattacharya.

We trust our skills, says James Hopes



GNS News Agency, June 7

Hyderabad: Punjab Kings bowling coach James Hopes said that Shreyas Iyer batted beautifully and just flicked the switch after he scored 20 off 24 at one stage and he is a match winner. In the post-match briefing after Punjab outsmarted Mumbai Indians in the Qualifier 2 of IPL at Ahmedabad on Sunday night, Hope said Shreyas did that a couple of times in this edition and it was a classy knock. "Shreyas is a sensational captain and a sensational player. I think the big thing with that is like the game up in Chandigarh (which Punjab lost to Royal Challengers Bengaluru in the Qualifier is don't try to find a reason for it. Don't look at oh well why did this happen? Why did that

happen? No no it just happened," Hopes said.

"There was a stage where I reckon we were looking at 220, 225 and we just kept pegging him back at the right time. We never went for that big over of 18, 19. We kept pegging him at 10, 11 knowing that we got Arshdeep coming at the end and Azmatullah bowled beautifully tonight as well," Hope said. "So our bowling group hung in there and gave us a score that we could chase and yeah, our batters did the rest," he said. "Taking on Bumrah in the first over not only has a flow-on effect for his bowling but for the rest of the team as well because we were having the chats half-time," Hopes said on the way top order handled Bumrah. "Shreyas played some ridiculously good shots of him at the end. I think there's going to be a fair bit of excitement around but I think it's our job as coaches and the franchise in general," he said. "So tomorrow will be just about the guys recovering and getting mentally prepared for what I imagine is going to be a pretty big crowd and a pretty big pro-Kohli crowd as well I would have thought," Hopes said about the final against Royal Challengers Bengaluru. "We just kept saying to our guys like we worked for two months to earn ourselves a second chance and we're now going to have to cash that second chance in. We don't change the way we play," he said. "We're just going to move on to the next game and trust that our skills are in a good spot and I think tonight showed our skills are still in a good spot," Hopes said.

Shreyas Iyer plays an all-time great knock, PBKS set up final against RCB to ensure a new IPL champion

GNS News Agency, June 7

In 18 seasons of the IPL, Mumbai Indians have never lost a game when they had posted a total of 200 and above. On Sunday, extending into early hours of Monday morning, in the Qualifier II, Shreyas Iyer made it a chew-gum-and-spit effort with an unbeaten 87 off 41 that took Punjab Kings to only their second ever IPL final and first since 2014. They will fight it out against Royal Challengers Bengaluru – another team hoping to end their title drought – at the same venue on Tuesday. At the half-way stage, when Punjab headed back to the dugout, they appeared a confident bunch that is capable of overhauling the target of 204 particularly the manner in which the five-time champions bowled in their game against Gujarat. It is an attack that is overtly dependent on Jasprit Bumrah to rescue them time and again. See him off with minimal risks, and Punjab had the resources to pull it off. That is easier said than done in a chase of 200 and above when one has to keep an eye on the asking rate. After losing Prabhsimran Singh early in the third over, it was the fifth over delivered by Bumrah that actually got the chase on track for Punjab. With Priyansh Arya causing early damages, Hardik Pandya turned to Bumrah in the powerplay in the hope of landing more punches on Punjab's top-order which has done all the scoring for them. Instead, Josh Inglis did a calculative assault, taking Bumrah for 20 runs (2x4, 2x6) in the fifth over.

But with Arya perishing in the next over and Inglis in the eighth, it was pretty much neck-and-neck as Mumbai kept three overs of Bumrah for the last 10. Shreyas, though, had other ideas. For a batsman who has enjoyed playing away from home, Sunday was no different. From the time he walked in, he was in the zone as he got going with a boundary off the second ball, then went about pacing his innings to perfection. For the next 9 deliveries, he seemed content enough rotating the strike in the company of Nehal Wadhwa. Off his first 15 deliveries he had only 19 and it was in the 13th over delivered by Reece Topley, where the wheels began to come off for Mumbai. Three length balls delivered with just slight deviation in the line disappeared into the stands for a hat-trick of sixes as Shreyas crack opened the chase. With Wadhwa, dropped on 13 by Trent Boult, ensuring Shreyas doesn't need to the job all by himself Punjab kept Mumbai under sustained pressure. Having brought forward their death overs against Gujarat Titans, Mumbai wanted to save the best for the last, but with Topley and Boult sending in two expensive overs Bumrah was done with his three by the 15th over. And needing 57 off 30 with 7 wickets in hand, the chase was going just one way.

In between there was a slight wobble when Wadhwa and Shashank Singh departed in space off 6 deliveries, but during which time Shreyas had managed to hit a six and a boundary. And the next two boundaries by Shreyas off Boult and Bumrah off the successive deliveries he faced killed the chase. After guiding Boult past short third twice, he saved the best for Bumrah, who dished out another middle-stump, pin-point yorker which most batsmen would have been lucky to play it safe. Shreyas, though, chose to dare as at the point of connection, opened the face of the bat to get it past the third-man fielder who was inside the ring. AB de



Villiers later called it the shot of the IPL and it is hard to argue. Bumrah ended up with figures of 4-0-40-0. With 23 needed off 12, Shreyas toyed with Ashwani Kumar, picking spots to hit four sixes in the 19th as Mumbai's wait for a title since 2020 spilled into 2026. If Mumbai look back at the result, they would rue how they missed picking the clues that Punjab provided them in the second half of their innings. Having waited till 9.45 to bat after losing the toss, to make up for their struggling bowling unit, Mumbai batsmen displayed all the intent that was needed. That they made 203/6 with the highest score being 44 (Tilak Varma and Suryakumar Yadav) was a testament to their approach which was definitely the need of the night. After Rohit Sharma perished early, Jonny Bairstow ensured they got another fruitful powerplay as Varma promoted to No 3, brought the urgency that was missing when he was playing lower down the order. Right through the season, despite not showing signs of hitting top gear, Mumbai has effortlessly gone at 10 an over and it repeated once again on the night as they dismantled Punjab attack without breaking sweat.

At 102/2 at the end of 10 overs, Mumbai were sailing through for a grand finish. But one thing the Punjab attack has done repeatedly this IPL has been to pull things back when the opposition least expect them to. When Shreyas Iyer called Chahal for his last over in the 14th, a total in excess of 220 was in sight, and when Suryakumar hit a six right away, the wheels appeared to be coming off. But off his penultimate delivery, Chahal – watching Surya prepping up for a sweep – showed the courage to slow it down and deliver one at 85.6, which could be connected only till the fielder at deep mid-wicket. Chahal, though should give the credit to Kyle Jamieson, who in the previous over had shown enough evidence that the slow deliveries were always going to bring rewards as Suryakumar struggled to connect his three cutters that were banged into the pitch. Those deliveries would soon become the norm going forward in the innings. In his next over, Jamieson delivered another slower full delivery which Varma skied to Priyansh Arya running from long-on. Two wickets in the space of three deliveries pegged back Mumbai as by the time the death overs began, there were two new batsmen in – Hardik Pandya and Naman Dhir. Though Mumbai managed to score 57 in the next 5 overs that took them past 200, they never came close to hitting the top gear as Punjab's attack used the long boundaries on either side of the square to good effect.

Glenn Maxwell announces ODI retirement: 'I felt like I was letting Australia down...'

GNS News Agency, June 7

Australia all-rounder Glenn Maxwell announced his retirement from ODI cricket on Monday, calling time on an illustrious 13-year career for the national side in the 50-over format. The 36-year-old Maxwell said he had made up his mind to retire from the format during Australia's Champions Trophy 2025 campaign that eventually ended with a semi-final exit following a loss to India in Dubai.

Maxwell, who first played for Australia in international cricket in an ODI in 2012, was part of the World Cup-winning teams in 2015 and 2023. Maxwell revealed that he had a chat with Australia's selection committee chair and former teammate George Bailey during the Champions Trophy about his decision. Maxwell, who endured a torrid time in the ongoing IPL 2025 season with the Punjab Kings before being ruled out with an injury, said that he believed he let the team down in his middle-order role during the 50-overs tournament in Pakistan and the UAE. "I said to him (Bailey) right then and there, 'I don't think I'm going to make that,'" the two-time ODI World Cup winner told the Final Word podcast. "I think it's time to start planning for people in my position, to have a crack at it and try and make that spot their own for the 2027 World Cup. Hopefully, they get enough of a lead-in where they can have success in that role." "My decision to retire from one-day international cricket was probably more on the back of the first couple of games in the Champions Trophy," he said. Maxwell joins Marcus Stoinis and Steve Smith in announcing their retirements from ODIs after his compatriots stepped down on either side of the Champions Trophy. However, Maxwell will remain available for selection in T20s. "I felt like I gave myself a really good opportunity to be fit and ready for those games. The first game in Lahore, we played on a rock-hard outfield. Post that game I was pretty sore. "We were lucky enough to have a washout against South Africa, where I



had a bit more time to have a bit of rest and get myself ready for the next game." "I started to (realise) that if I don't have the perfect conditions in 50-over cricket, my body just struggles to get through that. It feels like it's a tiring affair just to get through – and almost surviving – the 50 overs, let alone being at my best throughout that 50 overs, and then going out there and trying to perform with the bat as well.

"I felt like I was letting the team down a little bit with how my body was reacting to the conditions," Maxwell revealed. Maxwell steps away from the format as the batter with the highest strike rate among all ODI players to have recorded at least 2000 runs, holding a stunning 126.70 strike rate in his career. Maxwell's mercurial feats were best exemplified by his jaw-dropping 201 not out against Afghanistan at the 2023 World Cup battling cramps. "This was a moment, like Steve Waugh's Ashes ton on the last ball of the day, or Michael Bevan's final four to beat the Windies. One of those events that makes you ask 'Where were you when...'," Maxwell wrote in his 2024 book, The Showman. "It was crazy to think that I now had one of these, a moment when Australia was all on board."

'One of the most painful losses for Magnus Carlsen': Chess world reacts as Gukesh serves 'biggest shock of 2025' in Norway



GNS News Agency, June 7

Even before world champion D Gukesh had entirely gathered the magnitude of his move, a fuming Magnus Carlsen had banged the chessboard in disbelief at his stupefying defeat. A swift handshake was followed by a couple of apologies and an appreciative pat on the back as Carlsen stormed out of the hall, only a week out from his pompous social media response after forcing Gukesh into resignation in the first round at the Norway Chess 2025.

Gukesh went at the king and did not miss this time, a 62-move round 6 tussle ending with the world champion's first win over the legendary Norwegian. The chess world erupted in response to the tantalising finish in Stavanger. Coming back from a "nearly lost" position, Gukesh maintained his calm and accounted for the luck that went in his favour during the game. "There wasn't much I could do, it was just clearly lost. So I was just trying to make moves which kind of were tricky for him. Luckily, he got into a time scramble. One thing that I have learned from is that time scrambles can get too much out of control (laughs).... 99 out of 100 times I would lose..just a lucky day," Gukesh told chess.com after the win.

Reacting to Gukesh's response on X was chess legend Susan Polgar, who praised the 19-year-old's solidity when under pressure. "The World Champion showed the true meaning of 'Win with Grace'! He has the heart of a warrior! Knowing that he was in big trouble both on the board



and on the clock, he fought as hard as he could to survive, and was rewarded with a big victory," she wrote. Earlier in the night, Susan had recapped how the result was the "biggest shock" on the board in 2025 and probably one of the most hard-hitting defeats of Carlsen's epochal career. "Carlsen outplayed Gukesh, made massive blunder to lose a winning game! This is the biggest shock of the year! Carlsen rarely loses in classical chess, and he rarely commits big blunders. He was playing so well with the black pieces in round 6 in Norway against Gukesh. He had a winning position with more time on the clock. This has to be one of the most painful losses in his spectacular career. I am sure he is very angry with himself," remarked Polgar. Sharing an image of Carlsen's final slip-up on the board, India's premier chess coach and GM Srinath Narayanan took a subtle dig at Carlsen's X post referring to the "You come at the king, you best not miss" quote from an HBO show, The Wire. Dutch No. 1 Anish Giri, however, served up the quirkiest take on Gukesh's triumph of the Carlsen challenge. "Today's game was like between a grandpa and a child, except the grandpa is the GOAT and the child is the World Champion," the 30-year-old wrote on X. I am often called a "Magnus hater", because I don't agree with everything he does and because I think the number one spot should be decided by current results (atp-like) and not a statistical prediction of the encounter between two players

With assist from Kashmiri greats, Suhail Ahmad Bhat makes his way from Srinagar to Indian football team

GNS News Agency, June 7

Suhail Ahmad Bhat was in a cradle, just two months old, when Sunil Chhetri first played for India in June 2005. "Imagine," the 20-year-old blushes, "now I am sharing the dressing room with him." On the first day, he was 'gripped by nerves'. "We were doing rondos (a passing drill). I was so afraid... I kept telling myself, 'Don't make any mistake!'" Chhetri, one of India's all-time greats, sensed the anxiety and put his arm around Bhat's shoulders. He told the fellow forward, half his age, "This is your first national camp, just smile." Since then, the smile has remained plastered on Bhat's youthful face. He knows he is on the cusp of something rare — to rise from the Valley and reach the pinnacle: to play for India. Bhat is a part of the 28-man travelling squad for India's twin matches against Thailand and Hong Kong on June 4 and 10, respectively. If he gets picked, he will become only the fourth player from Jammu and Kashmir to represent India after Abdul Majeed Kakroo, Mehrajuddin Wadoo and Danish Farooq.

In a way, Bhat's story is also the story of Kashmir football, at least in the last two decades and the origins can be traced to a protest back on a pleasant spring day in 2007. The story goes that the then J&K chief minister, Gulam Nabi Azad, was considering converting Srinagar's primary football facility, the TRC Ground, into a tulip garden. Kakroo, the first player from Kashmir to captain India in the 1980s, had seen how one football ground after another in Srinagar had disappeared before his eyes to development projects. If TRC Ground met the same fate, Kakroo was convinced it would spell the end of football in Srinagar. Incensed, he took it upon himself to 'save the stadium'. "I had two South Asian Games gold medals, and I said I would burn myself outside the secretariat," he had told The Indian Express in an earlier interview. Nabi, eventually, relented. And the TRC Ground would become the site where Kashmir's football dreams blossomed. It was developed into a cute little stadium with a top-grade artificial surface that could survive the bitter winters. A decade later, it became home to one of the most romantic chapters in Indian football.

Real Kashmir — a club born out of a natural calamity, the floods of 2014 — took the domestic scene by storm, winning the second division and becoming the first club from J&K to play in the top division of Indian football. Those were heady days for football in Kashmir and Farooq, a no-nonsense midfielder, was one of the poster boys. The club's ardent fan base would create an atmosphere that made the opposition quake in their boots. Bhat was one of the faces in the crowd back then, accompanying his father, Mohammad Abdullah Bhat, for the matches. The football bug, he says, bit him at an early age. "My father played football, so I was drawn to the game naturally when I was very young," Bhat says.

Abdullah's day job was as a labourer and a vegetable vendor. Once the sun set, though, the self-confessed football tragic travelled long distances to play matches. "I had no coaching or no club as such. A few of us from the neighbourhood formed a team and played wherever we got an opportunity. I played barefoot for most of my life," he says. Abdullah takes pride that two out of his three sons went on to become doctors. But there's pure, unbridled joy in his voice that at least one of them — Suhail — picked football as a career. "I couldn't play beyond a local level," says Bhat Sr. "But when my son started taking an interest in the sport, I told him to pursue his dream without any fear." It helped that by then, an ecosystem had developed. Beyond the glamour of big-time football that Real Kashmir brought to Srinagar, Wadoo silently began to develop the next-gen



players at the state football academy, at the TRC Ground. "Growing up, we didn't have many coaches or a set pathway for someone to make a career in football. So, I wanted to do something for football in Kashmir and the state football academy was a part of that plan," says Wadoo, who spearheaded the project. Bhat was 14 when he joined the academy. "Like a lot of players in Kashmir, Suhail is physically very strong and has this quality to fight for the ball inside the box, never shy of doing that. And then, he was very disciplined. He never missed training," Wadoo says. Such was their obsession, that Abdullah was even prepared to change his son's school to ensure he didn't miss training. "One time, the school teachers made him sit there till 3pm. The evening training would start at 3.30, so if he stayed till the end, he would have missed the session. So, I told the authorities that if they did not leave him at 2, we'd change his school," Abdullah laughs. "They were cooperative." Like Wadoo and Ishfaq Ahmad, who reached the India U-23 level, Bhat left the Valley when he was in his teens to chase his dreams. He swiftly rose through the ranks, representing India at all age-group levels. His physicality in the box and strong mentality earned him a contract with Indian Super League champions Mohun Bagan. Bhat has yet to score for his club. But with India desperate to find a reliable striker, so much so that Chhetri had to return from retirement this year to fill the void he left, coach Manolo Marquez turned to the rookie striker from Srinagar. For Bhat, the magnitude of this is still sinking in. "In 2019, when an 'India Stars' team came to Srinagar for an exhibition match against a J&K team, Amrinder (Singh) Paaji was the goalkeeper. And I was a 14-year-old ball boy, standing behind Paaji's goalpost," he says. "This week, I was training with him. It's all a bit surreal."

We didn't execute well, says Jayawardene

HYDERABAD: Mumbai Indians head coach Mahela Jayawardene said that the only way they could have got into the game was to take wickets.

"I mean, there could have been a lot of ifs and buts, but I think we didn't play a perfect game and we paid for it. Like I said, I think it was a good campaign for us, the way we started and how we regrouped as a team and played some really, really good cricket," Jayawardene said in the post-match briefing after the team got drubbed by Punjab Kings in the IPL Qualifier 2 at Ahmedabad on Sunday night. "We had our opportunities getting to the playoffs and we had a really good game first up. And even today, I thought we played some good cricket, except for Kings playing better cricket than us, especially with the bat. They were solid, especially chasing 200," he said.

Kamal Haasan and Mani Ratnam’s Nayakan is not timeless, nor has it aged well; let that sink in



Ok, first things first. My intention is not to dismiss or disregard the impact and influence Nayakan (1987) has had, nor the contributions Mani Ratnam and Kamal Haasan have made to Indian cinema, both of which have inspired many to pursue filmmaking and acting. These are well-documented facts. However, the Nayakan effect on the masses has been so strong, unwavering even with time, that it almost (just almost; not necessarily exactly) feels like a bandwagon effect, where a critical evaluation of the film rarely occurs. You’re free to conclude that I have a contrarian bias and move on. But Mani Ratnam himself told The Indian Express back in 1988, “Whenever I see a film, I view it critically.” Yet, I honestly don’t think Nayakan is a bad movie. In fact, it contains several commendable elements, some never-before-seen in Indian cinema. So, let’s keep aside the blind devotion to the crime drama, take a step back and ask: Is Nayakan truly “peak cinema”? Has it aged well? And where all did it falter? Now that Kamal Haasan and Mani Ratnam gear up for their first movie in 37 years, Thug Life, this is the right time.

For this, let’s work our way inward from the surface by analysing the film’s narrative and technical aspects. Undoubtedly one of the finest movie dialogues in Tamil cinema, and one that has repeatedly found its way into pop culture, is the question posed by Sakthivel “Velu” Nayakkar’s (Kamal Haasan) grandson to him at the end, “Neenga nallavara kettavara? (Are you a good person or a bad person?),” which shatters the old man. As Mani Ratnam once remarked, it “puts across the moral dilemma of the man in a nutshell”. This is despite Velu’s lifelong adherence to his guiding motto, “Naalu peru saapida udhavumna, edhuvume thappille (If your actions help feed four people, then there’s nothing wrong with it).” Although the movie abstains from offering a direct narrative answer to this question, its very title, Nayakan, is a significant giveaway. Yes, one could argue that it’s a variation of his surname, Nayakkar (also written as Nayakar, Naikar, Nayaka, Naik, et al) — which also highlights his dominant caste background — but it literally translates to “Hero” in English. True, its hero cannot be confined to the binaries of good or bad. However, considering the era in which the movie was made and Indian audiences’ long-standing obsession with on-screen male heroes, particularly when portrayed by beloved stars, naming a film that seemingly refuses to take a clear stance on its protagonist’s morality “Hero” was an avoidable move. Unless, of course, the intention was a kind of reverse psychology.

One of the biggest shortcomings of Nayakan is its overt and unabashed obsession with Kamal Haasan. In a way, Nayakan could be seen as an “Aandavar fanboy sambavam” by Mani Ratnam, decades before the phrase even entered the Indian cinema vocabulary. Almost every element in the film seems designed to give the actor a moment to deliver an extraordinary performance, whether in the same shot/scene or the subsequent one(s). Considering this was still Mani Ratnam’s early period as a filmmaker — having debuted just four years earlier, though impressively directing five films in that time — he had yet to master the art of preventing the star/actor from overshadowing the narrative itself. He revealed recently that they didn’t have a bound script for Nayakan initially. By the time he made Thalpathi (1991), Mani had developed a better grip on this balance. The script for Thalpathi reflected his significant growth as a writer, weaving together diverse elements that connected meaningfully to the film’s core, which was not Rajinikanth the star-actor. However, in Nayakan, Kamal is the film’s soul, the air it breathes and its all-encompassing lordship. While Mani did manage to draw exceptional work from all involved, particularly Kamal, composer Ilaiyaraaja, cinematographer PC Sreeram and editors B Lenin and VT Vijayan, the film ultimately revolves around the actor and his exceptional skill set, especially his ability to emote through facial expressions and body language.

Even before Velu becomes Nayakkar of Dharavi — while he is still just a boy who fled his hometown of Thoothukudi after stabbing a police officer who murdered his union-leader father — Nayakan’s focus is singularly on him. After the film opens with the murder of Velu’s father and his escape to Mumbai, and once the young Velu appears, the film’s fixation on Kamal begins immediately. It doesn’t spend time offering exposition about young Velu; instead, it jumps straight into showcasing Kamal’s acting prowess. From the moment he is arrested by the police for ‘acting smart’ during a forced eviction in the slums, the camera and script begin to serve the actor’s range more than the character as such. Mani Ratnam crafted each shot from this point onwards to highlight the actor’s many strengths, even if that meant compromising the script by making everything be about Kamal and not Velu.

While the film features a handful of characters here — some named, most not — they are only relevant when in relation to Velu. They lack agency or defined identities when not in his orbit. Even as the movie progresses and we see Velu becoming Dharavi’s Nayakkar — inspired by real-life Mumbai mafia don Varadarajan Mudaliar — saving the people, Nayakan doesn’t care much to actually show who these people are. They all end up serving merely as contributors to his evolving character arc. The savarna saviour complex here is so pronounced that only the saviour occupies the foreground, while those Mani Ratnam deems in need of saving — members of oppressed communities — are, as usual, relegated to the background, appearing only as part of crowds. Even characters who have names and belong to Dharavi, such as Hussain (MV Vasudeva Rao), the man who raised Velu and meets a tragic end, his daughter Shakila (Tara), and Velu’s friend Selvam (Janagaraj), exist solely through their connection to Velu. Although Selvam is almost always by the “hero’s” side and is the only one who has the guts to call him “Velu” to his face even after he became Nayakkar, he, too, is just a background character with no story of his own. Despite Dharavi having enough people, we also see one “Iyer” (Delhi Ganesh) appearing out of nowhere and becoming Velu/ Nayakkar’s source of knowledge.

Once Velu becomes “the chosen one” (self-appointed

by the way; no one voted), Mani also cleverly overlooks Velu’s illegal businesses, despite the clear historical knowledge that while the dominant caste people may run the operations, it is the marginalised who will ultimately bear the consequences (and they do as well in Nayakan, time and again). “Naalu perukku udhavumna, edhuvume paavamille (If it helps four people, there’s no sin in it)” is the line he keeps repeating. But when the situation demands, he is financially secure enough to send his children, Charumati (Karthika) and Surya (Nizhalgal Ravi), to Madras for safety. What about those without names, identities or financial backing? What about the rest of Dharavi? Nayakan simply doesn’t care.

Though he is positioned as a saviour, the ‘celebration’ of which happens in the scene where he refuses to sleep with the underage sex worker Neela (Saranya Ponvannan) after learning she has an exam the next day and wants to study, is he truly one even for his dear ones? Despite knowing her aspirations, Velu soon chains her with a thaali (mangalsutra) without her consent. She lived the rest of her life as a housewife before ultimately being killed by her husband’s enemies. Even later, when Charumati questions his system of running a parallel government, Nayakkar insists that he can’t stop since he never chose this life of his own free will. “Are we doing all this because we actually want to? We have no other option, dear,” he tells her. But didn’t he? Despite wielding enormous influence, political connections and wealth, we never see him attempting to uplift the broader living conditions of Dharavi’s marginalised population, which would have allowed him as well to slowly give up everything. “I’ll buy five ambulances for Dharavi. They won’t ply for the rich, only for the poor,” he says at one point. But even after this, we never see Nayakkar stepping back to reflect on or challenge the deeper social stigma against the people of Dharavi. Instead, he grows wealthier by the day, while the marginalised remain his loyal foot soldiers, ever ready to lay down their lives for his protection (they literally do this as well towards the end). So, is there really any doubt left about whether he’s a good person or a bad one? While Nayakan presents one of its central themes, “he who lives by the sword shall perish by the sword”, through Velu’s gradual downfall, including the loss of his son Surya as well following his wife’s murder, Charumati leaving him, and his eventual death on the street after being shot by Inspector Kelkar’s son Ajit (Tinnu Anand) whom Velu had been raising ever since he killed Kelkar himself, another question arises: Was the overt humanisation of a man involved in numerous illegal activities really necessary?

Although Francis Ford Coppola’s The Godfather (1972), based on Mario Puzo’s novel and an inspiration for Nayakan, also delved into the inner world of mafia bosses, particularly their interpersonal relationships, it did not overtly humanise them. Their moral ambiguity remained intact and unsoftened. However, in Nayakan, partly because the role was played by Kamal Haasan and partly due to the Indian audience’s penchant for melodrama and hero worship, Mani Ratnam unknowingly infused the character with such a level of drama and cues to make the audience subconsciously perceive Nayakkar as the hero. Circling back to the intro, I wouldn’t call Nayakan “peak cinema”. Pandering to a largely savarna audience, who made up the lion’s share of the movie-going public at the time since watching new releases regularly was a luxury only the privileged could afford, and to “Aandavar” fans does not inherently make a film great. At the same time, completely disregarding the masses among whom the story is set is nothing short of ignorance. And no, the film hasn’t aged particularly well. That said, Nayakan is undoubtedly a good film, where the blending of words and visuals happens organically and beautifully, with Ilaiyaraaja’s music, as always, elevating the entire experience. One of the strongest aspects of Mani Ratnam’s script is how efficiently it omits the unnecessary and includes only what is needed to deliver the filmmaker’s vision; unlike the current trend of overwriting and over-filming and mindlessly splitting a movie into multiple parts. Kamal Haasan’s performance is undoubtedly exceptional, so much so that it has helped mask many of the film’s flaws over the years, leading audiences to blindly believe that Nayakan is “the one”. He won his second National Film Award for Best Actor for his performance here. Nonetheless, Nayakan proves that just because a movie is good, it doesn’t mean it’s great or free of flaws. And it’s important to analyse cinema critically — to call a spade a spade — and point out its shortcomings and misrepresentations. After all...Cinema cannot exist in a vacuum; it’s all about the discussions that follow. In the Cinema Anatomy column, we delve into the diverse layers and dimensions of films, aiming to uncover deeper meanings and foster continuous discourses.

Gauahar Khan criticises Suniel Shetty’s C-section remark, reveals she suffered a miscarriage: ‘For a male celebrity who didn’t go through pregnancy...’

Suniel Shetty faced criticism for his recent remarks where he lauded daughter Athiya Shetty opting for a natural delivery instead of C-section, calling the latter procedure easy and comfortable. He later clarified that his words were taken out of context and apologised to women for his comments. Now, actor Gauahar Khan, who is expecting her second child with husband Zaid Darbar currently, called out the veteran actor’s comments. She also opened up about suffering a miscarriage before the birth of her son. She recently launched her own YouTube podcast MaaaNoranjan, to discuss subjects like pregnancy, embracing motherhood, and much more. In the first episode, Gauahar revealed that she had a C-section delivery for her first baby Zehaan, and also suffered a miscarriage before that. “There’s one thing I never told everyone. I did have a miscarriage before Zehaan. What should I tell you about that feeling? It’s impossible to describe it. It was a pregnancy, I lost the baby after almost 9 weeks. That loss was extremely difficult. And I’ll be able to talk about it more in upcoming episodes,” she said. The actor looked quite emotional while speaking about Shetty’s remark when he appreciated his daughter for not undergoing a C-section. She said, “A what? I want to like scream at the top of my voice and say, ‘How could you say that? Like how?’ There are so many myths around this topic — that if someone is having a C-section, it’s the easier option. How can there be so much misinformation?

Adnana Sami says money isn’t the ‘real reason’ why he gave up Pakistan, chose India on Asha Bhosle’s advice: ‘I gave up properties worth crores in Pak’



Adnan Sami, Pakistan-born singer and composer, became an Indian citizen in 2016. While he has received flak from across the border for the move, Sami has maintained that he’s proud to be a part of India. Sami was even awarded the Padma Shri, the fourth highest civilian award of the Republic of India, earlier this year. In a new interview, Sami revealed the real reason why he started making music in India. “After the songs I released in 1998, people in the Pakistani music industry thought I’m finished. So they didn’t provide any marketing for those songs. Nobody got to know when the album released and vanished. I was very dejected. I was in Canada at that time. I knew they’d done that on purpose,” recalled Sami.

In the interview with India TV, Sami recalled discussing the issue with legendary singer Asha Bhosle. She had sung popular tracks like “Kabhi To Nazar Milao” from his 1997 album Badaltay Mausam with Sami. “I told Asha ji I’m dejected because people here have decided they don’t want to work with me for whatever reason, and that I want to record with her in London,” said Sami. “Why do you want to record in London?” she asked me. I said I know some people there. So she said, ‘See, if you really want to do something new, come to Mumbai. This is the capital of Hindi music. Whatever gets popular here would spread out to the rest of the world. So this is the place to come,’” Sami recalled his

Akshay Kumar intervenes at Housefull 5 event as women and children caught in crowd frenzy: ‘Aap log ko yahan se jaana padega’

Actor Akshay Kumar had to intervene to control the crowd at a Pune mall as Housefull 5 cast was at the venue to promote their upcoming film. Women and children could be seen crying as the crowd surged to catch a glimpse of the starcast. In the ensuing melee, a child got separated from her parents and actor Jacqueline Fernandez can be seen trying to calm her. A man with breathing issues also had a tough time as the mall was packed to capacity.

Both Akshay Kumar and actor Nana Patekar requested the crowd to calm down and not push others. Akshay took the microphone and said with folded hands, “Aap log ko yahan se jana padega. Aap dhakka dhukki mat kariye. Haath jod ke vinanti karta hoon, yaha auratein hai, bacche hai (You will have to leave. Don’t push and shove. I am requesting with folded hands as women and children are present here). I request everyone.” Besides Akshay, Nana and Jacqueline, Sonam Bajwa, Nargis Fakhri, Soundarya Sharma, and Fardeen Khan were also present at the event. Other cast members also looked quite tense as the crowd surged, and those at the back pushed to catch a glimpse of stars. Many children and women caught in the crowd were seen crying as a stampede-like situation ensued.

After the situation was brought under control, the team proceeded with the event. In a few videos, Akshay Kumar was seen playing phugdi with a fan and also the cast members, getting the crowd to cheer louder for them. Fans on

conversation with Bhosle. “Main boriya bistar le ke pahuch gaya Mumbai,” said Sami, claiming that Bhosle and her entire family took very good care of him. Bhosle was married to legendary music composer RD Burman, who died in 1994. “She made me stay in RD Burman’s home. I was very lucky because it was like a music temple,” recalled Sami.

“The songs that didn’t work in Pakistan, like “Kabhi To Nazar Milao”, “Bheegi Bheegi Raaton Mein”, “Lift Karadey”, they were marketed so well that the rest is history. The way people embraced me and loved me, I could’ve never imagined it,” added Sami. Bheegi Bheegi Raaton Mein and Lift Karadey were part of Sami’s 2000 hit album Always Yours. Sami revealed not just him, but legends like ghazal maestros Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan and Mehdi Hassan, and folk singer Reshma, did thrive in Pakistan, but their popularity grew by four times. “You can’t deny the audience and the masses are in huge quantity today. The attitude and respect for music here can’t be matched anywhere else,” said Sami. He lamented the fact that Hassan and Reshma saw very horrific last days and deaths despite being masters of their profession. “The audience loves them and has always praised them. But the authorities have never offered any help. These are just a few names. There have been many others like this, including actors,” added Sami.

The singer also responded to the letter then-Pakistan President General Pervez Musharraf wrote to his father in 2005, criticizing him for abandoning Pakistan. “There was no truth to that letter. In 2005, I wasn’t an Indian citizen. I was a Pakistani citizen. I don’t know where he got the wrong information from. It’s obvious that it’s gone from the bottom to the top. That’s why everyone just disowned me,” Sami recalled. He revealed that he didn’t apply for Indian citizenship for money as he left his inherited properties worth crores back in Pakistan. “Money wasn’t my driving force. In fact, when I came here, I had to start from scratch again,” said Sami. “I was facing a lot of problems then as a Pakistani citizen, especially in a public profession. Everyone knows all your moves. I had even reached out to Musharraf for help,” said Sami. He consequently applied for Indian citizenship in 2015, which he was granted the next year.



social media strongly reacted to videos where a woman was seen crying. One of them wrote, “I’m sure aunty was crying because she was stuck in that claustrophobic situation.” Another user commented,

“Aisa hi craze agar log hamare soldiers ke liye dikhte train mein bus mein ya kahin bhi to kitna acha hota. Yeh Bollywood ke liye pagal hone se kya milega? Unhe to desh ke liye bhi koi fikar nahi.” Nargis Fakhri, Jacqueline Fernandez, Sonam Bajwa, Soundarya Sharma, Fardeen Khan, Shreyas Talpade, and Johnny Lever were also at the Pune event along with Akshay Kumar and Nana Patekar. Housefull 5 features 19 actors in total. The film is directed by Tarun Mansukhani and produced by Sajid Nadiadwala. It is slated to release in theaters on 6th June.

‘Bollywood considered Rekha a dark-skinned South Indian actor who had nothing to offer’: Kabir Bedi recalls how Rekha became an ‘enigma’, proved haters wrong



Kabir Bedi’s role in Rakesh Roshan’s hit film Khoon Bhari Maang remains one of the most defining performances of his career. He played the part of a hero who turns into a villain and tries to kill his wife (played by Rekha) by feeding her to crocodiles. In a recent interaction, Kabir shared how he was approached by Rakesh Roshan to play the menacing character while he was shooting the Hollywood series Magnum, P.I. with Tom Selleck.

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Kabir recalled that although he was initially averse to taking on the role — being focused on his Hollywood project and his career abroad — Roshan managed to convince him to return to Hindi cinema. Roshan had admitted to Kabir that other leading actors had refused to play the sinister role, and the director believed that Kabir would be convincing as a hero-turned-villain. Kabir also spoke about his co-star Rekha and why he readily agreed to do the film with her, saying, “When I got to know Rekha is opposite me in the film, I said ‘done.’” Kabir revealed that he held Rekha in high regard, as the actor had defied all odds to become one of the top stars in the Hindi film industry. Speaking about the same, he said, “Rekha was an enigma for me. She had always been reclusive. When she came, the film industry regarded her as the dark-skinned South Indian actor who had nothing to offer. But she proved them all wrong. From an ugly duckling, she became a white swan with her performances. She had established herself by the time Khoon Bhari Maang started, and it was a no-brainer to say yes to a film with her.” Rekha began her career as a child actor in Telugu films. She went to make her debut as a leading lady in 1969 with the Kannada movie Operation Jackpot Nalli CID 999. A year later, her maiden Hindi film Sawan Bhado released but the young actor, who was a teenager at that point, had to face bodyshaming early in her career. Rekha kept on delivering acclaimed performances and won multiple awards and accolades. As Kabir had said in an earlier interview, “She gave fantastic performances one after the other. By the time we did Khoon Bhari Maang, she was the queen. After that she won the best actor Filmfare award for the film. I have immense respect for her.” Khoon Bhari Maang also starred Sonu Walia, Shatrughan Sinha, and Kader Khan in pivotal roles. The film was a massive hit at the box office, and Rekha bagged the Filmfare Award for Best Actress for her role.